Rahn can remove the forks from his forklift tractor and hook up to a stand-alone ball hitch assembly, without ever getting off the machine.

He started with the rear end and frame off a 1970's Chevy 1-ton dually pickup, turning the frame backward so the rear axle and wheels are up front.

"Built From Scratch" Forklift Tractor

"I use it to haul logs, stack firewood, and for many other jobs," says Mark Rahn, who built a forklift tractor from scratch. "It was a fun challenge. In the end I probably could have bought a used skid loader for less money than I spent to build it. But it turned out great.

"The forks pin onto the mast in such a way that I can remove them and hook up to a stand-alone ball hitch assembly without ever getting off the machine."

Rahn says he has been mechanically inclined from childhood. "For example, one day when my dad was away from home I tore apart a push lawn mower and put it back together all by myself. I was just 7 years old."

He started with the rear end and frame off a late 1970's Chevrolet 1-ton dually pickup, turning the frame backward so the rear axle and wheels are up front. He mounted a pair of small implement wheels on back, spacing them closely together and turning them inward like the tricycle-type front wheels on older tractors.

The machine is powered by a hand-cranked, 1945 LUC engine off a Deere combine. Located behind the driver's seat, it powers hydraulic pumps that drive a pair of hydraulic motors. One motor is connected to a 3-speed manual transmission off a 1960 Ford pickup and provides gear reduction for the front drive wheels. The other motor, off a David Bradley walk-behind tractor and still attached to the tractor's gearbox, is located behind the forklift mast. Rahn removed the tractor's wheels from the gearbox and installed a pair of sprockets in their place, which are used to chain-drive the forks up or down.

A hand made electric throttle controls the engine rpm's, and a foot-operated pedal controls the machine's speed. "The forklift has a lift capacity of about 1,200 lbs. One lever tilts the mast forward and backward, and another raises and lowers it," says Rahn. "A pair of master cylinders off an old pickup provide independent left and right brakes."

The steering wheel is off a 1940 Model A tractor. "The steering system is complicated and took me a long time to figure out," says Rahn. "A chain connected to the steering wheel drives a pair of sprockets, which chain-drive a driveshaft that goes back to a right angle gearbox that's connected to more chains and sprockets."

The motor and gearbox off a David Bradley walk-behind tractor is used to chain-drive the forks up or down.

The machine is equipped with LED lights on front and back, and over the steps. The seat is off another David Bradley tractor.

Rahn says he plans to build another stand-alone attachment for the tractor - a lift adapter that will make it easy to work on his riding mower.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Rahn, 7342 Gum Spring Lane, Ellis Grove, Ill. 62241 (ph 618 615-6659; markrahn66@gmail.com).

2-Wheeled "Thunderbolt" Does Many Jobs

You can do everything from plowing snow to hauling chunks of wood and pulling small utility wagons with this 2-wheeled cart called the Thunderbolt. New York entrepreneur Steve Brooks developed the patented cart through his company, Baja Shop Racing Ltd.

The powder-coated Thunderbolt rides on 13-in. tires and comes with a 36-in. long, adjustable handle that pins into a metal receiver tube with a series of holes in it. The attachment fits into another receiver-type hitch.

Different models are available to position the attachment above the tires, such as log tongs, or in front of them, such as a plow blade. The log tongs hook onto an L-shaped bracket that's pinned to the square tubing, and a metal arm at the bottom keeps the log from swinging back and forth.

Three different wagons are available, equipped with either drawbar or gooseneck hitches.

"These carts are easy to use and built strong," says Brooks. "I came up with the design after I hurt my back and needed something to move stuff around without re-injuring my back.

"Our R15 model comes with a plow blade available in 24 and 30-in. widths. It works great for moving snow and other light materials, and also can be used to scrape manure from alleys and to push feed to cows in free stalls."

One attachment consists of 4 adjustable vertical metal pillars that are used to enclose small items for transport. The pillars are welded to a 12-in. sq. metal platform with 4-in. long slots in it. Each pillar is threaded at the bottom and secured by a nut, and by loosening the nut you can move the pillars in or out.

"The pillars come in handy to transport a wide variety of items including gas cans, buckets, pots and more," says Brooks. "They work great with a spray tank to wash your vehicles."

Three different Thunderbolt models are available. The residential R24 model has a list price of $250 plus S&H; the commercial R30 lists for $350 plus S&H. The R15 is a commercial model as well but only comes as a plow. Call for pricing. All attachments are sold separately.

Brooks builds the Thunderbolt models in his shop and sells direct. Type in "Brooks Thunderbolt" to learn more on Facebook.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Baja Shop Racing Ltd., 8114 Green Rd., Hubbardsville, N.Y. 13355 (ph 315 691-6415; bajashopracing@yahoo.com; www.brooksthunderbolt.com).

The 2-wheeled Thunderbolt can be used with log tongs to haul more logs, or with a wheeled platform to haul small bales.

Plow blade works great to push feed to cows in free stalls. Photo at right shows how 4 adjustable metal pillars can be used to hold a spray tank.