Old IH Tractor Fitted With "Ring Gear" Steering Wheel

Anderson welded the ring gear to the tractor's original steering wheel spokes, keeping the steering knob.

Catherine Anderson, Blaine, Wash., was looking for something to replace the steering wheel on her 1959 IH 140 tractor. The one she found doesn't have a special spoke pattern, or custom spoke covers, or even custom painted grips. But it was practical and cheap, because she used an old starter ring gear she found in her shop.

Anderson welded the 15-in. dia. ring gear to the tractor's original steering wheel spokes, keeping the steering knob. She cut the original steering wheel off at the spokes, and then welded the ring gear onto the spokes in its place.

"The outer metal rim that supported the original rubber steering wheel had rusted out, so the first thing I did was buy a new steering wheel as a complete replacement," says Anderson. "However, after adjusting the tractor seat forward to a comfortable position I realized my knees were hitting the steering wheel, which made it uncomfortable to operate. I returned it and started looking around for something I could use to make a smaller wheel."

The ring gear's teeth may appear to be uncomfortably sharp to hold onto, but Anderson says gripping the wheel isn't too hard on her hands. Anyway, most of the time she uses the steering knob to steer. "I plan to coat all the teeth with a thick layer of clear epoxy that will fill in the gaps between the teeth to make the ring gear wheel feel smoother. Yet the teeth profile will still show through clearly," says Anderson.

The ring gear replaced the steering wheel on her 1959 IH 140 tractor.

"The ring gear is made from hardened steel and caused a lot of splatter while I was welding it onto the spokes. I had to be careful," says Anderson.

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Quick-Pin comes with a top sleeve held by a locking pin, and a shaft with a hole near the top. Removing the locking pin leaves just the shaft in the hitch, and as the tractor operator releases pressure on the shaft, it falls through.

"Quick Release" Hitch Pin

Here's a drawbar hitch pin that's different than any hitch pin we've ever seen. It solves the problem of trying to unhook a hitch pin when the pressure on it makes it hard to pull out.

Invented by Blake Chance, Mayetta, Kansas, the Quick-Pin Hitch Pin consists of 2 parts – a top sleeve held by a locking pin, and a shaft with a hole through it near the top. The top sleeve comes apart by removing the locking pin, leaving just the shaft in the hitch. Then the operator gets back on the tractor to release the pressure on the shaft, and it falls through the hitch.

"It makes it easy to unhook from any implement, saving time and adding to safety," says Chance. "It's especially handy whenever the hitch pin is pinched and can't be pulled out because of the pressure on it. But it also works great just for easier one-man unhooking in general."

He says the idea for the Quick-Pin came one night after a bearing went out on his baler. "It made me worry about how I would ever get my tractor unhooked from the baler fast enough, if a fire were to happen. I designed a prototype on a paper plate at a family party, and had my cousin make my first prototype in the spring of 2019."

Chance is a senior at Kansas State University, majoring in Agribusiness, with a minor in Entrepreneurship. "I took my first Entrepreneurship class in 2019 and wrote up a Quick-Pin business plan and entered it in a KSU Launch Competition. I took third place and used the prize money to get a patent pending on the Quick-Pin."

The Quick-Pin is available in 3 different sizes with 3/4, 7/8, and 1 1/8-in. diameters. They sell for $28.99, $29.99, and $31.99 respectively plus S&H. Chance says he's also developing a Quick-Pin for tractors and implements equipped with hammer straps.

"Quick-Pins cost more than standard hitch pins," says Chance, "but once people can see the benefit I think they'll realize the value."

You can watch videos of the Quick Pin in use on his website.

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"Log Dog" Simplifies Wood Cutting

"I was tired of cutting wood on the ground and having the chain hit dirt or rocks, so I built a log picker for the front of my pallet fork. Now my loader forks can hold a log about waist high and I can just walk along and cut off pieces from each end without having to stoop over," says Pennsylvania handyman Bob Stevenson.

Stevenson built his "Log Dog" out of 3-in. channel iron, but he says, "One of these could easily be made from square stock or angle iron, whatever's available in the junk pile."

"Basically it's a manual eccentric arm that holds a de-limbed log in place so it doesn't tilt or turn, and it sure makes cutting a whole lot easier," Stevenson says. "I usually grab a log or limb with the forks, lock the Log Dog in place, then drive over to the wood pile and cut away. The last cut is in the middle, between the forks, and both pieces fall on the pile."

Stevenson's device mounts slightly further out than the regular forks, attaching to J hooks, which are free-swinging. The J hooks mount onto the bucket with a steel rod supporting them. His Log Dog bolts in place so the attachment can't slide off.

"I've used the Log Dog for 3 years without any problems, holding pieces from 4 in. to about 18 in. dia. and up to 30 ft. long," Stevenson says. "Cutting this way is at least twice as fast and much safer than cutting on the ground."

Stevenson's wood cutting setup also includes a homemade splitter mounted on back of the tractor with a carry-all box for his tools, log roller, wedges, chain saw and spare parts.

Log picker attaches to loader forks and holds log about waist high, making it easy to cut off pieces.

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