



Lucky's mini trucks are fully inspected and imported from Japan for farm and recreational use and offer more than an but at a cost that's much less than a truck.

## Lucky's Mini Trucks Make Work Fun

Looking for a rugged 4-WD vehicle but don't want to pay a premium for a new ATV? Consider a mini truck.

Mini trucks are imported to North America from Japan and are being snapped up by farmers, ranchers, hunters and anyone else who has work to get done but wants to have a little fun along the way.

Most mini trucks weigh around 1,500 lbs., much smaller than a pickup. They fall under the category of sub-1000cc engines and are generally available in 4-WD or RWD. Most mini trucks have a bed size around 5 by 7 ft. with sides that fold down for easy loading and unloading. The result is a fuel-efficient vehicle well-suited to farm work and other off-road tasks. Unlike most ATVs, they have the benefit of a closed cab with heat.

U.S. regulations for mini trucks vary by state. They aren't legal on interstate highways because most use non-EPA engines that can't pass emissions tests.

(Mini trucks over 21 years old are exempt from these standards.) On-road use is allowed in 18 states, although usually with speed restrictions.

Lucky's Mini Trucks in Wisconsin sells used mini trucks, hand-picking every truck and then putting them through a thorough inspection process before they even leave Japan. Upon arrival stateside, the trucks go through a secondary inspection and service for fluids to ensure they are ready for resale. Most have a 1,500 lb. payload, but certain models can go up to one ton.

The company says they're easy to work on. "If you can turn a wrench, you can work on a minitruck."

Prices vary but most cost less than \$10K. Delivery is available for an additional cost.

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Shane Barber developed a mobile watering system made from refurbished fuel tanks that he named the Storage Drinker.

## Mobile Water Tanks Built To Last

Barber Industries founder Shane Barber is a third-generation cattle rancher near Hermosa, S. Dak. Ten years ago, Barber and his father set out to create an easier way to get water to their cattle.

"We had good water but could only get 2 to 3 gallons a minute, and that supply was intermittent," says Barber. "I needed to solve the problem of watering large herds of cattle with low incoming water flow rates."

The goal was to create a high-capacity waterer that was portable, easy to clean, and designed to keep cattle from climbing into it. Relying on his engineering background, he developed a heavy-duty mobile waterer made from refurbished fuel tanks. He calls it the Storage Drinker (SD).

"Mobile tanks can move with the herd. Intensive grazing practices, droughts, acquisition of new land with different water systems, ranching on rented ground, and putting livestock in temporary grazing areas all require flexibility with water infrastructure," says Barber.

Another advantage is that the SD can be used by calves and adult cows alike. "Many pipeline and tank watering systems do not provide adequate access for calves," Barber

says.

When Barber started out, he sold 5 to 10 tanks per year. Each was custom-built with large troughs and averaged around 6,000 gal. capacity. Now, after almost a decade of development, Barber landed on the tanks' current design and has ramped up sales to well over 100 tanks a year.

Standard sizes include 1,400 and 2,300 gal. Every system comes plumbed and ready to use. A 1,000-gal. tank will be released in late 2021, suitable for herd sizes of around 50 mothers. Each is easy to move with a skid steer, tractor, or pickup mounted bale bed.

Barber believes his tanks make work easier for ranchers in the long run. "Cattlemen spend a lot of time fixing substandard water systems. The SD water storage tanks just work; they don't create more work. My customers keep coming back because they don't want to spend their time on other types of systems that are a little less expensive but create more work in the long run."

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Guebert uses a 1 3/4-hp. grinder to make food for his dogs and cats.

## He Grinds Up Chickens To Feed His Dogs

If you want to grind chicken, bones and all, you need horsepower, says Mike Guebert of Terra Farma in Corbett, Ore., who uses the commercial grade, 1 3/4-hp. Carnivore meat grinder from Cabela's. The owner of a direct-to-market farm, Guebert owns guardian dogs that protect his livestock. Feeding them raw, ground meat helps keep them healthy.

"We got concerned about commercial dog food so we started making homemade food over 15 years ago," Guebert says, noting he uses old laying hens and imperfect poultry (including ducks, turkeys and guineas) for the dog food.

He's tried smaller grinders but none were up to the task like the Carnivore that he purchased four years ago. The \$800 price was reasonable for the quality of the grinder, and the reverse switch is useful when it plugs up.

Guebert notes the warranty says the grinder won't handle bones, but he's had no problems, and that it even grinds whole turkey drumsticks.

First, he cuts the gutted and plucked chickens apart as you normally would, using

quality shears made by Shun.

"Make sure the meat is partially frozen to keep the machine colder," as you feed the pieces through, Guebert says. "We do include heads but do limit the number of feet that go into each batch because the dogs turn their noses up if there's too many."

He also throws in organs such as hearts and livers. Going through the coarse grinding plate, the final ground pieces are about 1/4-in. in size.

The meat goes into gallon freezer bags and is frozen until needed; Guebert makes about four batches a year. He also makes food for his cats by grinding the meat again through a finer grinding plate and adding vitamins.

Over the years he has replaced grinding blades but has had no issues with the grinder. "Overall, it is a good grinder and should last a long time. We are considering getting a foot pedal for it," Guebert says.

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Electric Sheep Robotics makes add-on hardware that can automate a standard mower.

## They Can Turn Any Mower Into A Robot

Commercial landscape companies will soon have robotic mowers to use without needing to buy new mowers. Electric Sheep Robotics says its hardware clamps onto any new or existing ride-on mower. Once in place, the hardware and software offer practically unlimited options for mowing patterns without an operator on board.

"After the robotic attachment is mounted, a given area is mowed normally," explains Gunjit Singh, company co-founder. "The pattern is recorded, and when replayed, the mower will repeat the pattern. Multiple patterns can be recorded and are then available for replay. Alternatively, if there are few obstacles in the area, two strips mowed around the border allow the mower to automatically fill in the remaining area in a variety of patterns."

The new robotic mower uses LIDAR, cameras, GPS and ultrasonic sensors for ultra-precise maneuvering across diverse terrain. The software retains past patterns and

is automatically upgraded.

"With the laser radar, it can stop within an inch of an obstacle and then mow around it," says Singh.

Electric Sheep Robotics was founded in late 2019 and only recently announced itself. It has quickly captured interest from investors and prospective users.

Company co-founder Nag Murty is confident the labor shortage in the landscape market will drive demand. "If we were to stop acquiring customers today and just expand among the ones who are signed on with us, we would have hundreds of millions in annual revenue in a few years."

Robotic mowers are just the start. The company also plans to adapt the technology to snow removal, sweeping and more.

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