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Litwiller fixed the broken axle on his riding mower and replaced it with a motorcycle front end.

## Made-It-Myself “Mower Bike”

Austin Litwiller of Hopedale, Ill., came up with a creative solution to a broken lawnmower. He was mowing the lot around his shop when he ran into a rut and took out the front axle.

“I wasn’t as careful as I needed to be,” Litwiller says. “I was being a little too rough and broke the cast-iron front axle.”

Other than the broken front axle, the mower still ran well so Litwiller faced the decision to weld the axle back together and reinforce it or try to find a new axle.

“That’s when I began tossing around the idea of putting one wheel on the front of the mower,” Litwiller says. “I wasn’t sure if I would be able to avoid flipping over while mowing our ditches.

“I had an old motorcycle without an engine sitting in the shed,” he says. “I can’t even remember what kind of bike it was. We cut the front part of the motorcycle off the frame to add it to the mower.”

He and a friend took the front wheel apparatus up through the handlebars and the gas tank off the motorcycle. Once they took off the mower’s hood, he bolted some angle iron to the machine’s frame. Then, he welded the motorcycle parts to the angle iron.

Putting it together that way made it easy to change back to a more traditional mower. He could simply unbolt the angle iron, take the motorcycle parts off, and put it back together.

“We wired the headlight up to the wiring harness, and it was good to go. I also took the

fenders off the back and added homemade ones instead.

“I did have to modify the deck adjuster on the left,” Litwiller says. “I moved the forward-reverse pedal by extending the lever so I could have my foot pegs farther ahead as a motorcycle would.”

The rear wheels are the same ones that came with the mower, but Litwiller spiffed them up to add to the motorcycle theme. He sanded the wheels down and added chrome paint to complete the picture.

While he didn’t use the fuel tank from the motorcycle to power the mower, he says it wouldn’t be too hard to hook the cycle’s fuel tank to the mower. He says it wouldn’t be a bad idea because the bigger tank would allow him to mow for longer periods.

Litwiller says the project took about three days. While it might take a little bit longer to mow than a traditional mower, he says it’s worth it just because of the attention it gets.

“I haven’t been asked to make one for someone else yet, but plenty of people want to know where they could get one,” he says with a laugh. “It’s sort of funny that people don’t realize it’s homemade.

“It still works well as a lawnmower,” he says. “The turning is a little different because that requires a few more points than it previously did because of the handlebars.”

He’s not producing any for sale but says he loves to show it off to people who drive by or stop in.

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“In less than 6 mos., you should be able to gauge effectiveness by the lack of piglets,” says Loper Jr.

## Birth Control For Wild Hogs Slows Herd Growth

Wild hog feeders may accomplish what hunting and trapping can’t. Animal nutritionists Dan Loper Sr. and Dan Loper Jr. have developed HogStop, an all-natural bait that reduces fertility in males. It also impacts the ability of eggs to implant on the uterine wall of females.

“We started hearing about the explosion in wild hog numbers, with 2.6 million in Texas alone,” says Loper Jr. “My dad knew of feed additives that affected cattle fertility and thought they might work on hogs.”

Dan Loper Sr. invented the concept of total mixed rations in the 1970’s. The Ph.D. put his 50+ years in animal nutrition to work. He and his son put together a formulation and tested it out on 400-lb. boars. They had a control group and three test groups. The test groups were fed the special feed for 30, 15 and 5 days, respectively.

“We saw no difference in the three groups,” says Loper Jr. “The boars in all three groups showed a 60 percent reduction in the morphology of sperm. They were effectively rendered infertile for about eight weeks.”

The Lopers were excited about the results but quickly discovered more work

was needed. “It took three years to get a formulation wild hogs would eat,” says Loper Jr. “We were told it couldn’t be done, but we did it.”

The next step was to design a hog feeder that would limit feed availability to wild hogs. “Dan Loper Jr. asked us if we could build a feeder that hogs would use, but make it extremely difficult for other species,” says Robert Barclay, Barclay Welding. “We built two or three before coming up with our final, which then had to be approved by the EPA.”

Barclay Feeders are available from the company. The current price is \$650 each or \$575 each for five or more.

HogStop contraceptive bait feed is available from Hy-Pro Feeds dealers and Nelson Wholesale (ph 800-592-1428; [www.nelsonwholesale.com](http://www.nelsonwholesale.com)). While prices may vary by dealership, Loper Jr. reports HogStop bait runs around \$20 for a 50-lb. bag.

“We’ve had good feedback that the wild hogs eat it and the feeders work,” he says. “They tend to come back about once a month, so if the feed is there, they will stay infertile.”

The Lopers recommend feed levels be checked every few days and replenished as

needed. Feeders should be placed in an area where wild hogs travel.

“We advise against hunting near the feeders,” says Loper Jr. “Wild hogs are very intelligent and will teach other hogs to stay away if death is associated with a feeder.”

Loper acknowledges that the feeding regimen requires an investment by the landowner and patience. Unlike trapping or hunting, elimination is not immediate. However, feeding HogStop will stop herd growth.

“In less than 6 mos., you should be able to gauge effectiveness by the lack of piglets,” says Loper Jr.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, HogStop, 2441 NW Loop, Stephenville, Texas 76401 or Loper Systems, P.O. Box 5100, Clovis, New Mexico 88102 (ph 866-850-4191; [info@hogstop.com](mailto:info@hogstop.com); [www.hogstop.com](http://www.hogstop.com)). For feeders, contact: Barclay Welding, P.O. Box 244, Claude, Texas 79019 (ph 806-279-0458; [barclayweldingh58@gmail.com](mailto:barclayweldingh58@gmail.com)).



Feeder was designed to limit feed to wild hogs and not other animals.