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Made-It-Myself Pasture Vacuum

Jeff Lang, Newport News, Va., designed and built a pasture vacuum from scrap material that makes it easier to keep livestock pastures and stalls free of manure.

He was inspired to take on the project when visiting a friend's farm where he saw a manufactured version of a pasture vacuum that made it easy to keep up with the waste of 10 horses.

"It didn't seem hard to replicate," said Lang. "Essentially, I needed to build a large shop vac."

He worked intermittently on the project for about two weeks and estimates he used about \$80 worth of supplies. Costs would have been significantly higher, but he sourced most of the material for free.

The vacuum's frame and Honda engine came from an old pressure washer, to which he added wheels and the necessary connection points. The outer frame consists of old street signs he picked up from a scrap yard. He sealed the corners with silicone. An

unexpected bonus of the aluminum signs is that their anti-rust properties ensure that the vacuum is protected against the acid in the manure it picks up.

Soon after building it, Lang added a screen to the inside to keep particles away from the fan. Likewise, the vacuum's second hose acts as an air discharge to keep air and debris from blowing out at eye level.

The vacuum is meant to be towed behind a pickup, riding mower, or any other powered engine. When you want to empty it, just back it up to where you want the pile and rake out the interior.

The vacuum hose swivels 360 degrees so he can more precisely control the suction action. Overall, it works best with dry manure.

"You can also use the whole device as a leaf blower," Lang says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jeff Lang, Newport News, Va. 23606 (ph 757-873-1662).

Adaptor Lets Grain Drills Handle Both Coarse And Fine Seed

Farmers no longer need to choose between coarse and fine grass seeder boxes on their Case IH grain drills. An adaptor kit is available to help them mix the two and save time while using a Case IH seed drill.

Earl Wagler and Delmar Gerber of Ontario, Canada, figured out how to build a grass seeder update kit to allow farmers to plant forage grass mixtures with up to 30 percent coarse grasses in the Fine Seeder Box.

"A lot of farmers knock down seeded grasses for hay or haylage," Wagler says. "They use it as a forage and mix in ingredients like corn silage to make a feed ration."

"Unfortunately, alfalfa isn't as high in fiber as the grasses are," he says. "Research was showing that too much alfalfa was causing twisted stomachs in livestock."

He says more research showed that if producers added more grasses into hay and haylage forage mixes, it increased the fiber level.

"Some farmers were putting straw into their mixes for more fiber," he says. "But straw isn't very digestible. So, we thought why not put more grasses into the mix because it boosts fiber and it's more digestible."

The update kit allows livestock producers to plant a forage and grass mix. Installing the kit also eliminates bridging and plugging at the downspout cotter pin.

It's a seven-step process to install the kits that involves removing the grass seeder rubber tube as well as the downspout cotter pin.

The kit has not been tested for Bromegrass use.

When ordering a kit, Wagler says they need to know whether you need a steel or a plastic downspout kit.



Update kit allows livestock producers to plant a forage and grass mix.

The kits are designed for front-mounted fine grass seeder boxes. They work on Case IH model numbers 510, 5100, 5200, 5300, 5400, 5500, 6200, and 6300.

The individual kit price is \$4.70 (Can.) each (before shipping). The kits work with 16, 18, and 21-run seed drills. Make sure to specify which type of kit you need and the type of seed drill you operate.

Shipping usually adds approximately \$20 to the total as it's sent through the postal service.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Earl Wagler, P.O. Box 126, Millbank, Ontario, Canada N0K 1L0 (ph 519-595-4440); or Delmar Gerber, 3230 Chalmers Forrest Road, RR #1, Linwood, Ontario, Canada N0B 2A0 (ph 519-698-2849).

"Vapor Honing" Better Than Sandblasting

Vapor honing is a refinishing method used to clean dirty metal objects. The deep-cleaning process can restore metal objects to their original condition, no matter how many years have gone by.

"For restoration back to the original finish, vapor honing is the way to go," says Toua Yang, marketing director for Vapor Honing Technologies. "The process works by blasting the object with a mixture of air, water, detergents, and semi-rough cleaning media."

While it's effective for removing both oxidation and corrosion, it's still a non-abrasive form of cleaning and poses no risk to the item getting cleaned, unlike sandblasting.

"It's not a temporary fix," Yang says. "The vapor honing process works to seal the microscopic openings in aluminum, keeping corrosion and oxidation to a minimum for years to come."

Terence Smith, a sales representative for Vapor Honing Technologies, says the process works great for making old tractors look new. He has a '52 Farmall he needs to restore.

"The paint's chipping off, and there's a little bit of rust on it," he says. "This process will remove any rust and leftover paint, and I'll be ready to prep for a new coat of paint."

It's also the perfect system for restoring parts out of an old engine that might need rebuilding.

"Over time, engines get a lot of carbon buildup," he says. "This is one of the best ways to get an engine running in tip-top condition. The process is quick, gentle, and you won't spend a lot of money on chemicals."

Almost any surface can get saved by wet blasting. "We're well-known in the motorcycle and automotive world, as well as the aerospace and gun industries because we can clean so many different surfaces."

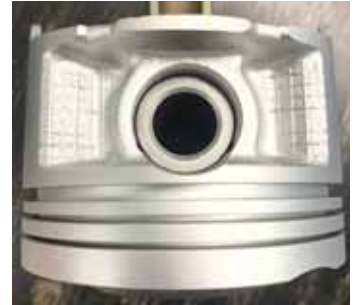
The process starts with a wet blasting cabinet, and there are many types available depending on what types of objects need cleaning and the workloads.

The process is simple. Place the object inside the cabinet and let the process begin. The blast gun shoots out water, compressed air, and media. While it does that, the various media scrub away the surface of whatever is getting cleaned.

"If you're worried about potentially damaging the item, the media stand no chance of damaging it because of the water," Smith



Before above, after below.



says. "Because of the water, the media have very little impact on the surface, which keeps friction to a bare minimum."

While the process typically takes no more than a few hours, the length depends on the item getting cleaned and its overall condition before the cleaning began.

Farmers can clean items with kits and cabinets they can order for their farm, or the company website has places that offer vapor cleaning services in different states. The locations are available on the website.

"The cleaning cabinets are fully tested before we ship them out," Yang says. "Once they receive it, all they have to do is connect a couple of hoses, add water, plug the power cord in, and the cabinet is ready to go."

The cleaning cabinets are available at different price points, depending on how much needs cleaning. For example, the "Weekend Warrior" cabinet ranges from \$1,999 to \$2,864.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terence Smith, Vapor Honing Technology, 313A Motz Ave., Lincolnton, N.C. 28092 (ph 828-202-5563; info@vaporhoningtechnologies.com; www.vaporhoningtechnologies.com).



Mound pusher built from a 5-in. I-beam can reach under fences.

"Mound Pusher" Wipes Out Ants

"Ants build mounds directly under fence lines where they know they're less likely to be disturbed. If the mounds build up high enough, so they're over the bottom wire, the wire will rust in the moist dirt and eventually break," says Bill Boyce, Texarkana, Ark.

So, he decided to build what he calls a "weapon of war" to reach under fences to destroy big ant piles. "I call it a 'mound pusher' and when lowered to the ground, it will shove the mound away from the fence.

I built it with a 5-in. I-beam and mounted it to a quick-attach plate that can be used on a front-end loader or skid steer."

Chain hooks and lifting eyes welded to the front cross member allow it to be used as a lift boom, too.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill Boyce, 13194 Hwy 296, Texarkana, Ark. 71854 (ph 870-645-2254; bboyce@swat.coop).