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Barge Wagon Converted To Mobile Chicken Coop

Ian Noyes, a farmer from western Michigan, transformed an old barge wagon into a mobile chicken coop.

"I'd been looking for something to house my chickens, but I didn't want to put up a brand-new building," Noyes said. His first idea was to purchase a flatbed hay wagon and build side walls. But, while scouring for used wagons online, he came across a listing for a barge wagon.

"The barge wagon design immediately appealed to me," says Noyes. "It already had 3-ft. walls and a tailgate that opens, plus a smaller door that could be used as an entry point."

Noyes purchased the barge wagon from about 30 miles away, paying \$750 for it. He then mounted three large cattle panels across the top in an arch for the roof, ensuring they overlapped to keep potential predators out of the interior. "I recommend using cattle panels instead of hog panels, as they are taller, so you need fewer for the whole wagon," Noyes explains. He used large washers to secure the panels and added scrap lengths of woven field fencing over the two open ends for extra animal protection. Scrap wire ties keep these panels in place.

Noyes made some aesthetic decisions along the way, including using short stainless-steel screws for attaching the panels so they

wouldn't break through the sides of the wagon. "I loved the paint job on this antique wagon, so I didn't want to mess with it," he laughs.

Over the cattle panel roof, Noyes fashioned a 12 by 16-ft. heavy-duty tarp he purchased online. He attached the ends to 2 by 4's to make it easy to roll up and adhere to the wagon's side.

Overall costs for the mobile chicken coop came to about \$900: \$750 for the wagon, \$100 for the cattle panels, and \$50 for the hardware and tarp. It took Noyes about 6 hrs. to put together and currently houses 25 meat birds, although he thinks it could easily handle 50 to 75.

Each morning, Noyes manually opens the small door to let the birds roam the pasture space and then locks them in again at night. A small Deere B tractor can haul the wagon to new pasture when the birds need a refresh, although it's light enough to push by hand when necessary. The birds climb into the wagon over the course of the day to get food and water, but they especially love hanging out under it to stay cool during the heat of the day.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ian Noyes, 4142 104th Ave., Allegan, Mich. 49010 (ph 269-430-3418; ianchnoyes@gmail.com).

"Otter Claw" Clears Out Beaver Dams

The Otter Tail County highway maintenance department in Minnesota routinely spends a large amount of time and energy clearing beaver dams blocking culverts.

"We're always ripping into them with shovels and rakes," says Dennis Bosek. "It's dirty, hard work and we needed a way to get those jobs done easier and quicker, so we came up with the Otter Claw."

Together, the team of Brody Bakken and Bosek built most of their invention in the county's Fergus Falls shop.

The 15-ft. long, 4 by 6-in. A500 metal tubing arm mounts to a normal skid steer plate with hydraulic hook-ups.

A large grapple made from A36 steel is run by hydraulics and hangs at the end of the arm on a large pin. A knuckle swivel allows it to turn 360 degrees and swing left, right, forward and back to access culverts from any direction.

"You can open and close it, pull it back or push it in," Bosek says. "As long as you can get close enough, you can clean out any congested area in just a few minutes."

He says if he were to build another Otter Claw, he wouldn't change anything other than



Claw was developed by county highway department workers to clear dams.

adding a telescopic function to the arm.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dennis Bosek, Otter Tail County Highway Department, 520 Fir Ave. W., Fergus Falls, Minn. 56537 (ph 218-998-8000; www.ottertailcountymn.us).



Quick-mount rake can sift, smooth, move and pulverize dirt.

Landscape Rake Has No Moving Parts

The Rake-N-Ator from B-Built Mfg. can turn a skid steer loader into a landscaping and land-leveling machine.

It's a rake that weighs 670 lbs., is 78 in. wide, and is an alternative to more expensive power rake models. Unlike other rakes on the market, there are no moving parts that could break down.

The rake features five grading bars that have a total of 76 2-in. teeth attached. The 2-in. long tooth design easily loosens up and flattens out any landscaping.

The universal quick-mount plate fits any skid loader, including Gehl, New Holland, Deere, Bobcat, and Kubota. The rake's teeth are easily replaced as they wear out over time.

It's perfect for preparing smooth and uniform seed beds for lawns. It can sift and pulverize large chunks of dirt.

The Rake-N-Ator also helps gather unwanted trash like roots, rocks, weeds, or a variety of other kinds of construction materials into a common area for easy disposal.

The rake is great at leveling and smoothing out pulling tracks or horse arenas.

The Rake-N-Ator retails for \$3,375 with shipping included to some areas in the U.S. and can be ordered off the company website.

The Rake-N-Ator has been so popular that the company has had a hard time keeping them in stock. Contact the company directly for current lead times.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Brandon Bungart, B-Built Mfg., 1550 Fairgrounds Road, Jefferson City, Mo., 65109 (ph 573-619-1973; brandon@bbuiltmfg.com; www.bbuiltmfg.com).



Arctic Blast fans use ultra-fine water particles to absorb heat and transport it away, so they can change the temperature fast without leaving a wet feeling in the room.

These Fans Keep Barns Cool

Farmer Boy Ag Supply is a wholesale supplier of agriculture and livestock equipment, including Arctic Blast fans. These fans offer a cost-effective solution for industrial cooling in barns and dairy facilities.

The Arctic Blast fans work to create a high-speed cooling wave of air that travels across the floor, making it ideal for cooling people and animals in close confines. They use ultra-fine water particles to absorb heat and transport it away, so they can change the temperature fast without leaving a wet feeling in the room.

The profitability of most dairy farms goes down as summer temperatures rise. Installing a cooling system can prevent the heat from negatively affecting milk production. They work exceptionally well in confined spaces like a holding area or milking parlor where tightly packed animals can raise temperatures fast and stress the whole group.

Arctic Blast fans come in two sizes, the full-size 72 in. (\$2,295) or the 55-in. Cyclone (\$1,737). With both models, you get tight blade clearance for reduced air drag and noise, and Arctic Air's guaranteed life-long belts that can be removed or serviced without special tools.

Jacob Leach, owner of Wet Meadows Farm to Table, has found success with Arctic Air

fans. He manages a 100-cow dairy in Cottage Grove, Tenn.

"We purchased and installed four 72-in. Arctic Blast fans over our bedding packs about 14 to 16 ft. up," he shared. "Cows love them. We keep them running ten or eleven months of the year. We do turn them down in cooler weather and off when it's cold, but as the cows are in there year-round, I'd say they've been running all but 6 mos. since we hung them 4 or 5 years ago."

Leach values the flexibility Arctic Blast products offer over traditional options. "They were a great fit for us, especially in a hoop barn where you can't mount a conventional fan off of rafters. We hung our Arctic Blast fans using cables to suspend them."

Despite his praise, Leach does have one reservation. "As for pros, these fans are reliable, offer speed control, and move a lot of air. The biggest con is we only wish we didn't have to manually restart them after a power outage. That's not a big thing anymore, but you can imagine after that first time when \$11k worth of fans were off and didn't come back on by themselves!"

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Farmer Boy (ph 800-845-3374; www.farmerboyag.com).