

Cement Mixer Transformed Into a Portable Pizza Oven

Randy Lancour of central Michigan wanted an outdoor pizza oven, but most models he considered cost between \$3,000 and \$4,000. "I looked around for something around the same shape as those designs and settled on a cement mixer," says Lancour. "Lots of people have them lying around, so I started asking. My neighbor had an old one that he gave to me."

Modifying the mixer proved a simple process. "I added cement to the bottom to create a flat surface, then placed firebricks inside and laid cement on top of those," says Lancour. "Those bricks really help with retaining heat." He then added a chimney, placed the entire oven on wheels, and reached out to a local metal shop to add a hinged door to the front. Lancour put \$50 into the door and \$15 into the firebricks—everything else he had on hand or got for free.

So far, Lancour's used the oven for plenty of pizza, sausage, and steak. He's even used it as a smoker. Lancour heats the interior with small pieces of cherry, cedar, or oak, depending on the temperature he's after. "I can get the oven to 900 F in 20 min. That'll cook a pizza in 3 min."

It's a project he's eager to replicate, though with a few changes for the next version. "I'm looking for another mixer, preferably one with less concrete inside, so it's not as heavy. I can move this one around with my pickup, but I'd like one I can move with a side-by-



Lancour has used the oven for plenty of pizza, sausage, and steak. He's even used it as a smoker. Depending on the temperature he wants, he heats the interior with small pieces of cherry, cedar, or oak.

side. And smaller tends to be better for these ovens; they heat up more quickly."

For those who want to make their own pizza oven, Lancour stresses the importance of including firebricks. "You really need those bricks for retaining heat. Otherwise, you'll have to keep the fire too hot, and things are more likely to burn."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Randy Lancour (ph 906-398-9966).

Short tubs surrounded by electric wire and held with step-in posts help keep cows from tipping over calves' water sources.



Calf Creep Water Tubs

By Heather Smith Thomas

This spring, we had to find a way to supply water to our baby calves. The pastures where we have our cow-calf pairs in the spring and early summer are fenced away from the creek to avoid having a young calf swept away by high water. When we first moved onto this ranch in 1967, we lost a couple of calves when cattle tried to cross the raging water in the creek. My husband and I fenced off the creek in those pastures to avoid having more calves drown. The cattle drink from water troughs instead.

In the pasture with cow-calf pairs, they generally have access to two troughs, filled twice daily with a hose. One of those troughs is short enough that the calves can reach the water to get a drink, but over the years, that trough developed some rusted-through holes in the bottom. We fixed it once by using mesh over the worst holes and spraying a sealant over the bottom. That lasted about 10 years, but then the trough started developing holes again, which I could initially patch with mud.

This spring, the holes were getting big again, and we planned to clean up the bottom of the trough and respray the sealant over the bottom, which would be less expensive than buying a new trough. The problem was cold weather; we needed some warm days for the

sealant to set up.

While waiting for warm enough weather to patch the trough, we made a temporary "calf watering creep" next to the fence, near the big water trough for the cows. Since one of our horse pens is next to that field, there was already electric wire along the top of the fence; we have electric fence along the top rail of all our horse pens to keep them from chewing the fences.

So, setting some short tubs along the fence was a simple solution. They can be easily filled with water when I'm watering the cows. I used an electric wire and step-in posts to keep the cows away from the tubs. Otherwise, the cows like to drink from the tubs, rub on them, and tip them over.

This has been working nicely. The calves are curious and come to check out the tubs, sample the water, and soon learn to drink from them. The cows respect the hot wire and can't get close enough to the tubs to mess them up. The wire is high enough that the calves can easily walk under while the cows stay out of that area. Now, the calves have plenty of water until we fix the old leaky trough.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Heather Smith Thomas, Salmon, Idaho.



Heron used lifting cylinders he had, plus other scrap, to make his snow bucket.

Old Toolbox Converted To Snow Loader

When Michael Heron needed to move snow from his roadways last winter, he devised an idea to use his small Deere 300 tractor.

"The tractor already had two hydraulic circuits I could tap into," Heron says. "I had two cylinders lying around, so I thought I could use one to lift the bucket and the other to curl it."

Heron used sections of 2 by 2-in. steel tubing on either side of the frame and a brace across the hood where he attached the lifting cylinder. He secured the other end to the arms and the top pivot. He made the lifting arms 1 1/2-in. by 1 1/2-in., and he added a thicker brace where he welded the two sections together. Another brace between the arms supported the curling cylinder that he also attached to the bucket. The brackets were built from scratch.

Heron made the bucket from an old toolbox, which he cut diagonally in half.

"My design limits were that it shouldn't cost very much because, at that time of

year, I didn't have very much," he laughs. "I scrounged around, found all the spare metal I needed, and cut things up to make everything fit."

If he could start over, he would've made the bucket a bit bigger, as snow isn't overly heavy, and the bucket path would be wider than his front wheels.

"The trickiest part was getting the brackets in the right place so the loader would lift to 6 ft. high and dump the bucket completely as snow likes to stick," he says.

Heron estimates that if he purchased all the materials, the build cost would be around \$500, but he already had the cylinders and used hydraulic hoses from other pieces of his equipment. He plans to replace the bucket with a larger one next winter.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Michael Heron, RR1, Site 1, Box 1, Main Station, Lloydminster, Sask., Canada S9V 0X6 (ph 306-307-8632; m.heron@sasktel.net).

He Made A Helpful Crank Lift Chair

At 93 and married for 73 years, Jack and Ruth Scoggin have always supported each other. In recent years, that has meant Jack picking Ruth up when she falls. But when that became physically difficult for him, Jack did what he always does when there's a problem to solve. He headed to his scrap pile and workshop with his welder and other tools. The result is a chair with a crank that raises a seat from the ground to about 24 in.

He got the idea about a year ago when Ruth fell in the garden. Jack got the tractor with the bucket and helped her slide into it so he could lift her and take her to the porch to step off.

But you can't take a tractor inside the house, Jack notes, so he made the chair using round tubing—one smaller than the other to slide up and down inside. He welded on scrap flat metal for a seat and used a crank from a 1964 Deere combine with a self-locking mechanism to hold the seat. The crank winds up webbing connected to both sides of the seat to raise it evenly. Extra metal feet on the front keep the chair stable so that a person can slide onto the seat before someone else cranks them up.

"The four pipes need to be braced at the top and bottom, and I used flat metal on the bottom so the seat could go as low as possible. I used small rods through the pipe at the top to fasten the lift straps," Jack explains.



Scoggin built his wife a seat that raises from the ground up 2 ft. out of scrap material and a crank from an old combine.

He adds that it's also important to put handles out front to help the person get out of the seat and to have some way to hold the seat in the top position if the crank isn't self-locking.

They've used it often and can take it to other places, such as their daughter's home. It's been a practical innovation that helps the couple keep their independence, just as many of Jack's other creations have helped their hog-farrowing operation in the past.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jack Scoggin, Kansas (dwolf333@yahoo.com).