



Ostry's self-propelled log splitter allows him to cut firewood with little manual labor.

Made-It-Myself Skid Steer-Mounted Log Splitter

Jim Ostry of Bruno, Neb., improved his firewood production efficiency with a self-propelled log splitter. "I called it that because it's mounted to a skid steer. Splitting is done from the seat. I made mine, but there are companies now making them."

Ostry's creative process went through multiple variations. "I could write a whole life story on how this log splitter came about," he says. "In short, as a person gets older, sometimes you have to change things to make them work better for you."

First, he made a hydraulic lift to move blocks of wood. "But then I got even older, so I made a self-propelled log splitter. It split the wood onto the pile or dump trailer, then I stacked the small pieces or loaded my outside boiler unit." The splitter became an evolving project. "Some of my additions included decking. This ensured wood that needed more splitting wouldn't fall to the ground. I also added a hydraulic lift deck to raise blocks of wood onto it," Ostry still owns this splitter. It's been a few years since he put it to use, but it still has its place, and he's sure it'll come in handy again.

He got the idea to build a log splitter on a skid steer at an auction selling a small, 3-pointed mounted, 4-in. beam splitter with a blown-out hydraulic cylinder. "I purchased it for \$125, thinking I'd mount it upside-down on the skid steer and use it to break

down the bigger blocks of wood so they'd be easier to handle with my regular splitter." Unfortunately, the beam turned out to be a little weak for the hydraulic power of the skid steer, causing it to twist and bend into the shape of a banana. Ostry added steel to the top of the beam to give it more of a backbone. "This cured the problem until I decided it needed more splitting wedge, so I doubled the length and added cross wedges to turn it into a four-way splitting wedge."

While this improvement worked well, it caused the beam to resume twisting. "So I added even more reinforcing, which took it from a 4 by 4-in. H-beam to a 4-in. wide and 10-in. tall beam with reinforcing inside that can no longer be seen. I also learned from this experience that if you have flex, it steals power."

Ostry is pleased with the result. "What I like about this style of log splitter is you can pinch a log crosswise, hold it in the air, and then cut it into blocks with a chainsaw. It makes getting a trailer load of wood rather easy. I just pinch a block in the wedge, raise it over the trailer, and finish the split by dropping the pieces into the trailer. No manual labor required."

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Handy Auger-Equipped Loader Buckets

When a local farmer building a new barn approached E Rissler Mfg. about a loader bucket built for feeding silage, grains, and forages, nothing suitable was available.

"The operation wasn't large enough to buy a big mixer wagon, but they didn't want to do the scoot around with just a skid steer feeding their cattle in bunks," says owner John Rissler. "We tossed the idea back and forth before deciding to build our own model."

They came up with a heavy-duty 3/16-in. thick bucket mounted offset to the right to better accommodate feeding into a bunk. A 12-in. auger flighting was installed inside, driven by a hydraulic motor and 3/8-in. gauge roller chain. The bucket featured a high carbon steel cutting edge and reinforced runners. A discharge hood covered the opening to retain material and keep the auger in place when not in use. The bucket was mounted with a universal skid steer attachment, but they can also accommodate other loader mounts if necessary.

"It works well for small farmers or acreage owners," Rissler says. "Most of our current customers who have one are feeding from 20 to 100 cattle."

The company has also developed a bucket for soil or gravel with added clearance and



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extra wear plates to control abrasion.

The buckets are built in New Enterprise and are currently being sold locally, but Rissler is looking to expand nationwide.

The 72 or 84-in. wide forage and silage buckets sell for approximately \$7,000, while the soil and gravel buckets retail for slightly more.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, E Rissler Mfg. LLC, 2794 Brumbaugh Rd., New Enterprise, Penn. 16664 (ph 814-766-2246; e.rissler@abcmailbox.net; www.mixtofeed.com).



Six-row Smart Cultivator uses its machine vision and artificial intelligence to cultivate and weed using mechanical blades. The software ensures accuracy to 99 percent.

Smart Cultivator Uses Old And New Technology

By Bruce Derksen, Contributing Editor

Stout Industrial Technology combines mechanical weeding with the most advanced technology in its Smart Cultivator.

Targeting the labor-intensive and inconsistent nature of traditional weeding methods, the 3-pt. hitch tractor-drawn cultivator offers a solution that Stout claims requires 96 percent less labor than conventional methods. Using Stout's "True Vision," which employs deep learning-based neural networks, the cultivator differentiates crops from weeds with precision seed line tracking. This advanced vision system adapts automatically to ambient lighting conditions, soil types, and plant maturity, ensuring effective operation across different agricultural environments.

The 6-row Smart Cultivator uses its machine vision and artificial intelligence to cultivate and weed using mechanical blades. The software ensures accuracy to 99 percent, capturing high-resolution images processed and analyzed through a convolutional neural network (CNN). Mechanical sweeps automatically open and close around the desirable plants at adjustable rates as the unit identifies the crop and the weeds.

The machine currently differentiates between 15 and 20 vegetable crops. One to 2

acres can be weeded per hour.

Manufacturing is completed in Salinas, Calif.

"What sets the Smart Cultivator apart is our integration of Stout True Vision, enabling true plant identification and precise seed line tracking for various crops," says a Stout Industrial spokesperson. "Additionally, the machine's software-defined nature ensures continuous improvement over time, maximizing its value and longevity. Supported commodities include a wide range of row crops, and the machine is designed to adapt to new crops through ongoing learning and development."

Pricing varies, but potential customers can expect the Smart Cultivator equipped with True Vision to offer a competitive return on investment compared to manual weeding crews.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact Stout Industrial Technology or their local New Holland dealership for more details.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Stout Industrial Technology, 90 Monterey Salinas Hwy., Salinas, Calif. 93908 (ph 831-455-1004; info@stout.ai; www.stout.ai).

Gas-Powered Post Driver

Skidril, a leading innovator in light construction tools, sells a self-contained gas-powered post driver.

The Ultra-Driver G20D is the most powerful gas-powered post driver in its class. It's powered by either a 2-stroke or 4-stroke Honda motor. The main body of both versions weighs less than 40 lbs. and can deliver up to 1,000 blows per minute, which drives in a T-post in about 20 seconds. It produces nearly 2 hp. with 50cc displacement. Internal vibration dampening reduces operator fatigue, and an idle feature with a clutch makes for easy post-leveling. It also drives up to 3 1/2-in. pipes, all while burning less than a quart of fuel in an hour.

Customer reviews indicate that the Skidril Ultra-Driver saved users lots of time and operated with a force that made it seem that it could drive T-posts into concrete. Many noted how solidly in the ground the Skidril drove in posts. They stated that it takes much more effort to pull them out again than to pull out posts they placed manually. However, some shared that it didn't hold up to wear and tear and that the hard plastic control handle shattered quickly, requiring total replacement. It can leak oil when not in use, similar to chainsaws. Not all T-post sizes will fit in the tube, and a manual post driver may be required.

Each Skidril is assembled in the United



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States. Pricing for the 2-cycle is \$1,044.75 and \$1,254 for the 4-cycle, with \$85 for shipping and handling.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Skidril, 235 Labrador Dr., Randleman, N.C. 27317 (ph 800-843-3745; info@skidril.com; www.skidril.com).