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Shop-Built Trailer Still Rolling After 25 Years

After building and selling six trailers, Norman Sieting built one that satisfied him. While he eventually sold it to a neighbor, he kept a close eye on it and used it as needed. Recently, he even helped with an upgrade. After 25 years and three deck replacements and repainting, Sieting reports the trailer is still going strong. It has traveled as far as Colorado and Tennessee without a problem. "I built my first one, and a friend begged me to let him buy it," says Sieting. "I built a new one, and when I started using it, I started building another. When I put a deck on the new one, the old one would go up for sale. Every trailer I built got better."

By the time he built his last trailer, an 8 by 16-footer, he had an innovative design. He started with a 40-ft. length of 4 by 6-in., 3/8-in. angle iron. After marking off 16 ft. at either end, he notched the corners and then

started heating them.

"Once it was hot enough, I could bend it by hand with a helper holding the other end of the angle iron," recalls Sieting. "Once I heated and bent the second 16-ft. length, I had a U-shape frame with 16-ft. sides and an 8-ft. center."

At the time, many trailer house tongues were available at scrap metal prices. Sieting bought some and used one as a trailer tongue. He cut others into 8-ft. lengths, each 10 in. wide. Sieting split them in half lengthwise and welded them in place as 5-in. wide frame cross members.

"I mounted the frame on 7,000-lb. tandem axles, also salvaged from a house trailer," says Sieting. "I cut out the original mobile home brakes and put in replaceable brakes."

At the rear end, he mounted an 8-ft. bumper made of Schedule 80 4-in. dia. pipe. Sieting

left 4 in. between it and the end of the deck so he could wrap chains around it to secure loads. The pipe also served as a mounting point for ramps.

"I cut a short length of the next larger size pipe in half lengthwise and welded each piece to the end of a car ramp," says Sieting. "I could set the ramps in place and slide them to the right position for loading a vehicle."

Sieting wanted a tilting bed. To make it, he set the trailer house tongue under the first third of the trailer bed and pinned it to the frame. This required exact measuring as he first welded two 1-in. thick, 5 by 8-in. steel plates with 1-in. dia. holes to each side of the frame.

It also required heating and bending the ends of the V-shaped tongue so they would fit between the plates. He notched the 10-in. wide tongue members at their midpoint to seat the bed in transit.

"When a lot of weight is placed on the front end of the trailer, it wedges the trailer bed into the notch," says Sieting.

Before pinning the tongue to the frame, he drilled holes to match those in the steel plates. He also welded 4-in. boss (ring) to reinforce each 1-in. hole in the tongue.

"When we mounted the trailer frame to the tongue, the steel plates had to fit over the tongue, and the bosses and all the holes had to line up exactly," says Sieting. "It was tricky, as I was using 1-in. bolts, so there was no play."

He fabricated hold-downs with stainless steel rods that ride inside pipe welded to the tongue. Slots in the pipe allow levers welded

to the rods to slide the rods back and rotate them, locking them down on tabs welded to the trailer frame.

Channel iron is welded to the top center of the trailer frame. A 2,000-lb. marine winch comes on an adapter with slotted holes. Studs screwed into holes threaded into the channel iron provide a solid anchor for the winch.

Sieting welded flat stock with gussets and fenders to the top edges of the 4 by 6-in. trailer frame sides. This provided a surface for mounting side rails of 2 by 2-in. steel tubing.

"I also built a toolbox into the tongue," says Sieting. "It holds the winch, binders and chains."

Although the seventh trailer may have been his best, that didn't mean it couldn't be improved. Recently, his neighbor brought it back to Sieting to make a change.

"We added 20 in. to the rear end but sloped it about 5 degrees," he explains. "Now he releases the retainers on the bed, and when he drives his front wheels onto the extensions, the trailer tilts and he can drive on the rest of the way. When he gets past the halfway point, it returns to level."

One more change was made to the trailer with its latest upgrade. "I always used 2-in. thick home-sawn ash for the deck," says Sieting. "This time, my neighbor went with manufactured decking. The laminated sheets look good and should last a long time."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Norman Sieting, 6112 Walker Rd. NW, Rapid City, Mich. 49676 (ph 231-564-1031; normansieting@gmail.com).

The system is designed to integrate with existing precision sprayers equipped with nozzle or section control, ensuring easy adoption without significant upfront investment.



Weed Solution Mixes Drones And Traditional Sprayers

As herbicide costs rise and regulations increase, grain farmers look for new, cost-effective ways to address these issues.

Aerial WeedScout from Sentera combines advanced Direct Georeferencing technology with drone flights, driving AI-powered insights and delivering targeted spray prescriptions. After surveying fields at high speed, drones measure weed size, location and type using advanced imaging technology to distinguish weeds from crops.

They detect even small weed patches as tiny as a quarter inch. This enables precise identification and mapping, which is critical for effective weed management.

The drones can fly over 100 acres per hour. After analyzing the collected data, a tailored prescription is delivered to the grower, ready for immediate application. This rapid turnaround ensures timely and effective weed control.

"A key advantage of the Aerial WeedScout

approach is the time between the weed detection and the sprayer application," says Sentera CEO Brian Wengatz. "This time window, often just a few hours, allows the agronomic advisor or farmer to review the insights, improving decision-making."

Wengatz explains that the process can prioritize fields and plan sprayer and truck logistics while optimizing tank mixes and volumes.

"It's a system advantage that we more simply call 'know before,'" he says.

Wengatz says the best time of year to complete the process depends on the crop and weed growth patterns, but early detection during the post-emergence stages allows for the most cost-effective treatment.

The system is designed to integrate with existing precision sprayers equipped with nozzle or section control, ensuring easy adoption without significant upfront investment.

"With a targeted prescription in hand, sprayers can maintain commercial speeds, achieving broadcast-equivalent weed control with fewer inputs, reduced tank refills, and less idle time waiting for tender trucks," Wengatz says. "This scalability allows for rapid assessment and prescription delivery,

making it even more suitable for operations of larger size and scale."

Aerial WeedScout doesn't recommend specific products or rates, believing that these decisions are best left to the farmer and their trusted advisors.

Currently, operations are focused on soybean crops in the Midwest U.S., with corn and cotton solutions available in 2026.

Sentera is preparing a limited release for the 2025 season, partnering with strategic industry and channel partners.

"It's essential this technology be delivered to growers via their trusted advisors who can best utilize the 'know before' insights to prescribe the right product mix, rate and timing for maximum efficacy on weed control," Wengatz says.

Interested parties are encouraged to visit the website to learn more and express interest in being a participant in their 2025 Aerial WeedScout offering. Pricing will be communicated as distribution agreements are finalized.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sentera, 767 N. Eustis St., Ste. 120, St. Paul, Minn. 55114 (ph 844-736-8372; info@sentera.com; www.sentera.com).

Farm auctions are getting a different look, thanks to the newfound ability to go virtual. The Walton Realty & Auction Co. hosted the Farm Science Review's first-ever virtual equipment auction this fall. Unlike in past years, no equipment was present. Instead, onsite and remote participants bid for equipment displayed on large screens.

"Virtual Equipment auctions utilize multiple simulcast bidding platforms, which also allow pre-bidding prior to sale day," says Sam Baer, Auctioneer Associate at Walton Realty & Auction Company. "These platforms are synchronized with a live auctioneer, enabling bidders from across the country to participate simultaneously and reach a final sales price for each lot."

Walton Auction Co. first dabbled in the prospect in March of 2023 with auction plans

for two late-model John Deere tractors. There wasn't a good way to market them, so the team launched a virtual equipment sale. It had tremendous results, launching a virtual equipment auction brand now known as Equipment Connections.

"A virtual auction's main advantage is the reduced need to transport large equipment to a central location," Baer says. "Additionally, we can offer high-quality items that consignors prefer to keep protected from the elements. The items remain at the consignor's farm or business for our virtual equipment auctions. Buyers can pick up their purchases directly from the seller's location." That leads to significant savings in shipping. "As labor and transportation costs continue to rise, the virtual auction format is expected to remain popular," he explains. "It provides

a cost-effective way to reach a wider audience of potential buyers while preserving the excitement of a live auctioneer's bid call. Internet bidding remains a strong component, ensuring accessibility and convenience for participants."

Bidders' ability to attend the live virtual event in person depends on their preference, location, and availability. "By offering a live bidding option, we aim to increase buyer comfort and confidence in purchasing decisions." Baer's quick to clarify there's still an appeal for showing up in person. "We enhance the live experience by allowing in-person bidding at the auctioneer's site, with large digital screens displaying the equipment in real-time."

The Walton Auction team has run several more virtual auctions since, and Baer believes



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the concept will catch on. "We've found that live virtual equipment auctions combine modern technology with the excitement and personal touch of traditional auctions, providing the best marketing platform for our consignors' equipment."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Walton Realty & Auction Co. LLC (ph 419-294-0007; www.waltonauctionco.com).