



Torwalt built a log splitter and conveyor that operates on tractor hydraulics.

Splitter/Stacker Runs On Tractor Hydraulics

Marvin Torwalt says that when he started a wood business 20 years ago with an axe and a wedge, he soon realized there had to be a better way. "Didn't have any trouble staying warm or staying in shape, but it sure was tough on the body after a while," he says. He looked at commercial splitters, which didn't do exactly what he wanted, so he built his own splitter/stacker. It's been a workhorse ever since.

Torwalt says he wanted a splitter that would handle large chunks without having to turn the block two or three times. A business he'd worked for used a converted hydraulic press, which had a few shortcomings with the hydraulics, so he improved on that design for his own rig. Torwalt built an 8-ft. vertical frame out of 4-in. heavy wall tubing. About 30 in. up from the base, he welded a channel iron cross brace to mount a stationary cutting platform. He mounted the base of the hydraulic cylinder to the top of the frame and used a horizontal support brace 24 in. down to hold it securely in place. The ram has a head with wedges to split a block into several pieces when the cylinder is extended.

"I wanted to run my splitter with my tractor loader, so I geared the onboard hydraulic

pump so the tractor could run at a fast idle," Torwalt says. "That gave me the hydraulic pressure I needed. I could split a full cord of wood using about 5 gal. of fuel."

Torwalt says the splitter worked great the first time he ran it, but the split pieces piled up quickly, and he had to move them away and start again. "Does that sound familiar?" he asks. "I knew there had to be a better way." He figured that out using various parts picked from his scrap metal pile. He assembled those into a conveyor that he mounted on a two-wheeled chassis made from a harrow drawbar. The base of the conveyor sits under the splitter, and the top discharges wood into his box truck or on a large pile. Split wood moves up the conveyor on a slatted feederhouse chain from an old White/Cockshutt combine. The chain is driven by a variable-speed motor powered by his tractor hydraulics.

Torwalt says his homemade splitter/conveyor system has served him well for several years, with just a few enhancements to make it more efficient. "It sure beats an axe and a single wedge," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marvin Torwalt, White Fox, Sask., Canada.

Double-Decker Trailer Offers Affordable Alternative

We recently noticed a "double-decker" destination trailer from Forest River. The Cherokee Timberwolf 16ML (mini loft) features a sleeping area over a small porch in the back of the trailer.

"It created a media storm," says George Schmidt, regional sales representative for the Topeka, Ind., company.

The loft/porch addition added another amenity to destination trailers designed to be set up on more permanent sites.

"They're an alternative for campgrounds and lake property. We're seeing a gradual use of putting them on private property in the woods to have a getaway," Schmidt says. "It's a more economical way of vacationing and making memories with family, offering the same amenities as a home but at a more affordable price."

The 27-ft., 9-in. 16ML has an MSRP of \$43,000, while the 35-ft., 8-in. 200G model has the mini loft/porch plus another loft over a main bedroom and sells for \$48,000.

Bigger models with slide-outs, which can cost up to \$75,000, feature roomy kitchens, upgraded appliances, fireplaces, seated showers, solar-reflected windows and other amenities.



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Like all RV trailers, destination models are designed for seasonal use.

"We have 260 dealers, and we encourage customers to shop locally for any maintenance or seasonal services," Schmidt says.

Dealers can be found on the Forest River website's dealer locator link.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Forest River Inc., 404 Lehman Ave., Topeka, Ind. 46571 (ph 260-499-2009; www.forestriverinc.com).

Smart Kit Powers Wheelbarrows With Tool Batteries

The SmartGate Smart-Barrow is the first-ever power kit that transforms name-brand wheelbarrows into motorized tools that reduce work with heavy loads and when going uphill.

Founder Jonathon Snyder relied on his experience as a landscaper to develop a conveyor system for truck beds that improved efficiency while unloading. "I thought to myself, we need something similar for wheelbarrows," he said.

His solution was an add-on power system for wheelbarrow propulsion that runs off standard tool batteries.

"It takes away the load-pushing part of using a wheelbarrow," Snyder says. "The average-sized guy can push it over a hill without any effort." He shares that safety concerns are minimal, as the wheelbarrow stops moving as soon as you take your hand off the throttle. "Plus, you're behind it," says Snyder. "You're in complete control the whole time."

By default, the Smart-Barrow operates at 4 mph. However, customers can request a custom speed when ordering. "Some construction guys know they'll be pushing it through tough terrain all day, and they'd rather have a slower speed," Snyder says. The system runs off Milwaukee or Dewalt batteries, and battery adapters are available. Two standard 5-amp batteries will last a typical workday. "If you're going uphill all day, you might want to use 9-amp batteries," says Snyder. "But that should be plenty. No one has ever used up 9-amp batteries in a day."

The Smart-Barrow has a one-year warranty



System runs off Milwaukee or Dewalt batteries, and battery adapters are available. Two standard 5-amp batteries will last a typical workday.

and a motor life expectancy exceeding 3,000 hours. It can be installed in 10 to 15 min. using only a socket and impact screwdriver. Once installed, the Smart-Barrow adds just 3 lbs. to the wheelbarrow.

While the standard model will fit most wood-handled wheelbarrows, wider and narrower tire varieties are available, including a wide-handle option for Brentwood equipment. Pricing is \$1,350 per model, with free shipping across the continental U.S. Each kit includes an electric wheel, a battery control panel, and a thumb throttle. "It's very compact, and we'll ship it right to your door," says Snyder.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, SmartGate Conveyers, 720 Frystown Rd., Myerstown, Penn. 17067 (ph 717-421-2522; jon@smartgate.us; www.smartgateconveyers.com).



During the 2024 growing season, Lemken tested two drills in Western Canada, seeding 1,500 acres to ensure they performed well in varying soil conditions.

South African No-Till Drill Making Inroads In North America

Envisioning North American opportunities due to similar soil types, Lemken purchased the company producing the South African-based Equalizer no-till drill family. The air-tine drill, a part of this equipment family, has been tested in Western Canada.

"It's a very disruptive drill," says Lemken North American Marketing Specialist Ivor Bernatsky. "The drill shanks dig down 5 to 6 in. to place dry or liquid fertilizer. This depth boils, churns and mixes the soil, blending it and breaking compaction, making it easier for the roots to grow stronger vertically."

Two semi-independent systems control seed and fertilizer placements. Seeds are deposited above the fertilizer before the packer wheel closes the furrow.

A hydraulically controlled trip-able tine is a standard feature that helps clear smaller obstacles without disturbing seed placement and avoids large rocks or obstructions without damage. An optional residue coupler provides superior trash clearance and cutting ability.

Lemken offers producers air cart options married to existing units, whether towed

between, behind, or mounted on-machine. The air-tine drills are available in 40, 60 and 80-ft. widths.

During the 2024 growing season, Lemken tested two drills in Western Canada, seeding 1,500 acres to ensure they performed well in varying soil conditions.

The drills are manufactured outside Cape Town, South Africa, and are available through Lemken dealers North America-wide. Interested producers should contact their nearest dealer for pricing and shipment details.

"Customers will be surprised how price competitive the air-tine drill is," Bernatsky says. "Many older farmers want to seed another 10 years, have an older drill, and are anxious about its condition but can't justify a new one. When they see our prices and technology, it's an eye-opening opportunity for them."

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