

Big Ag Trailers Built To Order

Family-owned and managed DANCO Trailers builds big ag trailers to order. Whether side dumps, end dumps, manure spreaders or chain-drive silage trailers and boxes, DANCO Trailers builds equipment that stands the test of time.

"We've had customers bring in trailers from the 1970s to be rebuilt," says Danette Fernandes, CEO and daughter of company founder Dan Coelho. "A lot of times, we put a new bed and racks on but keep the original frame, axle and suspension. We strive to make a good product that's more heavy-duty than most on the market."

Side-dump units are available as semi or pull trailers, with 4 or 5-ft. racks as standard. They feature an I-beam and tubing main frame with a high-strength bottom strap and reinforced rub-rail bed with tubing cross members at the hinge points. These provide rigidity while dumping and a minimum of flex or uneven rise.

Front and rear tapered ends on racks release the load as the bed rises for smoother, faster off-loading. Top hinged doors with 16-in. steel flaps extend the bed on the dumping side, keeping the load as far as possible from the trailer and its wheels. An automatic latch opens the doors as the bed lifts, allowing the driver to remain safely in the cab during dumping.

The family-owned and managed company has built similar trailers for farmers since 1964. Company founder Dan Coelho built his first trailer for his dad while in ag shop in high school. Coelho was off and running when his older brother asked for a tilt-bed trailer his senior year. His first shop was one he built with recycled wood. He soon expanded to repurpose the family dairy barn. Within 10 years, he was building silage truck dump bodies with special silage racks and side-dump trailers for hauling fertilizer.

Coelho describes the key to the company's longevity and success on the company website. "From the beginning, I strived to build silage boxes and side-dump trailers with



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unique labor-saving and safety devices," says Coelho. "Today, DANCO has the most safety and labor-saving devices for controlling doors, hydraulic tops, latches, side door closures, etc., on silage boxes and side-dump trailers."

The company has gone from building one-off trailers for family members to sending trailers to customers as far off as Maine and Mexico. However, some things haven't changed. Trailers and truck boxes are still built on the family farm. While the old shop and dairy barn are still in use, most work is done in a 14,000-sq. ft. shop added in 1997.

"We have around a dozen full-time employees," says Fernandes. "At one time, we expanded with more employees and a large inventory, but we felt we lost our quality control. Today, we concentrate on quality and build to order. Our customers understand that we can require a longer lead time, but they know it's worth the wait."

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Homemade Cage Makes Handling Calves Easy

Mark Bauman often faced problems with tagging, handling and moving newborn calves to shelter in poor weather. To compensate, he built a metal cage from scratch that he could transport with his tracked skid loader.

The cage measured 8 by 8 ft. square and 5 ft. in height. Bauman used 1/8-in. thick, 1 1/4-in. square tubing with six bars around the perimeter. He welded a matching skid loader plate with a quick-attach mount to one side of the cage for easy hook-up and transport.

"We call it the shark cage," Bauman laughs. "If a cow is unruly, I can set it right over the calf and step out of the loader through a gate I hung at the mount. I do my thing, get back in the loader, lift it up, and carry on."

He built an expanded metal box complete with a sled inside the cage to carry a weak calf.

"If the calf can't walk, we put it in the sled and carry the whole cage, calf, and box together," he says. "The cow can see her baby through the expanded metal, which helps encourage her to follow along."

Bauman says he added extra bracing in the mounting area because it protrudes, but other than this, building the cage was straightforward.



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He estimates the total cost between \$1,200 and \$1,400.

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UTV Gun Rack Keeps Weapons Safe, Accessible

Big Sky Racks, Inc., of Bozeman, Mont., makes and sells vehicular weapon mounting systems for trucks and UTVs. "The company was founded in 1983 by a cattle rancher who got sick and tired of pulling his guns out of their cases," says Josh Morford, company representative. "He wanted an easy-access system, so he welded a roof rack in his barn. When local interest took off, he approached my dad, Ted Morford, who has a marketing background. My dad spent four days doing patent research in the library, confirming that nothing like this existed. They went into business together, and the rest is history."

All models offer a reliable way to store weapons when on the move. "It's a safe way to transport weapons off the floor and out of sight," says Morford. "You won't entice people to play with your guns, but they remain easily accessible the whole time."

Over the decades, Big Sky Racks has adapted its products to match vehicle preferences. While the original Sportsmen rack (built in 1983) is still a popular seller, the company's products have evolved to accommodate ever-changing vehicle designs. "Initially, the whole concept was mounting guns on top of a car," says Morford. "When trucks got the fabric roofs in the 1990s, we pivoted to sky bar racks around the windows, which became a problem when airbags

became mandated. But that coincided with the growing popularity of UTVs, so now we're back to the Sky Bar."

The Sky Bar Series is a telescoping system with square-tube construction for optimal strength. The nearly universal design is compatible with most UTVs, and mounts are available for one and two guns. "There are only a couple competitors with ceiling mounts, and they've stayed away from our patent," Morford says. "Our racks keep guns secure, and no oil residue or marks are left on the gun. And they're tested to 140 F."

Over the years, Big Sky Racks has built a loyal following. "We've had guides tell us at conventions that as soon as customers get off the plane, they take their guns out of the hard cases and mount them in the racks," he says. "I mean, we've been in this for 45 years. You're bound to get something right after all that dedication."

Pricing varies by rack model and gun capacity but ranges from \$159 to \$210, and worldwide shipping is available. "We're a small, devoted business," says Morford. When someone calls, we actually answer."

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Easy-Install Hay Tub Hammer

The Dagger from Jacobs Global is a superior replacement hammer for hay tubs. Its unique design eliminates the need for spacers at installation and reduces rod grooving and hole elongation. It promises more durability and easier installation and removal.

The elliptical hole offers 100 percent cleanout and perfect rod contact. That eliminates rod wear and hammer sticking.

"Better rod contact also helps with installing and removing, in addition to longer life," says Joey Evans, Jacobs Global. "The elliptical hole has more room for material to exit. Hammers will stick less, which reduces vibration in the tub grinders."

Dagger hammers are hard-faced with suspended carbide to resist abrasion. Evans explains that they feature a good balance of weld matrix to hold up to impact.

"The Dagger hammers are optimized for more striking power for more efficient hay grinding," he says. Jacobs Global offers a full line of hammers machined, hard-faced and heat-treated to match user requirements. The sales team can help determine what hardness hammer should be used, what size of tungsten and which style of hard-facing, as well as whether a one or two-bore hammer is best.

The company also offers hammer rods heat-treated to a depth of 0.180 in., six times the industry standard of 0.030. Rods



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are available for most makes and models or can be custom-designed to fit unique needs. Spacers and lock collars are also available.

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