

HOME-MADE WITH READILY AVAILABLE MATERIALS

“Best Calving Shed I’ve Seen”

By Terry Hockaday

Here's one of the best calving sheds I've ever seen. Designed and built by Canadian Simmental breeder Dave Crawford, of Regina, it combines strength with versatility, imagination with practicality. Best of all, he made it himself using materials that are easily available to most other cattlemen.

The shed floor measures 16 ft. by 8 ft. The roof, 6 ft. off the ground in the front, slopes down to 4 ft. in the back. The walls and roof are made of ½ in. plywood fastened to square steel tubing with self-threading screws. The unit is supported by two sections of steel tubing that run up the front, across the roof and down the back. An “X”-shaped brace between the uprights on the back and front walls add extra strength.

The shed features adjustable legs in each corner for leveling. Also, it can be lifted up and moved by using the hooks installed in each corner of the roof, but Crawford suggests skids would work just as well.

Access to the calving shed is gained through slots on the lower half of one end of the shed front. Spring-loaded bars can be removed to allow larger calves in the shed. But Crawford has found that, with spacings of about 16 in., calves weighing up to 650 lbs. can easily enter. The spring-loaded bars might be useful if one of the animals ever got stuck.

To control those bitterly cold winter winds, Crawford designed the shed with flaps that hook up in position to help close out the wind, or can be dropped down on warm days to increase ventilation.

The real beauty of this shed is that it doubles as a calf-handling center for any sort of treatment necessary in the field. When the flap on the top of the shed above the entrance bars is lowered, it closes off the bars and prevents calves from moving in or out of the shed. In addition, the entrance bars are really a hinged gate which can be swung out to help corral calves



Cattlemen photo by Terry Hockaday

Calving shed has flaps that close up to seal out wind, or open for ventilation on warm days.

or swung inward to make bedding easier.

“Most times when we treat calves, we'll catch them sleeping in the shed and just drop down the flap to keep them there,” explains Crawford. “It sure beats chasing them around the pasture.”

In addition to calf handling and housing, the shed also contains a creep feeder big enough to hold about 10 bu. of feed. “Creep feeding is a contentious issue,” says Crawford, “but we wanted the option of using it when we built the sheds.”

There's no secret to using the calf sheds. Crawford suggests facing

them south to catch the sun, and painting the inside white to improve sun reflection. He's found it best to locate them in a sheltered spot. But you can improve shelter by setting two sheds up in an “L” shape, one facing south and the other west.

What did all this cost? Crawford used a lot of materials that he had on hand. But he estimates the sheds could be built for about \$500 each, depending on materials used.

It doesn't take many calves saved to pay for that.

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HALF THE COST OF A NEW ONE

Build Yourself A Self-Propelled Chopper

FARM SHOW's article on New York dairyman Jack Janssen, of Scipio Center, who designed and built a front-mounted chopper for his tractor (Vol. 7, No. 3) reported that a commercial front-mounted chopper for 4-WD articulated tractors would soon be on the market.

It's here! Shortly before this issue went to press, the Crary Co., Fargo, N. Dak., introduced a “chopper power” kit that lets you attach pull-behind choppers to the front of large tractors converting them into self-propelled forage harvesters.

“With the chopper mounted on the front of your tractor, you have more power and traction than even the best self-propelled choppers. And by using a tractor you already own, you can build your own self-propelled chopper at about half the cost of a comparable size, conventional self-propelled machine,” says Dave Majkrzak, Crary vice president.

The chopper kit consists of a support frame that bolts to the tractor, and a front pto kit that can be used to power other equipment (featured in FARM SHOW's Vol. 7, No. 2 issue). You can purchase the front-mount kit and chopper, complete with a 7-ft. wide hay head and 4-row corn head,

or you can convert your existing pull-type chopper by disassembling the cutterbox and mounting it on the Crary frame along with the blower.

The chopper retains its lifting range and is powered off the tractor's hydraulics. Switches controlling the direction of the discharge chute are powered electrically and set in the cab.

To remove the chopper, you simply loosen two turnbuckles, remove the V-belts off the blower, and back the tractor out of the machine. Both the pto and the chopper mounting frame remain bolted to the tractor. Majkrzak notes that the initial installation of the front-mount kit takes about 24 man hours. Most farmers, he says, can complete the installation in their own workshops.

A unit with the 4 row corn head sells for about \$45,000. The mounting kit alone without the chopper, sells for right at \$18,000. Kits are designed to fit Steiger and Versatile tractors. Kits for other tractors are in the works.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Crary Company, P.O. Box 1779, Fargo, N. Dak. 58107 (ph 701 282-5520).



You can blow forage into a trailing tractor and wagon or into a wagon hooked onto the self-propelled rig.



Chopper is available with corn or hay heads.