

Simple Wooden Box Catches 76,000 Rabbits

Nearly 99% of all rabbits in Great Britain were wiped out in 1953 by a disease. Recently, rabbit populations have reached pre-disease levels and farmers in some areas have had to go on the attack to prevent damage to crops.

One of the most successful is Scottish farmer John Bruce who tried shooting, gassing, ferreting and other conventional methods before coming up with a simple box trap that has caught more than 76,000 rabbits since he first started using it several years ago.

Bruce was experiencing substantial crop losses, particularly to winter crops. And he figured losses in pastures had started to reach levels of 20 percent or more. The final straw came when a 13-acre field of winter barley was totally wiped out.

"I had had enough of feeding my profits to rabbits. I decided I had to manage the problem more effectively," Bruce told Farmer's Weekly Magazine. He finally built a simple wood box trap that's placed in the ground under a rabbit run. Each box measures 3 by 2 by 2 ft. Rabbits get trapped as they run across a balanced tilting lid which acts like a trap door. The lid opens and the rabbit falls into the box. The lid then swings back up, preventing escape.

Bruce now has more than 100 rabbit boxes in place on his 1,900 acre farm. Along one fenceline, four box traps have each caught more than 400 rabbits a year for the past four years. On one exceptional night, 62 rabbits were caught in one box.

It takes careful planning to get the best results with the traps, says Bruce. He set up rabbit fencing along badly infested areas. The rabbits, eager to return to their feeding grounds, eventually find a way over, through or under the netting. Once a run has become well established (easily



identified by beaten down vegetation), a trap is installed under it. For the first week, the trap lid is weighted with a heavy stone so rabbits become used to running over it. Once the run is well established over the trap, the weight is removed and rabbits drop into the box.

It works best to set the boxes just one night a week. Rabbits will then continue to use the run and not avoid it. Bruce says the traps are easy to manage. He sets a few traps each evening, getting into a rotation of areas. Half an hour in the morning, and again in the morning is all it takes.

Bruce recently started making and selling the traps at a cost of about \$88 apiece.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, John Bruce, Balmanno Farms, Bridge of Earn, Perthshire, Scotland, United Kingdom.



2-Stage Splitter Cuts Firewood, Fenceposts

"As far as I know, there's no other splitter on the market like it," says Harold Smith, North Jackson, Ohio, about his 2-stage splitter that'll handle both firewood in 16 in. lengths and logs up to 10 ft. long.

Smith first made a splitting table with a long H beam down the center and pieces of 8-in. channel iron on either side. A 4-way splitting head mounts toward the front to split 16-in. long chunks into four pieces of firewood at a time. To split logs up to

10 ft. long, a single splitting wedge is mounted at the end of the center H-beam. The same 6-in. dia. by 18-in. long hydraulic cylinder is used for both splitting operations. Power is supplied by tractor hydraulics.

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All-Hydraulic Heavy-Built Mower

"It's the best mower, leaf pickup, and snow-blower tractor I've ever seen," says Don Roe, Hazel S. Dak., about the all-hydraulic lawn and garden tractor he built from the ground up.

In the 8 years since he built the tractor, he's added a number of attachments, including a large slant-bottom box on back for picking up leaves and grass that self-unloads out the back with a hydraulic-driven apron chain. He also fitted it with a 14-gal. spray tank and 12-volt pump, and a 48-in. snow-blower powered by a hydraulic motor.

The tractor was built from the front axle from a 4-wheel drive IHC, a 20-hp. Kohler engine, and a surplus hydrostat drive unit. Roe designed it with 4-wheel coordinated "crab" steering so the front and back wheels turn in opposite directions for tight turns. The tractor is all hydraulic, including power steering and power lift on front. In winter he switches the large front wheels, putting on a set that has fluid to provide extra traction. The tractor has a tilt steering wheel.

A Grasshopper blower unit is used to moved chopped leaves and grass from the up-front mower deck to the big box on back. The box quick-mounts on back of the tractor when needed. It has a rubber cover on top to keep out rain, and a canvas curtain



over the back that pushes out of the way as the apron chain unloads. Because the box slants upward, Roe can unload into a large pile, unlike some tow-behind boxes which are built low to the ground.

For spraying, a short boom mounts on back of the tractor. Roe's up-front snow-blower is chain-driven by a hydraulic motor that mounts right behind the blower.

The innovative yard tractor is the second one Roe has built. "I built my first one 30 years ago. It was 10 to 15 years ahead of its time since it had a front-mount mower deck, which no commercial manufacturer came out with till much later."

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Fail-Proof "Bin Full" Alarm

Harvest time is a lot less stressful for Ben Dyck since he came up with his failure-proof "bin full" alarm that sets off a loud horn before the level of grain in a bin reaches the top.

Key to success of the Carman, Manitoba farmer's alarm is the use of four liquid mercury switches. "I drilled four holes in an 8-in. long piece of 1 1/8-in. broom handle. The holes are spaced 1 1/2 in. apart and are spaced evenly around the circumference of the wooden dowel. One mercury switch is slipped into each hole so each switch points a different direction."

Dyck wired the four switches together in parallel and then inserted the dowel into a steel pipe. "When the pipe hangs vertically from the auger spout, all four mercury switches are open and there's one switch pointing in each direction. When the grain pushes the dowel up 5° in any direction, one of the switches will close and set off the alarm."

The alarm is wired to a loud horn and the tractor's 12-volt system. When the alarm



goes off, Dyck has plenty of time to get back and shut off the auger.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ben Dyck, Box 1021, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0 Canada.