

Handy Calf Sled And Scale

Getting newborn calves weighed and out of the field was a problem for Vernon Isaac, of Edson, Kan. His solution: A home-made sled, built from scrap pipe, that he pulls with his pickup.

"We equipped the sled with runners instead of wheels because, when the pickup driver stops, the sled stops, whereas a sled on wheels would keep going. The only time you need to worry about this sled is when there's snow on the ground and you stop on a sidehill. If you don't downhill or uphill, you're alright. If you downhill, it'll run into the pickup," Isaac points out.

The sled's runners are 3/4 in. sucker rods. Additional pieces of pipe were welded onto the front of the runners to reinforce them. A box frame, made from 2-1/2 in. pipe, was constructed over the top of the sled and a wooden floor put in the bottom. Wire hog panels enclose the sides.

The uprights are made from 1-1/4 in. pipe. A 1 in. gooseneck pipe, which telescopes into one of the uprights, serves as a place to hang the scale for weighing calves.

To weigh a calf, Isaac uses a piece of old tire to slip under the animal's belly. The tire is hooked to the scale and, when the calf is hoisted into the air, it's weighed. "We've found this works better than picking up each calf and standing on a scale," says Isaac.

He notes that his 250 beef cows calve in a small area. He uses the sled to separate cows and their newborn calves from the rest of the herd. "If ten cows are calving the same day, another cow that's wanting to calve may try to clean one of these ten calves. Therefore, as soon as cows calve, I want them in a different pasture where they're fed more protein and vitamin A.

"When I put a newborn calf on the sled, the mother can see and smell it

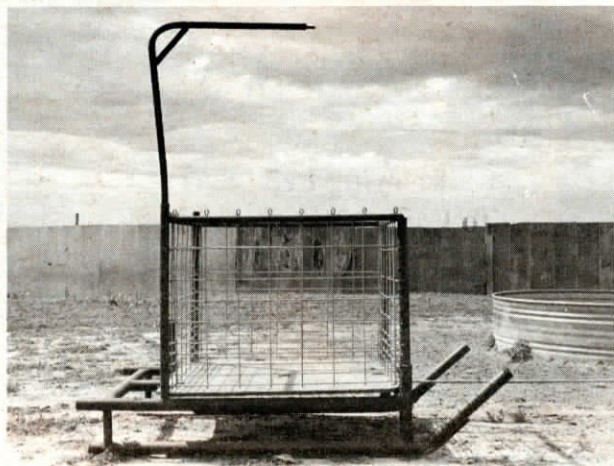


Photo courtesy Kansas Farmer

through the wire panels. She'll follow right along behind the sled," says Isaac. He adds that the sled's wood floor is easy to clean but, once it gets wet, newborn calves have trouble

standing on it. He plans to install a rubber mat for better footing.

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Sickle Mower Makes Great Hedge Trimmer

"I have lots of hedges and they're too much work to trim by hand," says Claude Peel, Brownlee, Sask., who transformed a sickle hay mower into a hedge trimmer that'll cut branches up to 1 in. thick.

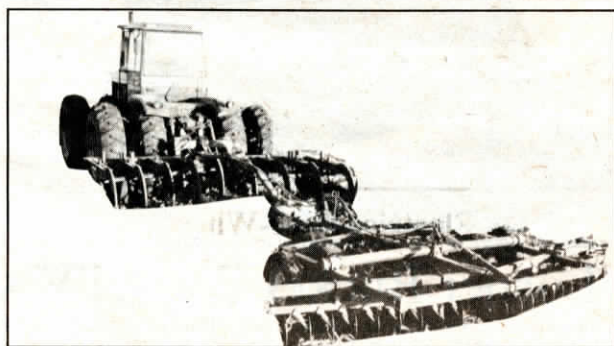
"All I did was take a 7 ft., pto-driven International hay mower and strip it down to nothing. I then put on a 10-hp, Wisconsin gas engine and a pulley and belt assembly to drive the sickle. The engine has a 12-v. battery and electric start," Peel notes.

"The sickle and guards went untouched although I reinforced the

cutting bar so it's sturdier. To trim the hedge, I mount the mower on my tractor bucket with two bolts and I'm ready to go. I can trim as high or low as the bucket will go."

If needed, Peel can still use the mower to cut weeds or grass around the farm. He's planning to build a mower that'll also cut vertically along the side of hedges.

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Revamped Disk Used As "Fall Finishing tool" Behind Ripper

Illinois farmer Bill Cox, of Jacksonvill, turned a conventional Deere disk into a "fall finishing tool" which he pulls behind his subsoiler ripper when working cornstalk ground in the fall.

The revamped disk leaves the ground "less lumpy," wipes out wheel tracks and eliminates an extra trip over the field in the spring — yet leaves enough trash on the surface to control erosion.

Cox started with a Deere BWA disk. He discarded the rear gang of disks and moved the front gang to the

rear.

One reason for choosing the Deere BWA was that he could adjust the angle at which the disks would run. He wanted them almost straight, leaving only as much angle as needed to make them run.

Cox discovered that, to get the depth of cut he wanted, he had to have the wheels carry some of the weight.

Cox, who hasn't used a moldboard plow for 12 years, uses the ripper-disk combination only to work cornstalk ground. He zero tills corn directly into previous year bean ground.

"Freeloader" Helps Haul Big Loads

"It's especially handy for hauling firewood but can be used for all kinds of cargo," says Gordon Leach of his new "Freeloader" carrier that leaves both hands free to open doors, turn on lights, hold hand rails or pick up more cargo along the way.

"I can easily carry a 100-lb. load without having to touch the load with my hands," he points out. Improvements slated for his prototype "Freeloader" include adjustable shoulder pads, adjustable waist belt, and a frame made of aluminum to reduce overall weight to about 3 or 4 lbs.

Leach hopes to have his new invention into commercial production soon.

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