

LETS HIM GET IN AND OUT ALONE

Home-Built Lift Keeps Farmer In Tractor Seat

When Fred Luthje fell from a ladder six years ago and sustained injuries that resulted in paralysis from the waist down, he began planning right away for recovery. Now, with the help of a tractor lift he designed himself, the Baldwinton, Sask., farmer is still in business.

At the time of his accident, Luthje was farming 2½ sections of land and raised cattle. He's since rented out some of that but still farm a considerable acreage on his own. To do that, he needed to find a good way to get in and out of his two tractors. When he couldn't find a good commercial lift, he designed and built his own.

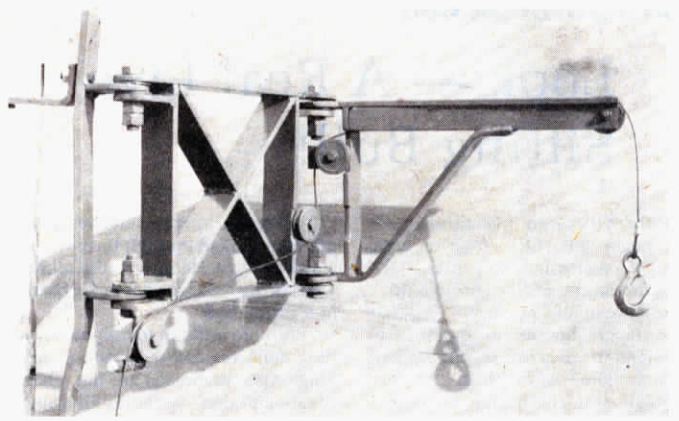
"It's a compact, self-contained unit that folds out of the way once you're in the seat," Luthje told FARM SHOW in describing his lift which, mounts on the frame of the cab and lifts him in a nylon sling. "The key to this design is that the winch doesn't

have to be mounted on the lift arm itself so the unit remains very compact."

The lift arm is 32 in. long and is made from two sections, 15 and 18 in. long, connected by a heavy hinge at the center. When fully extended, the arm reaches out far enough to lift the operator without banging into the side of the tractor. The operator controls it with a hand-held remote control.

Once lifted into the air, Luthje simply pulls himself over into the seat with his arms and the lift arm pivots with him. Once in the seat, he removes the sling and swings the lift arm out of the way inside the cab. If needed, he can quickly lower himself to the ground to service equipment or fix other problems, pulling himself along the ground with his arms.

There are 4 pulleys on the lift to control the cable, which runs to the



Double-hinged lift folds out of the way when not in use.

winch at the back of the cab. Luthje says the lift was easy to build and cost around \$500, including the winch. "You have to build carefully so it's strong enough and so the hinge will work freely," he notes.

The lift was Luthje's third attempt to find a design that would work. His first models either wouldn't handle the way he needed or were too bulky to carry in the cab. Now, he's able to get around by himself. A CB radio in the cab keeps him in touch with others on the farm.

Luthje has no plans to develop the lift commercially but will gladly help others build their own.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Fred Luthje, Box 68, Baldwinton, Sask. S0N 0V0 (ph 306 398-4045).



Photo courtesy North Battleford Telegraph

Once lifted to cab height, Luthje swings himself inside.

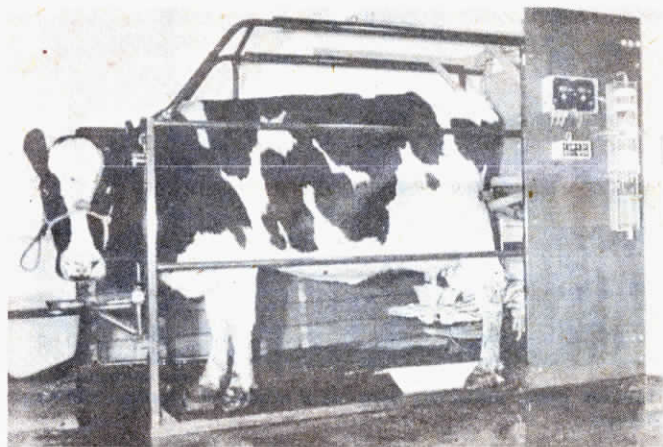


Photo courtesy New Zealand Farmer

Mechanical milker finds each cow's teats automatically.

BUT DOES IT HAVE WARM HANDS?

First Robot Milker Developed In Holland

A Dutch manufacturer says its new robot milker is ready for testing on dairy farms and that it expects virtually all of the world's dairymen to switch over to robots by the year 2,000.

According to a report in the New Zealand Farmer, the manufacturer Gascoigne-Melotte, believes that farmers using its robot milker will be able to milk cows four or five times a day, which they say will be beneficial for the udder and will increase milk production.

The computer-guided milk machine approaches the cow from behind. The operator attaches the cups by hand to the udder the first time it's used so that the robot can

store the coordinates of the location of the udder on each cow in its memory. From then on, for each milking, it automatically finds the teats. The milking machine recognizes each cow individually and teat coordinates are adjusted automatically each milking, if needed, to adapt to any sight changes.

The robot makes up part of a system of programmed feeding and computer measurement of milk stream and quantity, all linked to a microcomputer that lets the operator analyze the data. Additional measuring instruments, such as electronic milkmeters and conductivity meters for mastitis and cell count, will be added in the future.

"APPLE POLES" OUT-YIELD ORDINARY TREES BY 20%

Branchless Apple Trees

A mutant apple tree discovered by a farmer, developed by scientists and recently released for sale has no branches to get in the way at harvest.

Wijcik "Apple Poles" were named for a Canadian farmer who discovered the mutant tree in his orchard in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia in the 1960's. After 15 years of development work by scientists at the Agriculture Canada Research Station in Summerland, British Columbia, the tree is now on the market at Stark Brothers Nursery & Orchard Company, Louisiana, Mo.

Genetically the branchless trees are dwarf mutants of McIntosh apple trees. Although they are radically different both in appearance and fruit bearing characteristics (apple poles bear more strongly every other year), the fruit varies only slightly in quality from that of its popular McIntosh parents.

According to researchers, an orchard stand of apple poles outyields conventional trees by as much as 20%. However, because of the high cost of establishing a stand due to the increased numbers of trees needed, many researchers say they are not yet economically viable. Until prices drop, though, everyone agrees that



"Apple poles" grow to 8 ft. and have a compact root system.

they make great conversation pieces around the farm.

The trees stand 6 to 8 ft. tall and have a root system so compact they can be grown in large containers for ornamental purposes. They sell for \$12.95 apiece.

For more information, write for a catalog from: FARM SHOW Followup, Stark Brothers Nursery, Louisiana, Mo. 63353 (ph 314 754-5511).