



“How We Improved Our Ford F-250”

When Edward “Kit” Carson buys a new pickup, he doesn’t just bring it home from the dealer and start using it. The first thing the 79-year-old Texas farmer does is make a number of improvements that he builds into each new pickup before putting it to work.

Here’s how he “improved” his newest pickup - a 1994 3/4-ton Ford F-250 turbo diesel with 4-WD and a manual transmission:

“First we removed both front and rear chrome bumpers. The front was replaced with one we made out of 8-in. channel iron with a cow catcher grill guard mounted above it and a piece of heavy angle iron below to make a stiff tow bar. It has holes in it that we use to hitch up to a 4-wheel wagon to back it around the yard.

“We replaced the rear bumper with a 6 1/2 in. piece of 4 by 8 by 1/4-in. steel tubing, with a lower hitch point made out of plate steel that lets us position a ball hitch at 17 in. above ground so we have a level pull on small stock trailers. To the left of the ball hitch is a standup pin to pull a Deere round baler and on the right is a 7/8-in. hole for pulling hay feed trailers. There’s a strap on the far left end of the bumper to pull our haybine.

“We made a unique spare tire holder that mounts on the rear bumper. A length of 5/16-in. steel cable is threaded through the bumper, over a pulley and down to the spare tire. A 3-ft. steel arm that mounts on the back side of the bumper is used to pull the tire up against the bottom of the pickup. If you ever need the spare tire, you just unhook the lever and drop the tire to the ground. The tire is pulled up tight against three short pieces of channel iron mounted under the bed of the pickup.

“We made our own tailgate out of steel pipe and expanded metal mesh. A cable re-



lease at center releases it. We mounted a commercial fold-down gooseneck ball on a 3/8-in. steel plate in the pickup bed so we can turn it down out of the way when not in use. We cover the bed of the pickup with a rubber mat. Side rails are protected by pieces of 2 1/2 by 2 1/2-in. aluminum angle iron. A commercial toolbox mounts behind the cab. We painted a yellow strip down the center of it to act as a guide when hooking up to trailers.

“We had custom vinyl seat covers made because they’re easier to clean and we put a step at each door to make it easier to get in. We also added mud flaps behind each wheel.”

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Gravity Box “Auger Pit” For Flat Storage

For years Rick Mabeus, Winfield, Iowa, has stored most of his grain in flat storage and used a skidsteer loader to push grain into an auger that loaded it into a truck. However, he got tired of having to push the same grain several times into the intake end of the auger. He solved the problem by converting an old 250-bu. gravity box into a flat storage “auger pit”.

The box sets on the floor in the building’s doorway. He cut a hole in one side of the box that’s big enough for an unloading auger to fit through. The intake end rests against the floor at the other side of the box. He uses the bucket on his skid steer loader

to dump grain into the box.

“It really works slick and is a simple and inexpensive way to unload grain out of flat storage,” says Mabeus. “Once I dump grain into the box it never gets touched again. Less handling results in better grain quality and speeds up loading time into the truck. It’s also safer to use because the intake end of auger is inside the box.

“I mounted a wooden board along the top of the box to keep grain from splashing out whenever I dump the bucket.”

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They “Love” Their State-Of-The-Art Parlor

The only thing that could have improved on the state-of-the-art milking parlor Ron and Mary Niedbalski put up two years ago was a flush system that used water recycled from the operation for clean-up.

Otherwise, the double 14 parallel design is the Nashville, Ill., dairying couple’s dream come true.

“We love it,” says Mary. “It’s already paid for itself through faster and safer milking. Plus, because cows are milked above you, you’re able to get a good look at their udders, allowing immediate detection of any potential health problems.”

Still, Ron Niedbalski built his own flush system for the 40 by 40-ft. parlor. It supplies the 800 gal. of water necessary per day from water recycled from other operations.

“All the water we use in wash and cleaning cycles of equipment and our 3,000-gal. bulk tank goes into a drain in the parlor, then down into a 1,000-gal cistern outside the parlor. Rain runoff from the building’s gutters also runs into the cistern,” explains Ron. “A float in the cistern kicks on when water reaches a certain level, then transfers it to a 10,000-gal., 30-ft. high upright tank behind the parlor.”

There are eight 1 1/2-in. high sprinklers with special homemade metal deflectors to spread the spray pattern placed every 4 ft. on each side of the alley. They’re plumbed with 3-in. dia. PVC pipe laid under the cement. A valve on the outside tank delivers water through the sprinklers at up to 90 psi. A wheel inside the parlor allows the Niedbalskis to flush each side separately or both sides at the same time.

The system greatly speeds clean-up, Mary notes.



Likewise, the parlor, where cows are milked from behind, allows the Niedbalskis to milk 100 cows per hour with three people. That compares with 65 cows per hour with the double nine herringbone parlor the Niedbalskis used before. In that system, cows were milked from the side.

Operator safety is also improved since cows can’t kick in the parlor because a manure gutter behind them prevents it.

Milking efficiency is likewise improved since cows are closer together, requiring less time for the operator to move between them. Cows can depart their stalls in 3 or 4 seconds compared with 2 minutes before, thanks to a rapid exit feature.

The parlor features a revolving reel that prevents cows from moving forward once they’re in place for milking. It releases quickly once the milking’s done.

The Bou-Matic system came from Unverferth Equipment of Centralia, Ill.

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