



## Steering Wheel Replaced With Knob

"It provides a much more open view ahead of me and is easier to use," says Pennsylvania farmer S. Elwood Homan, who replaced the steering wheel on his 1970 Oliver combine with a single lever fitted with a steering knob. He says the idea would work on any combine.

Homan welded the metal steering knob onto one end of a bicycle kick stand. The other end of the kick stand is welded onto the steering wheel hub off an old Studebaker car. The hub mounts on the steering column shaft.

"It's a big improvement over the original steering wheel," says Homan. "The steering wheel was big and I was always trying to look through it to see what I was doing. It was also hard to use. A knob is easier to grip than a wheel and has a quicker response. I used the Studebaker steering wheel hub so I can still put the original steering wheel back on if I want."

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## Bridge Hitch Pulls 6-Ton Dry Fertilizer Cart Behind Planter

"It lets us apply fertilizer on up to 120 acres at a time without having to refill," says Darwin Peterson, Alden, Iowa, who, along with son Ronald, built an 18-ft. long bridge hitch and a 6-ton dry fertilizer cart that they pull behind their 8-row White 6100 planter. Cart delivers fertilizer by air to each planter fertilizer opener.

Peterson removed the planter's original fertilizer tanks and metering system. He used 5 by 7 steel tubing to build the bridge hitch and 18-ga. sheet metal to build the cart which is mounted on a pair of 21 by 16-in. tires. A Crary hydraulic-driven blower (powered by tractor hydraulics) is mounted on the cart's axle. The blower sends fertilizer through a 1 1/2-in. dia. conduit mounted alongside the bridge hitch to the planter. An electric clutch is used to start or stop the cart's ground-driven metering system.

"I built it because I didn't want to have to stop to refill the fertilizer tanks on my planter as often," says Peterson. "I bought the planter in 1991 equipped with fertilizer tanks and openers, but the system didn't work well because the double disc

openers plugged up. The company finally replaced them with single disc openers set at a fixed angle so they don't plug up.

"I spent only about \$4,000 to build the cart and hitch. Commercial pull-type dry fertilizer tenders sell for at least \$12,000. At an application rate of 100 lbs. per acre I can cover 120 acres without having to refill. The hitch is long enough that I can turn the planter fairly short without hitting the cart. I use a hand crank to calibrate the ground-driven metering system on cart before I go to the field. The metering device is hinged so I can tip it up in the air and wash it out with a garden hose.

"Next year I plan to also use the cart to fill my planter with soybeans. I'll replace the metering system with an air lock powered by a 12-volt gearhead motor. A 2-in. dia. hose will deliver soybeans to the planter and a cyclone will slow them down as I fill each hopper."

Peterson says he'd be willing to custom build the bridge hitch and cart.

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## Rolling "Barn" Keeps Dairy Calves Healthy

"It lets me keep calves dry and clean without having to use any bedding," says Scott Jennette, Bee Branch, Ark., about the 16-ft. wide, 20-ft. long rolling "barn" he made for his dairy calves.

The open-sided shelter consists of a steel frame made from drill stem with a pair of wheels mounted on back. It has a tin roof on top with a 2-ft. overhang. Wooden boards bolted to the front and sides keep calves in. A 4-ft. long feed trough (made from an old hot water heater) and 5-ft. long milk trough (made from a men's urinal) mount in front. The back end of the shed is covered by a wire panel gate that swings open. To move the barn, Jennette hooks the lower arms of his tractor 3-pt. onto the front of the barn, lifts, and then drives away slowly.

"I move the barn to a clean place whenever the grass runs out so calves always have fresh grass to eat. It has reduced death losses to just about zero. I keep about 7 calves inside the barn at a time.

"I keep calves grouped according to size and age. They go into the rolling barn as soon as they learn how to drink milk

from a bucket - when they're about 1 1/2 weeks old. They stay in it until they start eating good about 6 weeks later. Then I put them out to pasture.

"I usually park it near my milk barn so I don't have to walk far to feed them. I use buckets to put feed and milk in the troughs. A wire panel placed in front of the troughs keeps any cows that get out of their pasture from eating the calves' feed. I use a hose next to my milk barn to fill a 5-gal. bucket of water that I place inside. I bottle-feed young calves tied to the outside of the rolling shed for five or six days until they learn how to drink from a bucket, then move them inside.

"I originally built my portable barn to cover piles of cottonseed that I was feeding to dairy cattle. When I'm not using it for calves I use it as a garage. I've even put a picnic table inside it and used it for a birthday party."

He spent about \$350 to build the rolling shed.

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## "Crustbuster" Helps Crops Emerge

A home-built 6-row "crustbuster", built from a variety of discarded parts, has saved a corn crop more than once for Illinois farmer Glenn McCrea.

Most fields on his farm have heavy black soils where crusting is not a problem. But McCrea has a few fields with what he calls "timber" soils that crust over with a hard shell after a spring rain, making it difficult for his crop to emerge. To solve the problem, he built this weighted row hoe to break through and let the crop emerge.

The toolbar he used was originally used to tow a chain link harrow. The clamp-on shanks came off an IH cultivator. The rotary hoe wheels came off a Deere rotary hoe.

McCrea says he used cultivator shanks to support the hoe wheels because they can handle the extra weight he adds to the frame in the form of IH tractor weights. Spacing is set up for 30-in. rows.

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