



Air-through tailgate opens at center for easy access to cargo and makes it easy to step up into truck box. It also locks at center to open like a normal tailgate.

"FARMERS TELL US IT'S THE BEST TAILGATE THEY'VE EVER SEEN"
New Pickup Tailgate Hinges In The Middle

"It's the best pickup tailgate ever designed. No question about it," says Gary Walt, inventor and manufacturer of a new hinge-in-the-middle air flow tailgate that he predicts "will become the standard in the industry" within a few years.

Although at first glance it looks like other after-market tailgates and opens and closes like a regular tailgate, Walt's add-on unit has a unique feature that no other pickup tailgate has ever had before - it opens in the middle. That means you can easily reach

into the pickup by pushing one or both sides of the gate inward. Or, you can move one side of the gate out of the way to step up into the truck using the rear bumper, rather than stepping onto the tailgate from the side.

"A friend of mine broke his neck in an accident and asked me to come up with an easier-to-use tailgate so he could reach into the back of the truck from a wheelchair. After fooling around with the idea, I realized I had come up with a revolutionary new design that virtually every farmer and pickup owner would want," says Walt, who has started production on the new tailgate. He also manufactures big bale handling equipment.

The tailgate fits in place of any tailgate on any pickup. It's available either in a metal mesh air-flow design or in solid metal. Both sides of the gate open inward or outward or they can remain solid so you can put the tailgate down like a normal tailgate. Once in the down position, you can lift either side of the tailgate up to step up into the pickup or simply to reach into the back of it.

Sells for \$400 (U.S.). Walt is looking for distributors.

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You can lift up either side of tailgate when it's down.



Converted Massey 690 no longer leaves deep wheel tracks on Atkinson's heavy clay soil, improving seeding accuracy when planting crops.

HOME-BUILT, BOLT-ON CONVERSION
3-Wheel Tractor "Floats" Over Fields Like An ATV

While most tractor manufacturers around the world work on new rubber track systems for row crop tractors, one British farmer says he's come up with a different solution - a 3-wheel tractor that "floats" over fields like an ATV.

James Atkinson, who farms near Stillingfleet, Yorkshire, mounted Terra tires on the rear of his Massey Ferguson 690. Then he replaced the front axle with a bolt-on single wheel assembly designed to be fitted with a third flotation tire.

He made the conversion because of problems he and his father, Norman, were having on some of their heavy clay ground, which they have been converting to minimum tillage. Trash tended to stay on top of the ground and soil "puffed up" around wheel tracks as the tractor passed. That uneven ground caused problems when drilling crops.

Atkinson first considered fitting the tractor with a set of rollers that would flatten the soil across the width of the tractor but decided it made more sense to let the tractor do the work. In the process, he ended up with a machine that goes virtually anywhere and causes minimal compaction. He made the conversion without any permanent modification to the tractor. He can convert back to the standard axle at any time.

He found a large sheet of 5/8-in. steel plate at a scrap yard to make the front assembly. Side plates bolt to either side of the frame. A vertical kingpin (made out of a tractor axle shaft - a machine shop made a sleeve fitted with bearings) mounts between them over a large steering fork that carries the wheel.

Steering is controlled by a pair of hydraulic cylinders that mount on either side of the kingpin and are plumbed into the tractor's original hydraulic-controlled steering. Atkinson says the tractor steers nearly the same as before the conversion. The front axle came off a potato harvester. Lights mount above the front wheel.

Total expense to make the conversion was about \$2,500, not including the second hand Terra tires. According to Atkinson, the tractor's 78 hp. easily handles the larger tires although he added a heavy-duty clutch to be on the safe side. The tires provide a



Cylinders on either side of king pin turn big front wheel. They're plumbed into tractor's existing power steering.

solid "footprint" across the width of the tractor except for two 4-in. strips missed on either side of the front wheel, which he flattens out by dragging a length of heavy angle iron just ahead of his drill. "Germination is now very even and we have lost the tendency for early emergence in the wheel tracks," he says.

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