Home-Built Bale Processor "Good As Factory-Built"

"Compared with the big round bale feeders we used before, we figure it easily saves us a half bale a day in wasted hay," says Harvey Lorton about the big bale processor/feeder he and his sons, Dan and Gary, built from scratch to feed round bales into fenceline feeders.

The key component in the bale processor is a 7 1/2-ft. section of a Brillion flail chopper. They also made use of the pto shaft, belts and pulleys off the chopper.

The flail chopper mounts lengthwise on the right side of a 6 by 7 1/2-ft. hopper they built out of 12 ga. sheet metal. It's pto-powered by three V-belts and a 3-groove pulley.

Once the bale is loaded, a conveyor to the chopper chain, feeds the bale toward the rotor, peeling off a 2-in. layer of hay as the bale turns. The conveyor is powered by a low-speed, high-torque store-bought orbit motor that turns a 1 1/4-in. dia. shaft. The motor, which is detachable for other uses, is equipped with a small drive sprocket, while the conveyor drive shaft is equipped with a larger sprocket for a gear reduction of 4:1.

A custom-built concave, equipped with 3-in. sq. grates, grinds hay coming off the rotor into 3 to 4-in. lengths. An unloading auger off an old Gleaner combine mounts underneath the concave to feed hay onto the processor's belt conveyor.

The conveyor is 7-ft. long and 14-in. wide and is fitted with paddles. Height is adjustable with a winch and cable mounted on the side of the unit.

"To chop a bale properly, we have to run the tractor wide open and it doesn't take very long, either," says Lorton. "We can process half a bale at a time for loading into our 100-ft. fenceline bunk in less than five minutes."

The Lortons built their bale processor last fall for about $1,500. It handles big 5 1/2 by 6-ft. round bales.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harvey Lorton, Rt. 1, Box 134, Greenfield, Ill. 62044 (ph 217 368-2168).

"Low Waste" Round Bale Feeder

After watching his cows waste a lot of feed using his commercial round bale feeder, David McCoy, Fredericktown, Ohio, decided to build his own "low waste" bale feeder. He used an old World War II bomb trailer.

The feeder holds three round bales. It has V-shaped sides that are hinged at the bottom, allowing either side to be flipped over onto the other for easy clean-out. A pair of dolly wheels on front makes it easy to maneuver. "My total cost was only about $700," says McCoy.

He already had the bomb trailer which his dad had bought but never used. He used 3 1/2-in. sq. steel to make a 17 1/2-ft. long frame that mounts on the chassis of the trailer. He welded old "diagonal bar" steel hay panels to the sides and ends of the trailer and bolted a 2 by 12 wooden board on top of each side. The boards force cows to reach through the panels instead of feeding off the top of the bale.

A pair of steel pipes run the length of the floor. The center V-panels are U-bolted to pipes so they pivot back and forth freely.

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Portable Fuel Tank Virtually Theft-Proof

"We use it pull it to haul diesel fuel to our other farm to refuel tractors and combines," says Harvey Lorton about a home-built fuel tank trailer.

It consists of a 3 by 3 by 8-ft. tank built out of 10 ga. sheet steel with 540-gal. capacity.

The axle was made from two pieces of 12-in. channel iron, while vertical members supporting the spindles were made of 4-in. channel iron. The 6-bolt spindles were fitted with 1100 by 15-in. implement wheels.

Lorton converted a hand-cranked pump model off an old diesel fuel barrel to power using a high-speed, low-torque orbit motor that originally powered slingers on a fertilizer spreader.

"It pumps up to 25 gpm's," says Lorton. "Pulling this tank to the farm sure beats driving our tractors and combines back and forth."

As an added bonus, the tank is difficult to steal from since it requires hydraulic power to operate the pump, he adds.

"Not every Tom, Dick and Harry has hydraulics on their pickup," he says.

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Truck-Mounted Ladder Works At Any Angle

"This truck-mounted ladder is designed so you can use it whether the truck box is up or down so it's easy to clean out the box," says Dave Bryden, Arborfield, Sask.

The 5-ft. long ladder is about 1 ft. wide at the top and flares out to about 3 ft. wide at the bottom. The sides of the ladder are made from 1-in. dia. steel tubing. The curved rungs are made from 3/4-in. steel rods. When the box is in the horizontal position, the left side of the ladder is straight up and down. When the box is in the raised position, the right side of the ladder is straight up and down.

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