Photo by Jeff Grant, N'West Iowa REVIEW

Recycled plastic sheeting costs only about half as much as plywood and lasts much longer. Hog producers use it as farrowing crate dividers or to line walls of buildings.

4 BY 8-FT. PLASTIC SHEETS MADE FROM MILK JUGS, SOAP JUGS, ICE CREAM PAILS, ETC.

Hog Barn Panels Made Out Of Plastic Jugs

Virgil Houtkooper wants people to keep drinking milk - lots of milk.

No, he isn't advertising for the American Dairy Association. Houtkooper needs about 14,000 milk or other plastic jugs daily to keep his company, Iowa Plastics Inc., in operation. The one-year-old company turns plastic milk jugs, soap jugs, ice cream pails, etc., into 4 by 8-ft. sheets of virtually indestructible plastic. About 90% of the sheets are sold to hog producers who use them as farrowing crate dividers or to line the walls of farrowing or nursery buildings.

The company, located on Houtkooper's farm near Hull, Iowa, is the first recycling business of its kind in the Midwest and possibly the country. "We're taking a throw away product and making something good out of it," says Houtkooper, who markets the sheets through lumber yards, elevators, and hog equipment dealers. Recycled plastic sheeting costs only about half as much as plywood and lasts much longer because it doesn't rot and is so smooth that bacteria can't stick to the surface, says Houtkooper, adding that he hasn't found a hog yet that can wreck it. You can nail through the sheets or use sheetrock screws. No pre-drilling is required.

Collection sites throughout Iowa and surrounding states collect the plastic containers and turn them into granulated plastic (the company pays 10 to 14 cents a pound). Cardboard boxes containing 800 to 1,000 lbs. of granulated plastic are trucked to the company and stored until needed.

To manufacture the sheets Houtkooper uses an experimental 600-degree propane gas oven invented by a man in Missouri. Houtkooper purchased the patent rights to the oven. Granulated material is augered into a dryer, weighed, and dumped into a 4 by 8-ft. two-piece aluminum dye resembling an oversized cookie sheet or pizza pan. The granules are leveled off by hand. A lid is placed on top and a dye is placed into the oven for 20 minutes. The dye is preheated in the oven to transform the plastic into a liquid state. Hydraulic pressure is then applied to flatten the sheet. The sheets are cooled on racks for two hours. A crew of four full-time employees trims off the excess plastic and starts the process again.

Sheets are available in 1/2 and 3/8-in. thicknesses in two colors. Milk jugs and other white plastic containers produce a marbled white sheet while soap bottles and other miscellaneous plastics combine to make a multi-colored sheet. The 1/2-in. thick sheet weighs 80 lbs. and sells for $50. The 3/8-in. thick sheet weighs 60 lbs. and sells for $45.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Iowa Plastics Inc., 322 N. Main Ave., Sioux Center, Iowa 51250 (ph 712 722-0692).

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"KINDER AND GENTLER"

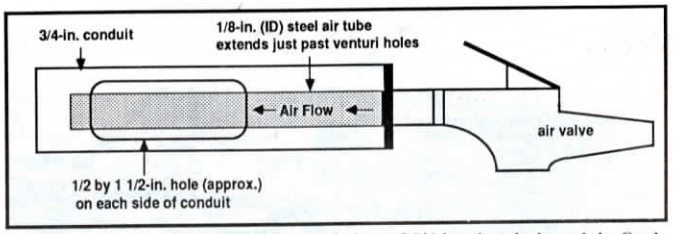
"Live" Mouse Trap

Persons looking for a "kinder and gentler' way to get rid of mice will like the new Trip-Trap. It catches mice without hurting or killing them.

Made of plastic, the Trip-Trap has a bait box up front. The trap automatically locks shut to trap the mouse inside when triggered. To release the mouse, you simply open the entrance-blocking flap. The manufacturer recommends releasing captured mice a mile or more away to help insure that they don't come back.

Sells for $4, including shipping.

For more information, contact: Charles Achterberg, pres.; K.G. Johnson Livestock Equipment Co.; E10706 Hwy 33 West, Baraboo, Wis. 53913 (ph 608 356-2194).



Lever-type air valve is attached to end of piece of 3/4-in. electrical conduit. Oval-shaped holes are cut on either side of conduit 4 to 5 in. from valve.

"VENTURI" LETS SMALL COMPRESSOR MOVE 5 TO 10 TIMES MORE AIR

Simple Conversion Boosts Air Compressor Capacity

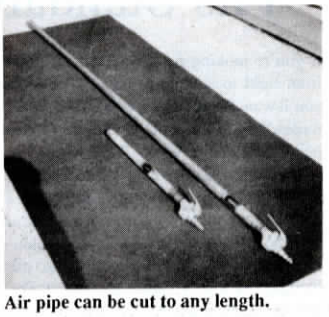
At first glance this new blower pipe doesn't look like much. But hook it up to a small portable air compressor and you won't believe how much air comes out the end.

"I wanted a way to get more air volume out of a small air compressor for blowing dust out of combines, radiators, around elevators and so on. This venturi idea lets a small 100 psi portable air compressor move 5 to 10 times more air. Works much better than hand-held electric or gas blowers and eliminates the need for a big compressor. And by using a long pipe you can stand back out of the dust," says Terrence Piekarski of Ski's Repair, Lowry, Minn., who came up with the new idea.

Here's how the blower works: Piekarski attaches a heavy-duty lever-type air valve to the end of a piece of 3/4-in. electrical conduit. The conduit can be cut to any length, depending on what you plan to use it for. It can even be bent in a curve for getting into difficult-to-reach locations like overhead milk pipelines, etc.

Key to success of the idea are the oval-shaped holes Piekarski cuts on either side of the conduit 4 to 5 in. from the valve. Then he runs a small steel tube (1/8-in. inner dia.) directly out of the air valve down the inside of the conduit to just past the two holes.

When air comes blasting down out of the small tube, headed on down the length of the conduit, it sets up a venturi action that draws air into the conduit through the two holes.



Air pipe can be cut to any length.

"Many times more air is drawn in through the openings in the large tube and forced out the end of the conduit than could be generated by a small air compressor alone. At about 100 psi, a small compressor can deliver a tremendous amount of air. I've sold many of them to elevators who need a lot of air to get the job done," says Piekarski.

He says the blower pipe is easy to build yourself or he sells them equipped with a heavy-duty Milton air valve. The electrical conduit can be cut to any length. The shorter they are the better they work because drag is reduced, but Piekarski says they work fine at lengths of 7 to 8 ft., which keeps you out of the dust.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Terrence Piekarski, Ski's Repair, P.O. Box 58, Lowry, Minn. 56349 (ph 612 283-5347).

YOU CAN BUY THE KNIFE ALONE OR THE COMPLETE ATTACHMENT

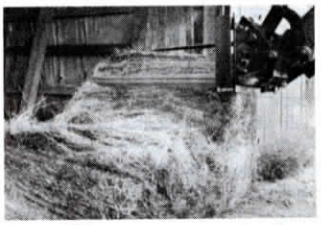
Big Bale "Saw" For Front-End Loaders

You'll like this simple new big bale "saw" that attaches to any front-end loader with double-acting lift cylinders.

Developed in Sweden, the "Silosplit" knife mounts on a rectangular frame that attaches to front end loader arms in place of a bucket. The upper edge of the Silosplit is rounded so it can be used to pick up and transport bales and is also equipped with a second small stabilizer tine that keeps the bale from turning when handled.

To split a bale, you simply position the knife above the bale and press it straight down into the bale using the double-acting lift cylinders on the loader.

Silosplit sells for right at $500 (U.S.). You can also buy just the Silosplit knife for $250 to fit in place of an existing bale spear you may already own.



"Silosplit" mounts on rectangular frame that attaches to front end loader arms.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Alo Canada Inc., P.O. Box 410, Buffalo, N.Y. 14213 (ph 416 871-3526).