

LP Tanks Make Great Feedbunks And More

Hayden McLeish likes making use of old LP tanks. He turns them into water tanks and even into snowplow blades, but it's as feed bunks where they really shine.

"Their round shape keeps the cattle from separating out feed and silage components as they eat. They can't shove anything into a corner," he says. "Everything just slides back together, and they eat it all."

McLeish likes the ease of making bunks with the big tanks too. He buys out-of-date 500 and 1,000-gal. tanks and cuts them in thirds lengthwise. He simply takes the circumference and divides it by three.

"At first I would cut the ends off level with the sides, but I discovered that the cattle would push feed out the ends," says McLeish. "Now I leave the curved ends pointed, and the feed just falls back into the bunk."

He fills the tanks with water to push out any residual gas before cutting the tanks with a torch. He uses a straight edge to mark the cutting lines and then grinds off the paint, sometimes as many as 15 layers.

"I drill a 1-in. drain hole in the bottom of each bunk and drop a bolt with an oversized washer through it," says McLeish. "If the bolt freezes over and water builds up inside, all I have to do is kick the bolt to drain it out."

He adds 24-in. legs that are cut on 45-degree angles at one end and ground to match the curve of the tank. The other leg end is also left at an angle for increased stability. "They don't slide around on concrete, and

they also come out of frozen ground easier that way," explains McLeish.

He has also cut the tanks in half for pasture bunks that he leaves without legs resting directly on the ground. He warns that care has to be taken or a cow can be pushed into a bunk and not be able to get out. He lost one cow that way.

"I've welded a pipe across the top on some, but now I just make sure I have plenty of bunk space for the cows," he says. "I try to make sure there's at least 4 ft. of bunk for each animal, so they don't push and shove each other to get at the feed."

McLeish says the bunks are built to handle tough treatment. If they fill with ice and snow, he simply turns them upside down with the skid steer.

"The steel varies by state," he explains. "LP tanks in Wisconsin are 5/16-in. thick. In Illinois, they're 1/4-in. On the 1,000-gal. tanks, I sometimes have to reinforce the seam, or they can bow in the middle when I pick them up with the loader."

McLeish says the out-of-date tanks can be purchased for \$85 in his area. He estimates using around \$50 in gas to cut them, and that legs, if bought new, would cost about \$20 each. However, he usually uses scrap pipe or steel tubing.

"The tanks also have the right curve to make great snowplow blades," he says. "In addition, I've used them for water tanks by cutting windows out of them for the cow's



Hayden McLeish turns old LP tanks into water tanks and feedbunks. He likes the way feed falls to the center.

head. The water can freeze solid, and it doesn't affect the tank."

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Netting system attaches to back of a Kubota utility vehicle and is used to lay netting over grape vines.

Utility Vehicle Rolls Out Bird Netting

By C. F. Marley, Contributing Editor

"Our hand-operated netting system attaches to the back of a Kubota utility vehicle and is used to unroll netting over grape vines. It makes placing the netting an easy job," say Jackie and Albert Becker, Plainview, Ill.

Jackie came up with a T-shaped metal support frame that bolts on back of the utility vehicle. It's made from 1-in. sq. pipe and fits into the vehicle's receiver hitch. The top part of the frame supports 4 lengths of 8-in. dia. pvc pipe spaced about 2 ft. apart. Elbows on either end help the netting slide through without catching.

The netting is stored in a bag at the back of the utility vehicle and is enough to cover a full row.

In operation, the lead end of the netting is threaded through the pipe lengths so the

dispensing end is directly over the grape row. After that it's just a matter of driving carefully, allowing the netting to feed out directly over the grape row.

"We usually have one or two people on each side of the row who pull the netting out as someone else drives the utility vehicle down the row," says Jackie. "Before we built it we tried predator calls, owls, audio and video tapes, reflective tape but nothing worked. We spent only about \$100 to build it. We use the same setup to roll the netting back up at the end of the season."

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T-shaped metal support frame bolts on back of utility vehicle. Netting slides out through 8-in. dia. pvc pipe at top of frame.

He Has A Passion For Plow Parts

Tyler Buchheit has turned a passion for plows into a business, supplying quality parts for Deere plows. Buchheit says the passion is an important part of the service he offers.

"The complexity of plows is mind boggling," he says. "Manufacturers offered a wide variety of plow bottoms to match different soils and different tillage practices in different parts of the country. At one time, Deere offered 8 to 9 different moldboards each with their own plow bottoms and all in 12, 14 and 16-in. shares."

Buchheit started his business after trying to find reasonably priced parts for a couple of old plows he was restoring. While there were dozens of vendors selling aftermarket parts, none were for antique plows. He wanted a 17-in. notched coultter blade, not fluted or rippled like modern blades.

"They were designed so each notch pulls trash down to be cut," says Buchheit. "I couldn't find what I wanted, and what I did find was crazy high priced."

A tillage parts vendor at the National Farm Machinery Show told him he didn't have what Buchheit wanted, but he could make it.

"I started with that one part," recalls Buchheit. "I now carry nearly 100 parts that I have had made for Deere plows, and I am a dealer for Wiese. I also buy old plows and salvage parts from them."

More important than the number of parts he offers is the information he shares. He can explain not only the multiple types of plow shares and bottoms offered on different model plows, but also what items were optional.

"You may be able to get a part from a dealer like a trash board, but it's going to be the latest version," says Buchheit. "Most people want to restore things to what the original was. Some parts like coultter blades, were optional. Not every farmer spent that extra \$3 per blade on what they thought was a luxury, but when restoring a plow, most want to dress it up and make it stand out."

Other parts require the special knowledge Buchheit offers. He points to alfalfa root cutters that bolt to landsides for plowing crops with a deep taproot. They actually cut



Tyler Buchheit supplies quality parts for antique Deere plows. "I love old plows and enjoy helping guys find the solutions they need," he says.

the first 2 in. of the next furrow. "A 14-in. plow share actually only cuts 12 in., but turns over 14 in the furrow," he explains. "With deep tap roots, plants in the last 2 in. can get covered without their tap roots being cut. The root cutter takes care of them."

Buchheit emphasizes quality, authenticity and price in his reproductions. He makes high wear items like those cutters out of AR400 abrasion resistant steel, selling the rare part for \$29.99. His difficult-to-find notched coultter blade is priced at \$36.00. Some parts, like a \$29.75 moldboard plow extension, fit multiple Deere plows as well as some Ford, IH and Case plows.

FARM SHOW readers unsure of the plow parts they're looking for are encouraged to take a picture of their plow. Send it to Buchheit with as much other information as possible; such as the cut of the plow, any parts numbers, type of wheel, plow beam and lift. He also welcomes calls from fellow plow fans.

"I just love old plows and get enjoyment helping guys find solutions they need," says Buchheit.

He sells parts over the phone, from his website and on eBay under the seller name 2cylfan. He requests people call for an appointment as he also farms.

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