

### Machinery Shed Doubles As Farm Home

By Jim Ruen

"When I'm working on equipment in the winter, it's awful convenient to have the storage area attached to the house," says Ian McCreary, who's raising his family in a 48 by 1,125-ft. farm building.

His kids love it. "They can step out the back door and ride their bikes even in winter," says McCreary.

The house takes up the first 30 ft. of the building, giving the family a little over 2,800 sq. ft. of living area. Wall insulation 14 in. thick keeps the living area warm in winter. A double sheet rocked wall between the house and the machinery area acts as a firewall.

Heat is supplied via a perimeter heating duct laid in the cement floor. An open stairwell with a fan mounted above pulls heat to the upper floor. The main floor is laid out like a standard bungalow, while the upstairs has a large rumpus room, kids bedrooms, and storage.

The machinery storage area includes a utility room for the home's furnace and hot water heater. An access door and parking space for the family car are directly behind the living area, while the machinery access door is at the rear of the building. The rear is also where the shop and welding equipment are located.

McCreary, and his wife, Mary Smillie, are generally quite pleased with the combo concept. There are a couple of changes they would suggest to someone planning to build a similar unit. "At first we had a problem with mice coming through the fire wall," recalls McCreary. "A layer of tin over the fire wall might help keep them out."

A second suggestion would be to install an air exchange system to create positive air pressure in the living area. "When we start a diesel engine in the shop, the smell can get into the house."

Positive air pressure might also have helped a few years ago when a combine burned up inside the shed. The heat melted the metal on the combine and even melted one of the overhead support beams.

"We got a little smoke damage in the house, but the shed is tight enough



Ian McCreary's family lives in one end of a big machine shed.



Back end of building looks like any other storage building.

that the fire ran out of oxygen," recalls McCreary.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ian McCreary and Mary Smillie, Box 69, Bladworth, Sask., Canada SOG OJO (ph 306 567-2099).

### Bin Maker Right At Home In Grain Bin House

When Allen and Kay Liefer, Walton, Kansas, decided to build a house, it seemed natural to make it out of a grain bin.

Allen started selling grain bins when he was 25 years old. Ten years later, he began manufacturing them. "We thought about building a house for quite awhile before we actually began," he says.

The Lieferers used a 45-ft. diameter bin with 16-ft. sidewalls as the frame for their house. In addition to the grain bin, they incorporated parts of a barn that they salvaged from Kay's grandparents' farm in Missouri, more than 200 miles away. The barn had been built by her great-grandfather from lumber he sawed himself.

Liefer hired a local builder who saw building a house in the round as a real challenge.

While he used regular galvanized steel on the sides of the bin house, Liefer purchased steel with a baked-on tan finish for the roof. "I thought it would make it look more like a house," he says.

"We sided the exterior of the bin with vertical cedar siding, so you can't tell it's a grain bin when you look at it, even though it has round walls and a grain bin roof," he says.

Rather than putting wallboard directly onto the round walls, they framed in 2 by 6 walls, making a 12-sided polygon. "By making the walls short and straight, it doesn't have the feel of being inside a round bin," Liefer says. "It meant, though, that the interior wall surface is about 10 in. away from the bin wall at the center of each section.

"We filled the space between the wallboard and the bin wall with insulation, so it's very well insulated," he says.

The house has a front and back door, with a covered porch that goes 3/4 of the way around the circle. Inside the back door, there's a laundry/mudroom area. As you progress around to the left, there's a kitchen and then a dining area, which opens into a family room with a fireplace. The fireplace is at the center of the bin, with the chimney extending straight up and out through the fill opening at the center of the bin roof.

The front door opens out of the family/living room area. On around the outside wall is situated the master bedroom and first floor bath.

The dining room and family room area has a vaulted ceiling.

The bin house also has half of a second story with a balcony looking over the lower level. Beams taken from the barn support the balcony, which is open along the inside and looks out over the dining room and family rooms. There's an office, a guest bedroom and bath, and storage space in the upper level.

"We used boards from the old haymow floor to make the floor on the second story," he says.

The living room fireplace is more than decorative. It has a water jacket that's connected to more than 3,000 ft. of tubing that runs through a foot of



Allen Liefer says most people don't believe their house started out as a grain bin.



Family room has a vaulted ceiling. Second story has a balcony overlooking the lower level.

sand under the concrete slab floor of the bin. "The water circulating under the floor warms it and the heat rises, giving us uniform heating throughout the house," he says.

Liefer says few people believe their house is actually a grain bin. In total, he figures the completed house cost about \$65,000 in 1988.

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### Reader Recipes

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and drain. Put in bottom of dish and top with croutons. In separate bowl, beat eggs, 2 cups milk, and dry mustard. Pour ingredients over croutons and layer with grated cheese. Cover and chill overnight. The next morning, mix 1/2 cup milk and both cans of soup. Pour over cheese, and bake at 325° for one hour.

Susan Metcalf,  
Billings, Mont.

### Baked Skunk

Skin the skunk carefully, making sure to remove the scent sac under the tail. After skunk is cut up and quartered, soak the meat in salty water overnight.

Put the meat in a pan and sprinkle paprika, sage, salt and pepper along with some onions. Bake in a medium oven until tender. Invite any politicians you know well enough.

From a local  
Canadian cookbook,  
"Incredible Edibles  
of Yesteryear"

### "Popped" Wheat

1 cup clean, dry whole wheat  
Heavy, deep skillet  
Oil or butter  
Salt

Place wheat in skillet and place over medium-high heat. Shake or stir until wheat makes a "popping" sound and is slightly browned. (Some kernels may escape the pan but not like popcorn.) Remove from heat, add oil or butter and salt. Or add a little soy sauce and sprinkle with chili powder. If available, "pop" and add sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, instant brown rice, or toasted nuts.

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