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Dump Truck School Bus

"We spent less than \$1,000 converting this school bus into a dump truck, and it performs as well or better than any dump truck we could have bought," says Sonny Fry, Muncy, Penn., who uses the converted bus to deliver coal to local homeowners.

"We have a small coal yard and I also am a dairy farmer and a bus contractor for our local school district. I bought this bus new in 1988. We can only use them for 10 years at school before we have to buy new ones. The dealer would only give me \$500 in trade so I decided to keep it and find a new use.

"It was a 72-passenger bus. With help from my son and son-in-law, we shortened it by sliding the wheels up and shortened the driveshaft. Then we cut 17 ft. off the frame on the back end, saving the original rear bumper. We cut holes in it to install the back lights, making a neater-looking back end with better lighting.

"We took the high-lift hoist off our old coal truck and set it on the bus frame, with a bit of leveling up of the frame.

"It works great for delivering coal. We kept the driver's seat and one passenger seat in



To shorten the bus, Fry slid the wheels up and cut off part of the driveshaft. Then he cut 17 ft. off the frame on the back end.

the "cab" compartment. There's great visibility and lots of room to store tools as well as shovels, brooms, coal chutes, tire blocks, etc. It's also easy to climb in and out.

"We can haul five tons of coal on this truck. We painted it blue. It makes deliveries much more convenient and easier for us."

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Seed Bag "Cradle" For Forklifts

Tom Mix's forklift couldn't lift big bags of seed beans high enough to clear the wagon he used to fill his planter in the field. Also, he was concerned the lifting straps might break, causing the bag to fall and hurt someone. He solved both problems by building his own seed bag cradle.

"It lets me lift the bag from the bottom instead of the top, which provides 3 to 4 ft. of extra lifting height," says Mix. "And, I never have to worry about straps breaking."

The 5-ft. high cradle has a 4-ft. sq. cone at the bottom and a pair of horizontal arms on top.

He uses his forklift to pick up a bag by its straps and sets it on the cradle. Then he picks up the cradle from underneath with the forks. Once the bag has been lifted over the wagon he opens up the bottom, allowing seed to funnel down through the cone.

"I can lift the bag high enough to clear 12 ft.," says Mix. "I used 1-in. sq. tubing to make the cradle frame and light gauge metal to make the cone."

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"It lets me lift the bag from the bottom instead of the top, which provides 3 to 4 ft. of extra lifting height," says Tom Mix about his home-built seed bag cradle.



Rear-mounted platform works great for hauling fence posts and other objects, says inventor Pete Peters.

Handy Tractor-Hauling Platform

This simple rear-mounted platform is designed for small hauling jobs such as fence posts, snow fence, square bales, and other things. The corner posts on back keep cargo from rolling off. It's very easy to attach or remove from the tractor.

It consists of an angle iron frame that runs up under the rear axle. Another crossbar rests on top of the drawbar. One bolt through the drawbar holds it in place. It takes only about two minutes to install or remove. Deck boards rest loosely on the angle irons.

Peters primarily uses the cargo platform for fencing.



Angle iron frame runs up under rear axle.

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Prototype microwave hay dryer used 210 household-type microwave units to dry high-moisture hay.

Update On Revolutionary Microwave Hay Dryer

Several years ago FARM SHOW reported on a revolutionary new "on-the-go" microwave hay dryer designed to cut hay drying time in half and improve the quality of the crop (Vol. 18, No. 6). The invention used ordinary household microwave "motors" to dry hay in the field.

Commercial development of the innovative hay dryer was dealt a major setback in late 1995 with the unexpected death of its 61-year-old inventor, Harold Herron.

The 50-ft. long hay dryer was fitted with 210 microwave units and a 7-ft. wide baler-type pickup. Seven 11-in. wide conveyor belts ran the length of the machine and dumped the dried hay out the back of the machine, ready to bale. The machine was powered by a 580 hp diesel engine that drove a 320 kw generator and a hydraulic pump to power the conveyor belts and pickup.

The machine was originally tested in Florida where Herron lived. After he died, it ended up in Ontario, Canada, where a new

company was formed - Int-Agra Technologies Inc. - which built a new, smaller machine. "We wanted to see how the machine would work in heavier hay," says project coordinator Jack Janzen. "The first model we built used a 100-kilowatt generator to reduce moisture content from 50 percent to as low as 20 percent. We built a second generation model using a 75 kilowatt magnetron and did field tests in 1998 and 1999."

For now, work on the idea has come to a standstill. "We want to build a third generation model with at least four 75-watt kilowatt magnetrons to allow us to work faster in the field. We're trying to get the University of Guelph to do the test work on it," says Janzen, who is looking for investors.

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