

**Editor's Notebook**



**Mark Newhall**  
Editor & Publisher



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A big "thank you" to everyone who ordered a copy - or even two or three copies - of our big new "Encyclopedia of Made It Myself Ideas" that was announced in the last issue of FARM SHOW. This 482-page book is the best collection of stories we've ever put together. It's great reading, with more than 1,200 home-built machines from the past 5 years of FARM SHOW. Plus a special section that features the 30 greatest inventions ever featured in FARM SHOW.

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**How to "Sex" Chicks**

I grew up on a commercial turkey farm so I knew from an early age that "sexing" newborn chicks is a valuable skill that not too many people can master. Floyd Benson, Danville, Ill., recently told us about an unusual do-it-yourself method. It sounds goofy but he was serious, so here it is:

"I've been using this method for the past 4 years and it really works," says Benson. "Take a flip top tab from a pop can and tie a string to it. Hold the string so the tab is over the head of the chick (or other animal). If the tab moves back and forth, it's a male. If it rotates in a circle, it's a female. Old timers have told me you can also use a needle and thread to do the same thing."

**Home-Sized Power Plant**

People crowded around this home-sized mini power plant that was on display at the 2005 Lawn, Garden Tractor & Power Equipment Expo in Louisville, Ky. last month. The show attracts more than 450 exhibits and some 28,000 visitors from around the world - and it often appeared that all of them were crowded around the Honda-powered unit.

Developed by Honda in Japan, where more than 15,000 of the co-generation units are already in use, it's a micro-sized home appliance that runs on natural gas. It's designed to replace furnaces in new or existing homes. The idea, in a nutshell, is this: Electricity is produced as a by-product of creating heat to keep a home warm. An 85 percent efficient generator produces electricity that is fed back into the electric grid as heat is siphoned off the engine to heat the home. At this time, 35 states allow "net metering", which means the value of electricity fed into the grid can be deducted from the cost of electricity used.



Honda's mini power plant generates income by feeding electricity back into the power grid while doubling as a furnace.

The Micro-CHP system, as it's called, is being imported by a company called Climate Energy in Massachusetts ([www.climate-energy.com](http://www.climate-energy.com); ph 508 359-4500). "This is real. The technology is ready today and will change the way the home heating industry does business," says Dr. Eric Guyer, Climate Energy CEO. The system retails for around \$10,000 and is designed to last up to 20,000 hrs. before needing major maintenance. Control and trouble-shooting are done via an internet connection. The system doubles as a whole-house generator in case of power outage.

**Wasting Grain**

There is no place on earth where a kernel of grain looks more valuable than at the tail end of a combine. However, sometimes we worry too much about grain loss.

In a bushel of wheat there are about 950,000 kernels. In order to waste 5 bu. of grain during a 10-hour day, you would have to lose 138 kernels every second, or 8,240 every minute. It takes 26 kernels on a square foot of ground to make a bushel per acre. So relax. You're probably doing a pretty good job of bringing in your crops. (Jack McCreery, Kiowa, Kansas)

**Liberty Quotes**

"The real destroyer of the liberties of the people is he who spreads among them bounties, donations and benefits." *Plutarch (45-125)*

"The tree of liberty must be refreshed, from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural nature." *Thomas Jefferson*

"The entire world economy rests on the consumer. If he ever stops spending money he doesn't have on things he doesn't need, we're done for." *Bill Bonner*

"When the people find they can vote themselves money, that will herald the end of the republic." *Benjamin Franklin*

"The majority of us are for free speech when it deals with subjects concerning which we have no intense feelings." *Edmund B. Chaffee (1887-1936)*

"Freedom to differ is not limited to things that do not matter much. That would be a mere shadow of freedom. The test of its substance is the right to differ as to things that touch the heart of the existing order." *Justice Robert H. Jackson (1892-1954)*

"The man who does not do his own thinking is a slave, and is a traitor to himself and his fellow man." *Robert G. Ingersoll (1833-1899)*

"Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom must, like men, undergo the fatigue of supporting it." *Thomas Paine*

"Politicians are interested in people. Not that this is a virtue. Fleas are interested in dogs." *P.J. O'Rourke*

"We are reluctant to admit that we owe our liberties to men of a type that today we hate and fear - unruly men, disturbers of the peace, men who resent and denounce what Whitman called 'the insolence of elected persons'. In a word, free men." *Gerald W. Johnson (1890-1980)*

**The 33 graduating students filed** into the already crowded auditorium. With rich maroon gowns flowing and traditional caps, they looked almost as grown up as they felt. Dads swallowed hard behind broad smiles, and moms freely brushed away tears.

This class could not pray during their commencement because of a recent court ruling prohibiting it. The principal and several students were careful to stay within the guidelines allowed by the ruling.

They gave inspirational and challenging speeches, but no one mentioned divine guidance and no one asked for blessings on the graduates or their families.

The speeches were nice, but they were routine....until the final speech.

A solitary student walked proudly to the microphone. He stood still and silent for just a moment, and then it happened. All 33 students, every single one of them, suddenly SNEEZED!

The student on stage simply looked at the audience and said, "God bless you, each and every one of you." And he walked off the stage. The audience exploded into applause. The graduating class had found a unique way to invoke God's blessing on their future without the court's approval!

**A little girl became restless** as the preacher's sermon dragged on and on. Finally, she leaned over to her mother and whispered, "Mommy, if we give him the money now, will he let us go?"

**A mother enters her daughter's bedroom** and sees a letter on the bed. With the worst premonition, she reads it, with trembling hands:

Dear Mom,  
It is with great regret and sorrow that I'm telling you that I have eloped with my new boyfriend. I found real passion and he is so nice, even with all his piercings and tattoos, and I love riding on the back of his big motorcycle. But it's not only that mom. I'm pregnant and Ahmed said that we will be very happy in his trailer in the woods. He wants to have many more children with me and that's my dream, too. I've learned that marijuana doesn't hurt anyone and we'll be growing it for us and his friends. In the meantime, we'll pray for science to find a cure for AIDS so Ahmed can get better. Don't worry Mom, I'm 15 years old now and I know how to take care of myself. Some day I'll visit so you can get to know your grandchildren.

Your daughter,  
Judith  
P.S. Mom, it's not true. I'm next door at Sandy's. I just wanted to show you that there are worse things in life than my report card, which is in the desk drawer. I love you!

Lutefisk lovers everywhere, celebrate! You can order the aromatic fish by mail no matter where you are in the world.



**What's For Dinner?**

If you've never had lutefisk, some people would say you're not missing anything. Other people - mostly of Scandinavian heritage - would tell you it's the food of the gods. I know people in Minnesota who say the holidays would not be the same without a big plateful of the jello-like, aromatic white fish.

While working on another story recently, I ended up talking to a fellow who told me he sells Lutefisk for a living at one of the biggest lutefisk producers in North America - Mike's Fish & Seafood in Glenwood, Minn. The company ships hundreds of thousands of pounds of lutefisk to customers across North America and around the world. In fact, the company has even shipped lutefisk to homesick soldiers in Iraq.

To make lutefisk, Mike's Fish buys dried cod from Norway and then soaks it in large vats of lye for about 20 days, which breaks down the structure of the fish into what some people say is a smooth tasty treat. Others call it a slimy, smelly slab of white something or other.

Anyway, my contact at Mike's Seafood said the company had recently come out with a new product: Lutefisk TV Dinners. I decided to order a couple (shown above) for Harold Johnson, founder and publisher emeritus of FARM SHOW, because he loves lutefisk. The dinners arrived a couple days later packed in frozen jell. But even though the box was wrapped and sealed securely, and each of the two TV dinners were individually sealed, the UPS driver who delivered the box said the aroma of lutefisk permeated his truck!

Harold, by the way, said the dinners were delicious. Mike's Fish sells lutefisk by mail for \$5.49/lb. For more info, contact Mike's Fish & Seafood, Inc., 260 Hwy 55 North, Glenwood, Minn. 56334 ph 800 950-4755 or 320 634-5146; [www.lutefiskmike.com](http://www.lutefiskmike.com).

**Worms Cause Pollution?**

A recent USDA report states that the billions of worms that farmers everywhere have been encouraged to promote in their fields might be funneling liquid manure - and other contaminants - to underground drainage tile.

That's right! The industrious little creatures have a dark side. Researchers did the study in no-till fields and found that water moved through the wormholes twice as fast as through soil with a low worm population. The study suggests that the most practical solution is for farmers to install shutoff valves so they can turn off drainage when applying liquid manure and crop chemicals.

**Old age is when** former classmates are so gray and wrinkled and bald that they don't recognize you.