

## Burying Family On The Farm

Ron Desens is the first of three generations to be buried on his family's central Minnesota farm. The idea of developing a private family cemetery on the family farm came to his wife Mindy after Ron's sudden death on the farm.

"He had pleaded with his folks years ago not to sell the land to developers and told them why it was sacred ground," says Mindy. She recalls him joking about wanting to be composted and spread by the manure spreader on the farm's fields.

While the two had discussed cremation, Mindy recalled hearing that Minnesota allows family burial plots. After talking it over with other family members, she approached Meeker county officials who approved the idea after walking the site.

"There was a legal process we had to go through, so I made a list and then followed up," recalls Mindy. "The list included getting a title opinion, getting the plot surveyed and getting approval from the local zoning board."

The family recognized that the process would take time. As her husband was not going to be embalmed, they worked with a

funeral home and had the body temporarily interred at a local cemetery. When the process was completed, Mindy dug Ron's grave herself. Last October, nearly a year after he died, Ron came home to his farm during a private family interment ceremony.

"We had an open house two days later, and people came to share stories and celebrate Ron's life," recalls Mindy. "He had been very active in a lot of organizations, including the organic movement."

The plot overlooks a lake and will soon resemble a small park. This spring she will begin landscaping the site with trees and a garden area, having already planted grapes and blueberries. The plantings, Mindy says, will be Ron's monument.

"I feel farmers will appreciate knowing they can do this," says Mindy. She points out that while her county officials were helpful, a man in a neighboring county had to sue his officials to establish a plot for his family. He was required to establish an escrow fund for maintenance and meet other county requirements.

Rules on establishing private cemetery plots vary by state and province. However,



Mindy Desens worked with county officials to get permission to set up a private cemetery on the family farm.

an increasing number of people are looking for alternatives, traditional and otherwise, to high cost funerals. Organizations such as the Funeral Consumers Alliance (800 765-0107); [www.funerals.org/index.htm](http://www.funerals.org/index.htm) or Forest of Memories ([www.forestofmemories.org/index.html](http://www.forestofmemories.org/index.html)) offer free information on con-

sumer rights and alternatives.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mindy Desens, 66683 288 St., Litchfield, Minn. 55355 (ph 320 693-8449) or Funeral Consumers Alliance, 33 Patchen Road, South Burlington, Vt. 05403.



"It's built much stronger than commercial above-ground swimming pools," says David McKenzie, who used steel grain bin panels to make this 4-ft. deep, 18-ft. dia. swimming pool.

## "Grain Bin" Swimming Pool

Steel grain bin panels make dandy swimming pools, says David McKenzie, Delisle, Sask., who used them to make a 4-ft. deep, 18-ft. dia. swimming pool.

"It's built much stronger than commercial above-ground swimming pools," says McKenzie, who built the "grain bin" pool behind his house four years ago. "We had a small above-ground metal swimming pool for years, but it rusted out and was so flimsy that we couldn't even lean on it. I wanted something that was built stronger. Half of this pool is underground and we installed a big pump that filters the water several times a day."

To build the pool, McKenzie used a skid loader to dig a hole and then placed the bin panels in it. The bin panels weren't quite the same diameter as the hole so he stretched them out and bolted in part of an extra ring. He put the smooth-headed bolts in backwards with the nuts on the outside. After bolting the bin panels together he sealed them with silicone.

The pool has a dirt floor with carpet laid over it. A commercial pool liner goes over the carpet. To keep the metal from puncturing the liner, he lined the panels with four layers of poly.

"It looks nice. People who see it for the first time don't have any idea it's made from bin panels," says McKenzie. "My three sons really enjoy it. I added a layer of big rocks around the perimeter of the pool to improve its looks. I used square tubing to make a lad-

der on the side. The ladder fits into square tubing sockets set in cement on the pool's floor and can be easily pulled out.

"I paid less than \$100 for the bin panels and \$400 for the pool liner. I already had the pump and filter. My total cost was only about \$500."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, David McKenzie, P.O. Box 614, Delisle, Sask., Canada S0L 0P0 (ph 306 493-8127).



Francis Soehnen turned a cable spool into an inexpensive, easy-to-move dog house.

## Cable Spool Makes Great Dog House

Francis "Butch" Soehnen, Beach City, Ohio, turns cable spools into an inexpensive dog house that's easy to move. "It worked so well I'm turning an extra large one into a shelter for our goats and miniature donkey."

He first installed a ring of 2 by 4's, spaced 17 in. apart around the perimeter of the spool. Then, he punched out the spool's center and attached siding to the outer edge of the spool to enclose it.

He put carpeting on the floor and insulated the top of the spool. A canvas flap lets his three labs, Jenny, Sally and Hershey in and out and keeps them warm inside.

When he needs to move the doghouse, he simply tips it on its side and rolls it to a new location.

Soehnen says the dogs love their house.



He first installed a ring of 2 by 4's, spaced 17 in. apart, around perimeter of spool.

"They wouldn't come out of it if they didn't have to," he jokes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Francis Soehnen, 10523 Soehnen Rd. N.W., Beach City, Ohio 44608 (ph 330 756-2055; fax 330 756-2878).

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