

Tractor "Horse Hitch" Big Hit At Parades

Hometown parades are a big draw in many rural communities, and Palmer Feldmann and son Gordon have come up with a proven crowd pleaser. Their tractor "horse" hitch features 4 WheelHorse garden tractors that pull a covered wagon, with all operations controlled from the wagon.

The pulling is done by one hydrostatic drive tractor on back, while the other tractors just tag along for the effect. Steering is done using reins attached to the tie rods on all the tractors.

"We take it to parades every summer where it's always a big hit. People can't figure out how we can control the tractors without anyone riding them," says Feldmann. "My son Gordon did most of the work."

All the tractors are equipped with Kohler engines. Three of them have 16hp engines and standard transmissions. The fourth tractor has a 10hp engine and a hydrostatic transmission and is the only tractor used to drive the team. (The other tractor transmissions are in neutral.) A boat cable runs from the tractor's hydrostatic gearshift lever back to a lever mounted on the wagon. Pushing the lever forward causes the tractor to go forward, and pulling it causes the tractor to back up.



Palmer Feldmann and his son Gordon came up with a big crowd pleaser at local parades. Their tractor "horse" hitch features 4 WheelHorse garden tractors that pull a covered wagon, with all operations controlled from reins from the wagon.

"Covered wagons in the old days had a lever on one side to operate the wagon's brakes. We're using that lever to operate the tractor's hydrostatic transmission," says Feldmann.

The operator steers by holding onto a pair of reins, which are attached to the tie rods on all the tractors. A pole runs forward from the wagon between the 2 sets of tractors, while a pair of crossbars connect the tractors from

drawbar to drawbar. A tie rod extends from the pole to the outside of both front tractors. The reins run from a pair of pulleys mounted on the pole 3 ft. ahead of the wagon, forward to the steering rod on each tractor.

Feldmann paid \$300 for the flatbed wagon, and his wife then made a canvas cover that lays over hoops that are attached to the sides of the wagon.

"We already had the tractors because for years we operated a WheelHorse dealership," says Feldmann. "Our total expense was about \$300, and most of that was for the wagon and converting it to a covered wagon."

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Dog Splint Heals Broken Bones On Young Calves

By Heather Smith Thomas

Young calves sometimes suffer broken legs. The good news is that their bones heal quickly if you can splint them properly.

We splinted a calf's hind leg using a dog splint. The leg was broken above the hock, which is a tough place to cast and really hard to heal on a big calf but very feasible on a young one.

"Most of the time when a really young calf suffers a broken leg, it's broken at the growth plate at the end of the long bone," says Dr. Mark Hilton, Purdue University. "When it's broken at the growth plate it tends to break straight across. If you can get the leg realigned and set the fracture, the leg will often respond well in a cast or splint."

He says that if the fracture is above the growth plate, it's generally better to use a

cast than a splint because the cast can share weight with the leg. "Splints work great for maintaining alignment of the limb, but if you have to also support some of the weight, a cast is more effective."

Some splints are designed for high limb injuries and can sometimes be used to immobilize the leg enough for it to heal. "A plastic dog splint, wrapped with stretchy tape to hold it in place, may be adequate to support a high break on a hind limb on a newborn calf. An older calf, carrying more weight, may not have such a good prognosis with a high break," says Hilton.

You can get plastic dog splints from your veterinarian; just select the proper size for the calf's leg. Place the splint over the leg to make sure it's the right size, then place some



A dog splint was used to heal calf's hind, which was broken above the hock. Splint was wrapped with stretchy tape to hold it in place.



padding such as roll cotton between the leg and splint. Wrap the splint with stretchy tape to hold it in place, with enough layers to make it solid and stable so the calf can walk on it and get up and around to nurse. If there are no

complications, the leg should heal completely within 2 to 3 weeks. But on a fast-growing calf, you may have to redo the splint if the bandaging becomes too tight.

How To Conduct Your Own Tractor Olympics

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

With the winter Olympics behind us, Liz Capen says it's time to plan ahead for summer's Tractor Olympics. She has a book to make it easier.

Tractor Olympics events give antique tractor clubs a new excuse to get together. Instead of pulls or parades, tractor owners participate in competitions that mimic farming and demonstrate tractor skills.

After an earlier FARM SHOW article about the Tractor Olympics that Capen and her husband, Dave, host on their Bennington, Vt., farm (Vol. 36, No. 3), she received dozens of calls from Canada and all over the U.S. from California to Florida to New York. Some offered suggestions for new tractor games. Others wanted to know how to start their own Olympics and how to turn it into a fundraiser. A couple of brothers from Iowa even drove out to watch the Capens' event that September.

Capen decided to write a book, which she completed this winter. Her self-published, "Shaftsbury Hollow Tractor Olympics," is hot off the press. The subtitle explains what it's about: "A tractor enthusiast's official rule and guide for farm related games".

"It's a handy, easy-read book that's simple

and to the point," Capen says.

The 43-page manual shows photos of games, provides advice on safety, how to organize volunteers, and how to keep the competitions fair.

She included details of the games she mentioned in the original FARM SHOW article, such as Balloon Pop and Crack the Egg. But she also added new ones that FARM SHOW readers told her about.

For Corn Plant, drivers drop a kernel of corn from their tractor seat into containers as they pass over them.

In Blindman's Leap, the driver is blindfolded (with a welding mask) and told to drive straight ahead and stop at a designated line without driving over it.

"The driver on our biggest tractor, a Deere 620, won by getting within 4 in.," Capen says.

The book also describes Blindman's Bluff, where a second person on a tractor directs a blindfolded driver through an obstacle course.

From the calls she received, she knows tractor games are popular. One caller wondered if the events could be adapted for garden tractors.

Capen sells the book for \$12 including



Liz Capen and her husband, Dave, host a Tractor Olympics on their Vermont farm. Tractor owners participate in such games as Corn Plant (upper left) in which drivers drop a kernel of corn from their tractor seat into containers as they pass over them. In Blindman's Leap (above) the driver is blindfolded with a welding mask and told to drive straight ahead and stop at a designated line without driving over it. Liz has also written a book on how to set up such farm-related games.

shipping. Email or call her for more information.

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