

Hydraulic Lift Decks Haul More Hogs

Steve's Livestock Transport moves more hogs per semi trailer and is easier on pigs and driver. The company's prototype trailer has 2 levels that can be raised into place while loaded. Pigs load easier with less stress on them and driver alike, according to Bill Rempel, Steve's Livestock Transport.

"We started working on a way to reduce stress on animals to improve meat quality," says Rempel. "We also wanted to make it easier on our older drivers and attract younger drivers to the industry."

The prototype, all aluminum, 53-ft., twin-axle, straight trailer was built to meet Steve's needs by concept partner Wilson Trailer Co. Though it is based on European designs, it has been modified for North American needs. It has 3 decks, 2 of which raise up on stainless steel cables powered by hydraulics.

As pigs being loaded fill a deck, it is closed off and raised. Once a second deck is filled, it too is raised so the fixed deck can be filled. In a standard trailer with 3 decks, steep ramps are used to fill the top 2 decks. Drivers responsible for clearing out the pigs and cleaning the trailer have to work bent over in a space less than 4 ft., 4 in. high.

"We wanted to be able to put a full load on each deck without ramps," explains Rempel. "We also wanted to make it easier for the drivers to move around inside the trailer without the cramped quarters of a fixed deck truck."

Rempel says the prototype retains the same payload. Water tests of the pto-driven, hydraulic powered system demonstrated a 20,000 to 25,000-lb. lift capacity.

"We are testing different weight loads and applications," says Rempel. "We bring it into the shop weekly to look at stress points. We plan to operate through all 4 seasons to identify any changes needed before Wilson builds more."

While Rempel says the company hasn't done any quantified research on the impact of the trailer on the pigs, driver results are clear.

"The drivers love it and want to keep driving it," says Rempel. "They don't want to give it up."

When both companies are satisfied with the



Prototype semi trailer has 2 decks that can be hydraulically raised into place while loaded. Photo above shows decks in lifted position. Photo below shows lift decks down.



prototype, it will be marketed in the U.S. by Wilson and by Steve's in Canada.

"We expect to see more trailers on the road by next summer," says Rempel.

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Dave Gilbertson fitted his rusted-out pickup with "tire fenders" that he made by cutting the sidewalls off small tractor tires.

Rusted-Out Pickup Fitted With "Tire Fenders"

Dave Gilbertson needed to replace the rusted-out fenders on back of his 1995 Mazda B2600 1/2-ton pickup, but he didn't want to spend the money at a body shop. So he came up with an inexpensive solution. He cut the sidewall off a rear tire from a small tractor, then cut it in half to form a pair of 1-ft. wide arches. He then bolted the arches onto the pickup. The inner part of each arch faces outside and forms a bulge somewhat like a factory fender.

"It was a good way to keep an older pickup going without having to spend a lot of money," says Gilbertson. "I bought the pickup 2 years ago with more than 200,000 miles on it for only \$200. The front wheel fenders were still in good shape, but the rear

wheel fenders had rusted so bad that most of the metal in a strip about 2 in. above the wheel was gone. My tire fenders bolt onto the good metal that was left."

Gilbertson does a lot of gardening and yard work and says his small Mazda is really handy for those kinds of chores. "I don't drive this pickup on the highway much so I'm not too concerned with how it looks. But it helps that I have a black pickup because the tire fenders blend in with it."

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Clyde Otto spent about \$4,100, including the tarp, to build this 28 by 68-ft. wood hoop building.

Home-Built Hoop Building

Clyde Otto built a wood hoop building that he says is cheaper and better than the commercial alternative. His 28 by 60-ft. building with 4-ft. sidewalls has housed custom-fed heifers for the past 3 years.

"Some commercial buildings sit on the ground with no sidewalls or doors," says Otto. "Mine has sidewalls, which allows me to use it for livestock, and sliding doors on each end to keep out winter weather. We are up on a ridge and usually have plenty of wind."

Otto framed his hoop building with wood 2 by 4's. Plywood gussets reinforce each joint. Two 1 by 1-in. wood stringers run the length of the building with angled 1 by 2-in. spreaders reinforcing the hoops. Otto also mounted lengths of 1 by 2 between and at the

high point of each hoop. He mounted 1-in. pvc pipe over the top of each 2 by 4 hoop. They provide a smooth round surface for the stretched tarp cover. Ends were framed in with wood and covered with steel siding. The premium grade tarp was purchased from Troyer Tarp Mfg., Ethel, Mo.

"I used railroad ties for the sidewall posts and 2-in. thick planks for the walls," says Otto. "It is standing up well."

The price was right as well. Otto says his hoop building cost about \$4,100, including the tarp. The commercial alternative would have cost him \$7,000 without sidewalls or door.

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He has used the hoop building to house custom-fed heifers for the past 3 years.

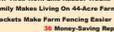
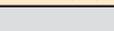
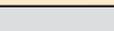
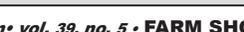
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