



Fas-Top truck box topper is shown in place with the tonneau cover stored underneath.

## Pop-Up Truck Box Topper Doubles As A Tonneau Cover

This first-of-its-kind truck box topper pops up when you need it and folds down and out of the way like a convertible car's top when it's not. When it's down you can pull a conventional-looking tonneau cover over the truck box.

The dual cover Fas-Top system can be reconfigured in less than a minute, according to Jay Schmeichel, Bismarck Canvas.

"We started working on the Fas-Top design about 10 years ago, but we couldn't find heavy enough materials at the time to make it viable," he says.

When the company finally found an American-made, vinyl-coated fabric that met their standards, the Fas-Top became a reality. The tonneau cover is 18-oz. fabric with a 7-mm thickness, almost twice as heavy as most tonneau covers. The topper cover is made with a slightly lighter, 13-oz. fabric.

"The topper folds down and stows away under the tonneau cover at the front of the pickup box. It's suspended off the bed of the truck, so you can carry cargo under it. When the topper is down, you can roll the tonneau cover out over it or leave the box open," says Schmeichel.

The fold-down topper can also be removed for storage if it's not likely to be used for a time. Schmeichel notes that the main reason people don't take traditional toppers off is the weight and difficulty.

"The Fas-Top topper comes off by removing a couple of pins and Velcro straps," he says.

Aluminum side rails mount to the top of the box, providing a secure mount for both covers. Built in North Dakota, prototypes went through harsh testing.

"We have fairly extreme conditions here,



Photos show tonneau cover in place (above) and stored away.



so we need high-quality materials for our weather," he says. "It is not uncommon to get 40 mph winds, and when you drive into the wind at 70 to 80 mph, it adds up. On a windy day, we take our toppers out and test them."

The tonneau cover can be ordered by itself for \$449. The topper by itself is \$549. The dual system is priced at \$989.

Check out a video of the new topper at [www.farmshow.com](http://www.farmshow.com).

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## He Turned A Cub Cadet Into A Forklift

Of all the Cub Cadet tractors that Kelly Birkey has owned, his custom-built forklift has been the most useful.

"I can pick up another garden tractor with it," says Birkey, Paxton, Ill. "The forklift is on a Cub Cadet 1872, my favorite tractor. It's very strong and well-built, with features like hydraulics and power steering."

Birkey built the forklift shortly after retiring 25 years ago after operating Birkey's Farm Store and an International Harvester dealership with his brothers in Illinois. In retirement he has collected, restored and sold nearly 300 Cub Cadet and IH tractors, plus parts.

To make the forklift, Birkey reversed the steering, seat, and controls and flipped the ring gear and pinion in order to operate the Cub Cadet running backward.

It took a while to find a small forklift mast to fit.

"It was a Brick Buggy, a self-propelled, walk-behind buggy for moving bricks," Birkey says. He paid \$200 for it at a scrapyard. He removed the motor and retrofitted it for his Cub Cadet.

"I added 3 in. to the tractor axles so I could put in pillow block bearings between the housing and wheels to carry the weight of the forklift," he explains.

For counterweights he built a bracket on the back for four round weights that came off a Caterpillar combine made in the 1930's.

He has used the forklift Cub Cadet for more than 20 years, moving and lifting Cub Cadets to make it easier to work on them.

At 90, Birkey doesn't use it as much as he used to, but the forklift is always a popular attraction when he takes it to shows.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kelly Birkey, Paxton, Ill.



Francis Ehemann wanted an easier way to lift net wrap rolls into balers. So he invented a winch-operated lifting device that lets one man easily lift a roll of net wrap.

## Winch Lifts Rolls Of Net Wrap Into Deere Balers

"Rolls of net wrap aren't easy to install in our Deere 467 round baler. They typically weigh about 100 lbs. and have to be lifted 5 ft. off the ground into a storage compartment. I made it a lot easier with a winch-operated lifting device that lets one man load a roll of net wrap in just a few seconds," says Francis Ehemann, Hattiesville, Ark.

"I got the idea because I farm with two brothers, and we're all in our 70's. On this baler a door lifts up to install the net wrap roll. There isn't a lot of room to work."

The patent pending lift consists of a boat winch welded to a vertical 1 1/4-in. dia. pipe which has a 1-in. dia. pipe running through it to form a pivot. The vertical pipe can be set at 2 different heights by changing the position of a pin. A horizontal steel arm welded on top of the pipe lifts the roll. Cable runs up through a pair of pulleys mounted on the horizontal arm.

To raise the roll, the operator fastens a chain hook to a pair of plastic handles on the roll, then swings the roll over and uses the winch to lift it up into the baler's storage compartment.

The entire lift is supported by an angle iron bracket that bolts onto the side of the baler. A 3-in. wide steel arm that's welded to the bracket pivots on a long bolt, allowing the lift to swing sideways.

A 17-in.-length of 1-in. square tubing keeps the lift stable when not in use. The tubing hinges on a short bolt positioned above the angle iron bracket and has a short metal strap welded onto both sides at one end. The operator runs a "keeper pin" through holes drilled into both straps and under the 3-in.



Boat winch is used to swing roll sideways over into baler's storage compartment.

wide arm.

"It's an idea that saves a lot of work. I'm surprised that Deere hasn't offered anything like this before," says Ehemann.

He says the lift will fit any model of Deere round baler made after 2003. "My 467 baler makes a 4 by 6-ft. bale. I haven't tried it yet on balers that make a 5 by 6-ft. bale, but it should work with some possible modifications needed.

Francis says that if anyone is interested, he's willing to build additional lift kits and sell them for about \$250.

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Birkey turned this Cub Cadet into a forklift, reversing the steering, seat, and controls and flipping the ring gear and pinion in order to operate the tractor backward.