



Steve Ice uses the mini gooseneck trailer he built for his Deere Gator to haul welding equipment to neighbors' fields.

## Mini Gooseneck "Welding Trailer"

Steve Ice does a lot of welding work for farmers in his area, often working in farm fields to help with equipment breakdowns. So when he decided to build an off-road welding trailer for his Deere Gator, he equipped it with a gooseneck hitch.

"A gooseneck offers better weight distribution on the utility vehicle, just as it does on a pickup. I figured that if I have to go out to the field, I'd rather get my utility vehicle dirty than my pickup," says Ice. "Also, a gooseneck trailer is easier to back up in tight places than a bumper-pulled trailer."

Ice uses the trailer to haul his Mig welder and another portable welder, as well as a big argon carbon monoxide bottle. All components are secured by ratchet straps that attach to the trailer's side rails.

The 2-wheeled trailer measures 8 ft. long by 4 ft. wide and has 1-ft. high rails. It rides

on 13-in. wheels. Ice used 3-in. channel iron to build the frame with 1/8-in. sheet metal on the floor and 1/4-in. diamond plate steel over the fenders. He used 2-in. angle iron for the gooseneck hitch, welding a 2-in. coupler onto it.

To make the Gator's hitch, he welded a steel ball onto a rectangular steel plate, which he bolted to the bed's floor. A hand-cranked jack mounts on the trailer. "I drop the Gator's tailgate and back up to the trailer, then use the jack to drop the gooseneck onto the coupler," says Ice.

He spent less than \$400. "Most of that was for the wheels and axle, which I bought at a surplus store," notes Ice.

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Strong Way Sleeve wraps around rotting posts on pole buildings. A hydraulic driver pounds sleeve into the ground.



## Steel Sleeves Solve Decaying Post Problems

You don't need to dig out and replace rotting posts on pole buildings, says Shane Schechinger. Instead, you can "sleeve" them to save time, labor, and boost longevity of your pole barn or post frame building. As a distributor for the Strong Way Sleeve, he has sleeves for all different size posts and the equipment to install them.

"It takes about a week to dig out and replace posts in an average size building (about 40 by 60-ft.). With this system you can do that job in a day," he says.

Installers need 10-ft. clearance around each post to accommodate a small walk-behind skidloader to power the hydraulic driver. It took the inventors of the system years to develop the driver to pound the 3-sided galvanized steel sleeves into the ground around the posts. The sleeves need 3 in. of clearance.

"We drive them down to the concrete pad that is typically under the post. Or if they don't have a pad, we go down about 4 ft.," Schechinger says. That leaves about 2 ft. of the sleeve above ground, which is secured to

the post with structural screws. Tabs inside the sleeve at the bottom grab into the post to prevent uplift. Usually posts only rot at ground level and about 6-in. underground so both ends of the wood are still good.

The heavy-gauge galvanized sleeves have corrugations to make them stronger and have a reactive coating to protect the galvanized surface.

"We have done salt tests and this coating lasts longer than hot-dip galvanizing," Schechinger says.

Trained service people install the sleeves for about \$275/post for an average size building. Or customers who want to do the work themselves can rent equipment to do the job.

Schechinger is based in Iowa but has installers that work out of state. He welcomes calls from interested partners.

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## On-Board Scale Weighs Small Bales

The Check Weigher from Agmechtronix takes the guesswork out of making small square bales. The new product from the precision ag equipment company weighs 2 or 3-string hay bales as they exit the baler.

"The Check Weigher is still in the prototype stages, but we had a really good response to it at the World Ag Expo," says Ryan Herbon, Agmechtronix. "Hay producers are excited about being able to tune in the weight exactly where they want it. The Check Weigher will ensure they aren't giving product away by baling too heavy. They are making the bale they need to make."

The precision bale scales can weigh up to 15 bales per minute. Each bale is weighed, and the weight is displayed on the screen in the cab along with the daily average. It allows the operator to adjust the baler as needed.

Agmechtronix set out to build the Check Weigher at the request of an existing customer. In-house engineering designed the prototype and they have manufacturing capabilities including CNC milling, manual machining, robotic welding, cable making, and more. Once field technicians have tested the machine in the field, the company can quickly move from prototype to product.

"Getting accurate weights as bales are moving through without having it hang



Check Weigher weighs 2 or 3-string bales as they exit baler's quarter turn chute. Bale weights are displayed in the tractor cab.

lower than a normal chute was the biggest challenge," says Herbon. "We plan to have it ready to release by mid June."

Agmechtronix has priced the Check Weigher at \$8,000. Initially it is being made for 3-string, Massey Ferguson, small square balers. Herbon says it will be adapted to other brands in coming months.

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## Three Ideas From A Southern Farmer

Bill Ausburn recently sent in 3 ideas that make life a little easier around his Easley, South Carolina farm.

### Twine Pulley Detector

"I had trouble seeing the left side of the twine as it fed through my Vermeer baler so I couldn't tell when it ran out of twine," says Ausburn.

"I solved the problem with a cable pulley from a roll-up door. I mounted it in an existing hole near the twine route. I ran the twine over the pulley and put white and red X marks across it so I can easily see when the twine is moving."



### Cups For Fertilizer Spinner Plate

"The metal cups rusted out on the spreader plate on my hitch-mounted fertilizer spreader. Instead of buying an expensive replacement plate, I split pieces of 1 1/2-in. pvc pipe in half and mounted the half-rounds onto the plate. Works great and they'll never rust," says Ausburn.



### Pto Tailgate Tie-Down

"When towing my Vermeer baler to the field with my pickup, I had a problem with the pto shaft getting in the way. I solved the problem by lowering the pickup's tailgate, laying the shaft in the center of the tailgate, and then ran a bungee cord from one side of the tailgate, around the shaft, and then to the other side of the tailgate. It eliminated the need to take off the pto shaft for transport and it stays at the center of the tailgate even on sharp turns," says Ausburn.



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