

The Bin-Brella is made with two half-circles of galvanized conduit that slip into a sleeve in the canvas to create a rigid base. The top is secured to the auger with two straps.



“Bin-Brella” Keeps Water Out Of Bins

Most grain producers have experienced unexpected rain when using an auger to load a bin. Instead of grain, the bin starts filling up with water.

Manitoba farmer Stephen Tkachyk was tired of the dangerous trek up the bin ladder and slick metal roof to close the bin in pouring rain. So, he invented Bin-Brella, a shield that mounts to his auger to completely cover the bin opening.

“I’ve used it for 4 years and have a couple prototypes,” Tkachyk says. He hired an upholstery business to sew the shield out of heavy-duty vinyl tarp.

Two half circles of galvanized conduit slip in a sleeve around the bottom to create a rigid 42-in. diameter base. The top is secured to the auger with two straps. One with a buckle goes over the top and the other fits around the auger collar and tightens like a belt. Tkachyk keeps the Bin-Brella attached to his auger so

that he can move it from bin to bin.

This year he was invited to bring his patent-pending invention to Manitoba Ag Days, where it won second place in the Farm Built Solutions Category of the Innovation Showcase. With a cash prize of \$500, plus \$500 for advertising, Tkachyk has been searching for a manufacturer.

“I’ve had a few people wanting to get some. One fellow wanted to get a price for two dozen to use for promos,” he says.

He welcomes calls from companies interested in working with him. The design could be easily adapted to make the Bin-Brella in different sizes as a simple solution to avoid a common problem.

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Converted Planter Used To Install Dog Fence

Terry Jacob “plants” invisible fence wire with a no-till planter row unit. His wife Ruth wanted the underground fence to contain the family dogs. Now that he has the unit working, Jacob sees other uses too.

“I figured if it could place seed corn 2 in. in the ground, it could put wire down 2 in. as well,” says Jacob. “I used an old row unit from a Buffalo Till planter. In no time at all, I was laying wire.”

Jacob buys large planters and then breaks them down into 2 and 4-row, 3-pt. hitch units and resells them (Vol. 41, No. 1). He says there is a strong demand for wildlife food plot planters. The Buffalo planters are heavy, but make great no-till planters.

“To lay wire, I centered a planter unit on the mini-toolbar, removed the seed hopper and plates, and mounted a free turning wire reel,” says Jacob. “I also replaced the seed tube with a stainless steel tube similar to a fertilizer tube.”

He then secured the wire feed tube to the side of the planter unit and at the bottom, curved it backwards to where the seed would normally drop, just ahead of the closing wheels.

“I just lower the planter and start driving, I don’t even have to stake the wire,” says Jacob. “It just feeds out and into the ground. It hardly leaves any tracks in the sod.”

After laying invisible fence for his dogs, Jacob is considering laying it for a few goats. “I have quite a bit of machinery behind my shop, as well as cattle pens,” he says. “I have a hard time mowing it and keeping the trees down. My daughter is a veterinarian, and she told me about people using dog fence and collars on goats for vegetation control. The collars get pricey, but so does fencing off an area like that.”



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While Jacob hasn’t tried it yet, he suspects the planter would do an equally good job laying shallow subsurface irrigation tape. “You could lay it right over root crops,” he says.

What Jacob really likes is the ease of converting the unit back to planting seeds. “When I am done with the underground fence, I’ll pull the stainless steel tube and replace the seed tube, seed drive gear and hopper, add the other row unit and sell it.”

Jacob says he can sell a 2-row unit for \$1,500 or more. “It can take some work when they’ve been sitting in a fencerow for years, but I’ve sold them for as much as \$4,500 with fertilizer units on them,” he adds.

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The drag bar on the rear tine tiller was replaced with a 5-in. wheel to keep mulch from building up under the bar.

Tiller Runs Smoother With Tail Wheel

Replacing the drag bar on David Johnson’s rear tine tiller with a tail wheel made for smoother tilling and better weed control.

“I like to mulch my garden plants with 4 to 6 in. of dry leaves to suppress weeds and hold moisture,” says Johnson. “I use the tiller to fluff up the leaves, exposing the roots of any weed seeds that germinate.”

The only problem was the drag bar on the tiller. It tended to drag leaf mulch along, leaving bare soil behind. Periodically, Johnson had to lift the tiller and spread out the pile of built-up mulch.

He couldn’t simply remove the drag bar because it provides depth control. “I only need to fluff up the top few inches,” says Johnson.

His solution was to remove the drag bar and replace it with a 5-in. dia. caster wheel he found at a farm auction.

Johnson welded together a mounting arm for the wheel. When he upgraded to a bigger tiller, he had to extend the wheel back farther to clear the drag pan.

“It works great with no more mulch buildup,” says Johnson. “The only problem is in bare soil where it leaves a compressed trail, and the fresh seeds germinate faster. There I need to make a half lap to take out the trail.”

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J.S. Repairs buys older reefers and rebuilds the units and engines to sell as refrigerated trailers, stand alone refrigeration units, or as independent diesel engines.

He Sells Repurposed Reefers

Need a rebuilt refrigerated trailer (reefer), a stand-alone refrigeration unit, or just a dependable diesel engine? J.S. Repairs has all three. Owner Jacob Schrock buys older reefers that have been traded in for new.

“I rebuild many and resell to trucking companies,” says Schrock. “Some refrigeration units are not worth repairing and putting back into service, so I part out the trailer and sell the engines. The diesel engines in these are amazing.”

A certified low temperature refrigeration technician, Schrock can evaluate the refrigeration unit for possible problems. Most reefer refrigeration units are either Carrier or Thermo King brands. “Carrier units have a reputation for electrical problems and are often not worth repairing,” says Schrock. “Thermo Kings probably won’t get scrapped out, but are resold to a trucking company or to Amish stores or others looking for an electricity-free refrigeration solution.”

When he scraps out a reefer, the engines find ready homes for a wide variety of uses. Some are set up to power air compressors, hydraulic pumps and more. The engines are as varied as their repurposed uses.

“They are as small as 17 hp. and as big as 38 and include brands like Kubota, Isuzu and Yanmar,” says Schrock. “Hours can vary as well. I’ve had Carrier systems with as little as

5,000 hrs. and as high as 30,000 hrs. I recently had a Thermo King unit with 61,000 hrs. that was still going strong.”

Schrock makes repairs to the engines and adds needed parts, including a radiator, fan, alternator and stub shaft. He also adds desired accessories such as auto start.

“Auto start works off a signal such as air pressure or temperature,” says Schrock. “It can monitor oil pressure, temperature and speed and start up or shut down automatically, depending on the application.”

Schrock also offers new after market as well as good used parts for engines and refrigeration units, courtesy of his parting out reefers. He also makes service calls with a mobile service truck.

“Most of my business is within 150 miles of my shop, but I have shipped motors, refrigeration units and parts from Tennessee to Michigan and west to Colorado,” says Schrock. “I have a customer base that comes to me for small, economical, used, diesel engines.”

He notes that a core engine can sell for \$950 to \$1,200 or up to \$2,500 depending on accessories.”

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