

Editor's Notebook



Mark Newhall
Editor & Publisher



Telescoping hitch made it easy to put pontoon boat into water on a steep landing.

Hitch Makes Boat Launch Easy

We have a family cabin on a small lake in Northern Minnesota. We try to get there as often as we can during the summer but time is always short. Fortunately, we have a great neighbor on the lake named Gordy Surges who is a FARM SHOW subscriber and, therefore, knows how to get things done fast, often building his own equipment to make life easier.



Gordy Surges uses his quick-tach 10-ft. hitch to handle all kinds of chores.

When we were getting ready to put our 18-ft. pontoon boat into the water a few weeks ago, Gordy came over and offered to help. A few minutes later he showed up on his Bobcat with a 10-ft. long hitch fitted to the loader arms. He latched onto my boat with the ball hitch at the end and pushed the pontoon trailer down the road to a boat landing that's steep enough to make launching a little tricky - even with a 4-WD truck.

Gordy's "made it myself" hitch is fitted with a large 6-ft. long hydraulic cylinder that telescopes out far enough that he doesn't even have to leave the road to launch a boat. He can use the same hitch to pull in docks and boat lifts, and also to back trailers into tightly packed storage sheds, of which he has several. Thanks for your help, Gordy!



Biofuel plant designed to convert corn, crop residue, or even garbage into liquid fuel, can be easily expanded as production grows, or to produce different fuels.

Modular Energy Plant Makes Fuel From Both Grain, Residue

"We can turn corn and cornstalks - or even garbage - into ethanol or high-value n-butanol," says Mark Gaalswyk, CEO, Easy Energy Systems. The company's "modular" system of Lego-like pods makes it easier for one large farmer, or a group of farmers, to turn crops into energy.

"N-butanol is the holy grail of biofuels because it has similar btu's to gasoline. It could replace gasoline, but it has an even higher value when used as an industrial chemical."

Easy Energy Systems currently has a corn-to-ethanol and corn-to-n-butanol demonstration plant operating at

Emmetsburg, Iowa. The firm is also building a garbage-to-n-butanol plant near Truman, Minn., that's expected to be operating by the fall of 2016.

The patented process uses shipping container-sized pods that each carry out one or more steps in the process. Expanding - or changing fuel production or inputs - simply requires adding or replacing modules.

"We are still getting final pricing based on the pilot plants," says Gaalswyk. "The Emmetsburg plant can produce in the ballpark of a million gallons of ethanol. Using the n-butanol modules, it can produce about 300,000 gal. of industrial solvents, 75 percent of which would be n-butanol."

The Truman plant is designed to use garbage from 2 counties. A multiple stage shredding system will separate glass and aluminum from organic matter, in particular paper. Cornstalks will be added to the paper waste and processed through the system to produce n-butanol. Byproducts include a lignal coal to be burned in a nearby power plant and biochar for use as a soil amendment.

"One of the attractive aspects of the Lego-style system is that you can take state-of-the-art technology and prove it out on a smaller scale," says Gaalswyk. "People come to us with their ideas, and we help them develop the technology. Then we get exclusive rights for using it in our modular system."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Gaalswyk or Jonathan Scarfpin, Easy Energy Systems, 102 Mill St., Welcome, Minn. 56181 (ph 507 728-8214; toll free 800 397-9736; jscarfpin@easyenergysystems.com; www.easyenergysystems.com).

Daryl's Rules For Living

Contributing editor Jim Ruen sent me this note the other day:

"I just finished an interview with Daryl Dixon, a 92-year-old fellow who built his own mowing tractor (see story on page 23). During the course of our very enjoyable conversation, he told me that he still runs a custom mowing business. He's also building another mower in his shop and restoring a 1942 Studebaker as well. Every Saturday night he drives 75 miles to dance and recently he drove 1,100 miles from Plainview, Texas to Rockford, Ill., to visit his brother. He's very active with a great attitude. I asked him how he stays so upbeat and strong. Here's what he told me:"

- If you want to keep going, don't sit down.
- Smile. It's easier than frowning and makes you look more interesting to other people. They'll want to know what you're thinking about.
- If someone isn't smiling, ask them why. Maybe you can help.
- Make something useful out of something worthless.

Liberty Quotes

"It is better to live one day as a lion, than one hundred years as a sheep." *Roman Proverb*

"Tolerance becomes a crime when applied to evil." *Thomas Mann*

"Without freedom of thought, there can be no such thing as wisdom; and no such thing as public liberty, without freedom of speech." *Cato*

"Freedom is nothing else but a chance to be better." *Albert Camus*

"One of the sad signs of our times is that we have demonized those who produce, subsidized those who refuse to produce, and canonized those who complain." *Thomas Sowell*

"Reaching consensus in a group is often confused with finding the right answer." *Norman Mailer*

"Our forefathers found the evils of free thinking more to be endured than the evils of inquest or suppression. This is because thoughtful, bold and independent minds are essential to the wise and considered self-government." *Justice Robert H. Jackson*

"We have a criminal jury system which is superior to any in the world. Its efficiency is only marred by the difficulty of finding twelve men every day who don't know anything and can't read." *Mark Twain*

"I know no class of my fellowmen, however just, enlightened and humane, which can be wisely and safely trusted absolutely with the liberties of any other class." *Frederick Douglass*

"He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetuate it." *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

"It rankles me when somebody tries to force somebody to do something." *John Wayne*

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Do Robot Milkers Pay Their Way?

It's hard to pick up a newspaper or magazine nowadays without seeing a story about how robots are the future. Well, in the dairy industry, robot milkers have been on the market for some 20 years. Ron Johnson at *Dairy Star* magazine recently took a look at the economics of milking robots, which now cost around \$200,000 each.

First of all, owners say the robots can provide a better lifestyle by freeing dairymen and women from most daily milking chores. They also provide a wealth of information on each cow that would be difficult to gather manually. But they'll only work on dairies with excellent management because the data and machines must be monitored continuously.

Operating costs for robots include the machines themselves, modifications to the facility, pelletizing feed to go into the robot boxes, increased feed consumption, repairs, and routine maintenance. Benefits include labor savings, better health, and higher milk production. Useful life of robot milkers is 15 years, although some have lasted longer.

Bottom line? Yearly net income per cow averages \$41 lower with robot milkers, according to University of Minnesota dairy expert Jim Salfer. But most owners of robots are satisfied with their decision because of what they see as an improvement in lifestyle.

Ole and Lena were having dinner one night. When it came time for dessert, Lena took the biggest piece of cake.

Ole looked surprised and said, "Vell, Lena, dat sure vasn't very polite! Yew took da biggest piece of cake."

"Vell, what would yew have done?" asked Lena, annoyed. "Vell, I would haf been polite and taken da smaller vun," replied Ole.

"Vell, den what are yew complaining about. Dats what you got!" said Lena.

Poor Ole! He was a nervous wreck. Night after night he laid awake for hours worrying. Finally after many sleepless nights, he wrote a letter to the IRS. "Dear Sirs," Ole wrote. "I hafn't been able tew sleep since I cheated on last year's income taxes. I am sending \$500 with this letter. If I find dat I still can't sleep, I vill send yew da rest of da money later."

Ole died. At the funeral, Lena and the kids were in the front row as the pastor said, "We are gathered here today to pay homage to a good man. He was a kind man, loved by everyone. A man who treasured his family as much as they did him."

At this point, Lena turned to her young son and said, "Quick, Sven, go up to da casket and make sure dat's yur daddy in dat coffin."

Little Ole came to Sunday school late. He was usually very prompt so his teacher asked him if anything was wrong.

Little Ole replied, "No, it's just dat I was going to go fishing but den my dad tolt me I needed to go to church instead."

The teacher was very impressed and asked Ole if his dad had explained to him why it was more important to go to church than to go fishing. Ole said, "Vell, yep, he did. Dad said he didn't haf enuff bait for da bot of us."