

Where there's a will (and a front-end loader) there's a way

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When it comes to farming, I adamantly employ my basic mantra: 'muscular power should only be employed when it is completely impossible to utilize hydraulics'.

Translation: I don't move nuffin' I can move with a tractor and front-end loader.

Case in point: a few years ago, I was at a photo shoot where some ladies were potting plants. One raved about her new potting table. I said I had a potting table I used when planting the flower beds.

I explained it was on wheels and had adjustable height. She was interested, and asked what company manufactured it.

"Massey-Ferguson," I replied. All three ladies laughed and admitted it would be quite handy.

I go on the theory, why kill your back when one has a tractor and loader?

Now in spite of the fact I'm a member of that 'almost 60' club, lately I've found myself moving things that I would never have tackled a few years back.

And last weekend was no exception. For more than 22 years, there's been

an unused stainless steel milk cooler sitting in the barn. With its feet cemented to the floor, it's been a source of countless 'geez I could really use that space a lot more effectively' thoughts.

But weighing close to 400 lbs., moving it wasn't something one tackled on a whim.

I've been asking if anyone wanted it, but I was drawing blanks until this past weekend when I was approached by someone who had a definite and pressing use for it.

Apparently, there's a need for stainless steel tanks for those who collect maple sap to produce maple syrup. And those old milk tanks are perfect for the task.

Not wanting to turn down an opportunity to move it, I agreed to having it available for pick up this weekend.

Ted Brown



Last Sunday, I asked The Sidekick, "Ya wanna move that milk tank today?"

She amazes me at times. She actually gets excited about a project like that. If she were a puppy, her tail would be wagging.

Armed with a crowbar and sawsall, we carefully dismantled the door to the milk house, where the tank has sat since 1957.

Once opened up, we employed a number of Newton's laws of physics, including the one about 'every action has an equal and opposite reaction' which loosely translated means 'if you move something heavy, the next day your body will probably hurt like hell somewhere.'

Using a small block and tackle, and a floor jack with wheels, we slid it around into position, in line with the temporarily widened door in the milk house.

Then came the aforementioned Ted's law of movement. Translation: Enter the skid steer loader.

In spite of the fact I had to maneuver that tank down a feed passage, an obstacle course only an inch wider than the actual milk tank, it came through without a hitch.

Although she didn't swoon and sigh "My hero!", The Sidekick did admit to being in awe of my prowess with the skid steer loader.

Parking the tank by an outside door, the tractor and front end loader was my final coup de grâce (again, more hydraulics) and in minutes, the tank was outside the barn waiting to be picked up by its new owner.

I'll be the first to admit, it went easier than anticipated. And my 'hydraulics' mantra once again proved itself. But it does have limitations.

I just don't think I can get the skid steer into the living room, the next time The Sidekick wants to rearrange the furniture.



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