Once holes were drilled through the roof, Gutschmidt was able to securely bolt the roof rail to the underside plates.

Lift And Carry School Bus Calf Shelter

Turning an old school bus into a calf shelter is pretty easy. Just cut the body free from the chassis at the floor. Moving it is more challenging unless you have Roger Gutschmidt's lift-and-carry roof rail.

"It's easy to overthink the problem of moving a school bus calf shelter," says Gutschmidt. "When you take the shell off the bus, the sides have no support on the bottom. Guys usually bolt angle iron or oil field pipe to the bottoms, like a runner underneath."

A customer approached him with an alternative. Gutschmidt had used support rails made of angle iron on a similar shelter 30 years earlier. These rails had loops at the ends to help pull the shelter around. It worked... but?

"The problem is the ground is frozen with hard manure clumps, and it has to ride over them," says Gutschmidt. "My customer suggested a bar across the top of the bus shell that he could lift with forks on his tractor loader."

Gutschmidt considered the structure with stringers every 2 ft. along the shell's length. He noted that the roof itself is both strong and lightweight.

"I used 2 7/8-in. O.D. oil steel pipe for the lift rail and attached it to the bus roof every 4 ft., next to every other stringer," he says. "I welded 4 by 10-in., 1/4-in. steel plates to the pipe and drilled 5/8-in. holes in it for bolts. I used more pipe of the same diameter to make 3-in. spacers."

Inside the bus, he welded matching plates next to every other stringer.

"I didn't go through them as that would have weakened them," says Gutschmidt. "I bent all the plates slightly to match the curve of the roof."

Once holes were drilled through the roof, Gutschmidt securely bolted the roof rail to the underside plates. He used 7-in. bolts because the roof thickness varied.

"My customer loves it," says Gutschmidt. "He can't believe he didn't do it long ago. He can pick up the shelter and move it to fresh ground quickly and easily. With forks on his tractor loader, he has great visibility to pick up the shelter and move it as needed."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Roger Gutschmidt, Gutschmidt Manufacturing, 6651 Hwy. 56, Gackle, N.D. 58442 (ph 701-698-2310; shopdoc@drtel.net).

"With the new line, it'll only take about 1 hr. to produce the sidewalls for a small 30-ft. dia. bin in contrast to about 14 hrs. with our previous production line," says Henderson.

Manufacturing Line Improves Grain Bin Production

To increase efficiency in manufacturing corrugated grain bin sidewalls for all sizes of bins, Chief Agri has rolled out a new sidewall production line.

"We've extended our tech to build an inventory management system into our line, dramatically reducing the need for setup and changeover times," says Chief Agri Operations Manager Mike Henderson. "We can improve capacity by 50 to 75%, depending on bin size and demand."

In the past, especially for smaller-diameter grain bins, increased setup and changeovers were required to produce fewer sheets, resulting in time and labor inefficiencies. With the new production line, Chief expects to have material for 5 to 500 sheets in a queue for immediate launch.

"In seconds, sheets will come off the line, cutting waiting time for farmers and reducing lead times dramatically," Henderson says. "With the new line, it'll only take about 1 hr. to produce the sidewalls for a small 30-ft. dia. bin, in contrast to about 14 hrs. with our previous production line."

Chief's goal is to serve the entire grain bin market and hopes to use this new production line as a driver to maintain its commercial efficiency and dramatically increase its effectiveness in farm bin production. The new line is based in Kearney, Neb. Chief hopes to maintain its competitive edge without negative cost implications.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chief Agri, 4400 E. 39th St., Kearney, Neb. 68847 (ph 800-359-7600; www.agri.chiefind.com).

Lightweight Composite Spray Booms Cost Less

BK Comp plans to introduce its lightweight composite spray booms to the North American market in the near future. The booms were first sold in Argentina in 2020. The company is also active in Brazil and has a sales contact in Australia. The booms were on display at the 2025 Farm Progress Show.

"We're currently looking for a partner to fund our expansion into the North American market," says BK Comp CEO Ezequiel Poodts.

Poodts is confident they'll be a good fit, noting that carbon fiber/resin composites are lighter and more corrosion and fatigue-resistant than aluminum booms, promising a longer life.

Booms have rotomolded plastic covers over the carbon fiber core, doubling resistance to impact and abrasion.

"Our booms are more durable and offer less downtime with reduced maintenance costs," says Poodts. "They're also less expensive than comparable aluminum booms in the U.S."

He points to the $60,000 price for a 120-ft. aluminum boom he saw at the 2025 Farm Progress Show, compared with BK Comp's 120-ft. model, which costs $36,000 USD in Argentina.

BK Comp booms feature rotomolded plastic covers over the carbon fiber core, doubling impact and abrasion resistance. At the same time, metal nodes withstand the concentrated loads of ties and joints. Wing hinges are also metal. The combination allows a wider working width for increased productivity and fuel savings while reducing soil compaction due to its lighter weight.

"Unlike other attempts at composite booms, our design is quite simple and uses much less carbon fiber," says Poodts. "Installation isn't difficult, and we already have adaptations for most of the top-brand machines."

The composite boom's rigidity makes it ideal for smart spot-spray systems. The weight reduction over metal booms is significant. The BK 48 is 158 ft. wide and weighs only 1,098 lbs. Booms are also available in widths of 104, 118, 132 and 144 ft. The 104-ft. BK 32 weighs only 736 lbs.

If the boom section is damaged, Poodts suggests it's easy to repair. The company offers a repair kit that includes a carbon fiber clamp. He explains that, unlike metal, composites don't deform before breaking.

"They crack as dry wood does, such as when you break a pencil in half, and you can make the parts match back together perfectly," says Poodts. "In those cases, the repair kits are a solution to the farmers not being able to use the welding machine to repair carbon fiber. It's actually easier in some ways, since you don't even need electricity."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, BK Comp, Parque industrial y Logístico Panamericana KM29 Unidad E, APQ El Talar de Pacheco, Buenos Aires, Argentina (ph 54-11-4064-1911; sales@bk-comp.com; www.bk-comp.com).

Remote Control Add-On For Auger Hoppers

In 2008, a young North Dakota farmer and inventor devised what he called the Auger Jogger, an electrically powered, remote-controlled swing auger, to move heavy grain hoppers safely and easily.

Twelve years later, Mary Paulson and her brother Dale purchased the patent for the unique innovation and have since brought the Auger Jogger to commercial use.

The remote-controlled invention consists of a pair of air-filled tractor lug tires mounted on the auger side of a grain hopper. Electric motors provide the moving power.

"The heavy-duty grip tires can drive in either direction, so one tire always has traction," Paulson says. "The electric motors and worm-drive system easily move the hopper in and out to line up properly with the grain truck or wagon unloading spout."

Twelve-volt DC powers the Auger Jogger, so it doesn't require a running tractor or truck. It comes standard with mounting plates that fit most auger models. Simply remove the factory hopper tires and bolt the included mounting plates to the existing holes. Each plate has nine holes to ensure the hopper and tires sit at the optimal height for unloading.

A remote control allows the operator to move the hopper from the truck cab or from up to 100 ft. away. Each unit includes four remote controllers programmed to the same frequency, plus a small control box that mounts to the auger's swing arm.

System moves the hopper in and out to properly align with the grain truck or wagon.

Paulson says the Auger Jogger can be easily installed by the farmer or a dealer, if desired. It retails for around $3,200, either directly from the company or through a dealer network listed on the website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Auger Jogger, 286 6th Ave. S., Carrington, N.D. 58421 (ph 701-653-5831; augerjoggermfg@gmail.com; www.augerjogger.com).