For the Farmer Who Has Everything

What is a loving spouse to do? My wife, bless her heart (hey I’m a Southerner…it’s what we do), has just about given up on trying to buy presents for me at Christmas. “You know what you need…and if you need it, you probably have already gotten it,” is her usual statement and the fact she’s right! We mechanically minded folks are just hard to buy for, especially if the well-intentioned gift giver is mechanically challenged like my bride…one last time…bless her heart.

One thing that has been a benefit as I get older is that if I buy something for myself for Christmas and put it away for my wife to give to me as a gift, I have usually forgotten about it by Christmas so it is still a surprise! Ah the gift of the forgetful mind! But just in case you haven’t given up on trying to surprise the farmer or do it yourselfer in your life or if you are like me and are charged with buying for yourself, here are just a few ideas that I find very useful.

**Gifts $100 or under :** One tool that I am constantly finding new uses for is the porta power unit my Dad purchased many years ago. Also known as a ram, a small 4 Ton unit is around $100 or you may opt for a larger 10 Ton unit for about $175. On our farm, as on many I suspect, bigger is better so we moved up to a twenty ton unit which has its limits tested from time to time. Rams are handy for getting into tight places where repairs require lifting, spreading or separating. It really is a tool that you will find work for as you use it more and more.

Of course, cordless tools and replacement batteries/chargers are always good choices. Having tools, chargers and batteries in more than one location are handy in our operation as it seems that I am always in need of the tool that I don’t have close at hand.

**Gifts $500 or more:** As I age, many handy “can’t do without” tools I select fall more and more into this price range. As I thought about this article and what I could or couldn’t do without, I gravitated more and more towards my chain hoist. A strong, well placed chain hoist is worth its weight in gold in the modern farm shop. Ours is an old 7 ton unit salvaged out of railroad shop, but newer ones have features that can be very useful. I use my chain hoist for everything from unloading my pickup truck without the risk of a scratch to changing the blades on the lawn mower without removing the deck. A chain hoist is also a safe, floor space saving way to lift and move heavy items such as motors and tractor planetary drives. As with any lifting tool, knowing the limitations of the tool and also the supporting beams (even the floor in some instances) is a valuable piece of information and could save your life or the life of a loved one.

Along the same line, and a tool that I recently invested in is a 12 volt or AC powered winch. As the last remaining “strong back/weak mind” on our farm (both of which are getting weaker which seems very unfair to me) I get into more and more situations where one more pair of hands would be very useful. The task of removing a lime scale-filled water heater from the basement comes to mind almost immediately! During the last such removal, I called upon my son-in-law for assistance. I am thinking that he is very intelligent and as a result, will not be available should that task ever arise in the future. I wonder if they make winches with built in water softeners?

**Gifts that are Free or Low Cost:** The final category is one that I think we all need to pay attention to when it comes to our farmers and farming community. To me one thing we can all give our farming friends is “RESPECT.” We need to honor the work they do, the hours they put in and the sacrifices they make to feed our nation. What better time of year to remember farmers than during the days with the least daylight. Giving any person respect will brighten even the gloomiest day!

Upcoming Events

Jan 7, 2025 VQA Sale

Jan 13 VQA Steer Take Up

Jan 15 VQA Heifer Take Up

Jan 18 VT Beef Health Conference, Campus

Jan 28 VFGC Winter Conference, Wytheville

If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodation to participate in this activity, please contact Andy Overbay or Pam Testerman at 276-706-8339 /TDD (800) 828-1120) during business hours of 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. to discuss accommodations 5 days prior to the event.