

The basis for our love-cost baler is a 55-gallon drum, modified as follows:

- Remove one end of the barrel.
- Cut the container down the middle in half lengthwise to form two equal, semi-cylindrical halves.
- Weld two hinges, appropriately spaced, to one of the long seams.
- Weld two sets of tabs (cut from scrap angle iron) to the edges of the other seam, so that the two sides of the opening are equipped with facing surfaces which can lie clamped together. You'll also need an X-shaped configuration of wood or metal, with a hook or bent nail at each extremity. This device should just fit into the bottom of the container.

To prepare the baler for operation, close the drum and secure the edges of the two halves with clamps screwed to the tabs. Cut two lengths of baling twine — no substitutes — and drape them down in the barrel so that they cross each other at right angles with their center sections held by the hooks at the bottom of the barrel and their free ends hanging over the drum's wall. The ends of the strings are then fastened loosely to a band of twine running around the outside of the barrel, to keep them from falling down inside the container and being lost when the hay is added.

OK, you're all set to make a bale. Just pack the barrel with loose hay, stomp on the fodder to compact it, and tie each length of twine with a "trucker's hitch": Loop one end of the string, pass the other through the loop, cinch up, and secure the fastening with a double half hitch. Then remove the clamps, open the barrel, and take out your product. You'll find a bundle weighing 50 to 70 pounds not as neat or compact as those formed by the conventional baler, but still a functional, easily stored unit. Yep, this rather primitive method really works and the price of the equipment is hard to beat.

Read more: <http://www.motherearthnews.com/sustainable-farming/homemade-hay-baler-zmaz75jzgoe.aspx?page=2#ixzz216BmASIR>