

# **SELECTING THE BEST HYDRAULIC CATTLE CHUTE**

Prepared for  
Dr. R.W. Mackey and Students  
The Master's College

Prepared by  
Steven Westrup  
The Master's College  
Business Communications

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## Memo of Transmittal

TO: Dr. R.W. Mackey, The Master's College Business Department

FROM: Steven Westrup

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SUBJECT: Selecting the Best Hydraulic Cattle Chute

Here is the report you requested at the beginning of the semester regarding which hydraulic cattle chute to purchase. We are living in a time of change. New technologies help to usher in that change by providing us with alternative ways of performing tasks that we have been doing for centuries. One of these newly created technologies are hydraulic cattle chutes.

Hydraulic chutes save wear and tear to the body of the operator, time that it takes to work cattle, and are less stressful on the cattle themselves.

In this report, I researched different brands and models of hydraulic chutes that would be similar in function and purpose. I chose three different chutes to research more in depth from a list of quality hydraulic chutes that was found on American Cattlemen's website. While reviewing the chutes, I created three different categorizes with which to analyze the chutes. These three categorizes are: history of the manufacturer, build of the chute, and price.

I have also performed ratings within each category to place value to the chute that performed the best in each category. These ratings were conducted and concluded after researching and comparing the different chutes by the standard of each individual category. I then pooled all of my category information at the end to give a final analysis and endorse one of the chutes over the other two. This was performed by adding differing amounts of weight to the different categorizes based on how influential each category is to the decision of the buyer.

Thank you for the opportunity to research more in depth differing hydraulic cattle chutes. Don't hesitate to contact me with any questions.

## CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
INTRODUCTION.....	1
SELECTING THE BEST HYDRAULIC CATTLE CHUTES.....	1
Manufacturer History .....	2
Build of the Chute .....	3
Price .....	5
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....	6
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	8

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

<u>FIGURES</u>	<u>PAGES</u>
Figure 1: Manufacturer History .....	3
Figure 2: Build of the Chute .....	4
Figure 3: Chart of Chute Prices .....	5
Figure 4: Approximate Price of Chutes .....	6
Figure 5: Total Points .....	6

# Selecting the Best Hydraulic Cattle Chute

## Introduction

Change is something that is inherent in the fallen world that we live in. Ever since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, sin has had its effects on not only the material world that humanity resides in, but also on human beings themselves. People get old, people wear down, people deteriorate; and many times, they unnecessarily accelerate this process. This can be said of farmers and ranchers all over the United States, and the World for that matter, that are resisting change when it comes to cattle working. Many of these hard working men-of-the-land continue to subject their bodies to physical abuse by persisting in their use of manual cattle chutes. These manual chutes require much physical effort and become taxing on your body with excessive usage.

The solution that new technological change has brought about is the hydraulic cattle chute. Hydraulic chutes are a large improvement over the older style manual chutes for multiple reasons, one being that they are easier on the body of the operator. Imagine that a rancher is getting ready to vaccinate his herd of 1,000 yearling steers. A manual chute would work great and get the job done well, but after the first 50-100 head, he starts to look for the end of the line. This causes the rancher to fatigue and, unless there are four or more other men around to rotate in, the vaccination process could take many more days than needed. A hydraulic chute can change this scenario because, rather than having to manually exert himself, the operator can simply run a set of levers that brings about the same result as the exertion. Not only do hydraulic chutes both make it easier on the operator and save time, they are also easier on the livestock being worked. Manual chutes require force to and momentum to slam the head gate shut around

the calf's neck, while hydraulic chutes close in on the calf without the need of force, meaning that the cattle aren't put under as much stress.

The hydraulic cattle chutes researched and presented in this report would be best used by the cattlemen who have anymore than a few hundred head of any age or sized cattle. Each separate chute will be analyzed on the basis of the history of their manufacturer, their individual build, and the price of the chute.

This report will analyzed and evaluate three different chutes: Power River Rancher, Titan West Cattle Care Chute, and the SILENCER Ranch Model made by Moly Mfg., Inc.

### **Manufacturer History**

When looking to purchase any equipment that will rigorously be put to the test on a daily basis, it is a good practice to look at the history of the manufacturer of the equipment. It could be tempting to jump on board the bandwagon of the manufacturer who has been in the business the longest, because they have much experience. It may also be adventurous, however, to look at who the "new kid on the block" is and side with them to see what new ideas they are bringing to the industry. Neither of these qualify the manufacturer as superior to the other, it simply states who has had more experience in the industry.

Each of the three producers of our target chutes has a history in the industry. According to Ray Sturn of Moly Mfg. Inc., Moly Mfg. was started in 1987 by a central Kansas farmer who "saw a need for better methods and improved equipment for handling cattle." The company was formed as he began to design and build his equipment (Sturn, 2013). Titan West was brought about by a couple, Dave and Linda Smerchek, who purchased a preexisting company, Linn Enterprises, in 2003. Linn Enterprises had been an agricultural production manufacturer for 32 years before the Smerchek family took the reins (Perkins, 2012). Powder River has been

manufacturing all-steel squeeze chutes since the 1940's, and it is said that with proper maintenance and care, the chute should last 30-40 years ("Cattle Chutes," n.d.). Points were given to each manufacturer based on their individual histories. The point scale is from 1 to 3, 3 being the most reputable history and 1 being the least history.

**Figure 1: Manufacturer History**

	<b>Moly Mfg.</b>	<b>Titan West</b>	<b>Powder River</b>
<b>Manufacturer history</b>	26 years	42 years	60+ years
<b>Points</b>	1	2	3

Because Powder River has so much longer of a history than they other two companies, it was awarded the most points, followed by Titan West and then Moly Mfg. This is not a test of the quality of the equipment, but solely a glance at the background of the producer.

**Build of the Chute**

When questioning which hydraulic chute would be the best purchase, it is important to take into account: ease of use, durability, and overall appearance. While the appearance of the chute is by far not the most important aspect, it definitely plays a role in getting the attention of the prospective buyer. Ease of use and durability are more practical specs to research and consider. If the controls are difficult and hard to use, the value of the chute goes down drastically. Likewise, if the chute isn't durable and wears out quickly, the usefulness and dependability decline. If this happens, it is necessary to either pay for someone to repair the system or repair the system oneself.

To test these different aspects of build of the chutes, we look at different features represented on each. These include the gauge of the metal used (especially in high wear areas),

accessibility of the hydraulic controls, build of the head gates and tailgates, and access to the animal.

**Figure 2: Build of the Chute**

	<b>SILENCER Ranch Model</b>	<b>Titan West Cattle Care Chute</b>	<b>Powder River Rancher</b>
<b>Overall Appearance</b>	Very Good	Very Good	Fair
<b>Mainframe</b>	4"x2"x1/8" rectangular tubing, 2"x2" square tubing	2"x2" square tubing with reinforced stress points	N/A
<b>Pivot Arm Available (accessible controls)</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Access to animal</b>	Excellent, 16" neck access, neck extension bar, hydraulically positioned head left or right	Very good, 15" neck access, patented neck extension technology	Average, stationary neck extender included.
<b>Head and Tail Doors</b>	Excellent, fully sheeted, full-open 26" clearance	Good, scissor style head and tail doors, sheeted.	Good, scissor style doors, easily adjusted, sheeted
<b>Points</b>	3	2	1

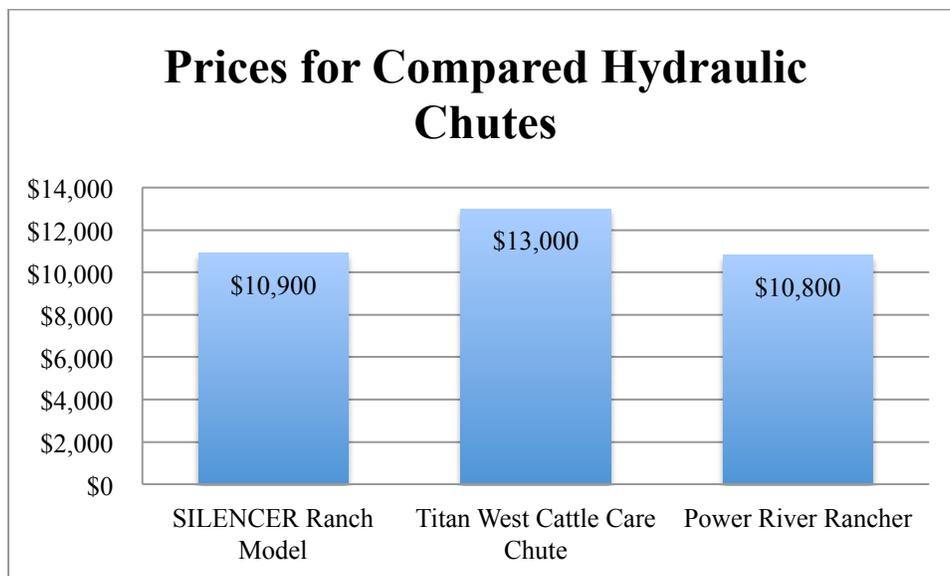
Because of its exceptional head and tail doors, access to the animal, and its structured mainframe, the SILENCER Ranch Model is scored highest in the “build” category of this report. The Cattle Care Chute by Titan West also scored well, but fell short, mainly because of its scissor style doors. While the SILENCER’s doors open fully for the “most advantageous cattle flow in and out of the chute” (“SILENCER’s Unique Designs,” n.d.), the doors of the Cattle Care Chute hinge near the bottom of the chute, creating the possibility for tripping out going or inflowing cattle. The Powder River Rancher fell short because its neck extender is fixed, while the other two can move the head into a better working position, and because data could not be found regarding its mainframe.

## Price

Finally, it is imperative that the customer be aware of the prices for these different models of hydraulic chutes. It may seem like the responsible thing to buy the least expensive chute, but this could pose the risk of losing product quality. With that being said, purchasing highest priced option does not always ensure that you will be receiving the best chute.

It is also important to note that each separate chute and manufacturer have many other available options and extras to add on that I have not presented. Each add-on will represent an increased price to the total that has will be presented below. For the sake of this demonstration, the three different chutes have been equipped with an add-on that they all have in common: pivoting arm controls. Each chute in this price diagram has also been equipped with any other “extras” that have been used in previous comparisons in this report.

**Figure 3: Chart of Chute Prices**



Points were awarded to the chutes based on price with the same scale (1 to 3) as has been used throughout this report.

**Figure 4: Approximate Price of Chutes**

	<b>SILENCER Ranch Model</b>	<b>Titan West Cattle Care Chute</b>	<b>Powder River Rancher</b>
<b>Price (dollars)</b>	Approx. \$10,900	Approx. \$13,000	Approx. \$10,800
<b>Points</b>	3	1	3

As is evident from both the chart and the table, Titan West makes the most expensive chute at nearly \$13,000, giving it the lowest number of points. The other two chutes are close enough together that they were both awarded the top honor.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

When taking a final look at the point value system created, the build and durability of the chutes is weighted the most because of the extreme importance of this category. It was the most broad of the three comparisons, but included the most important features of hydraulic cattle chutes. Price was the second most weighty of the comparisons because, while it does have an affect on which chutes you can purchase, it should not be the deciding factor. History of the manufacturers was the least weighed comparison. While looking back at the history of a company and seeing what they have produced can help you know that you can trust the company, it is by no means the most important factor when dealing with this decision.

**Figure 5: Total Points**

	<b>SILENCER Ranch Model</b>	<b>Titan West Cattle Care Chute</b>	<b>Powder River Rancher</b>
<b>History (1x)</b>	1	2	3
<b>Build (3x)</b>	9	6	3
<b>Price (2x)</b>	6	2	6
<b>Total Points</b>	16	10	12

From this final chart, we can see that the SILENCER Ranch Model Hydraulic Chute, while it doesn't have the longest of history, out performs both of the other models while still remaining very reasonably priced. Although, it isn't the most expensive chute researched, it has the most value because of how good of a chute you get for the money paid. The idea for this topic was first thought of after hearing a life-long rancher from Kansas say that the SILENCER chutes are the "Cadillac" of the hydraulic chute industry. After researching and reporting the data that was found, I think that his statement was an appropriate one. For more information, visit Moly Manufacturing's to see more specific specs and options.

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