

ONLINE ARTICLE

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Ed Evans, "Toowong", Inverell, won the NSW Farm Inventors competition at the Commonwealth Bank AgQuip Field Days in 2010.

FOUR years ago it was just an idea, but now Inverell grazier Ed Evans is preparing to commercialise a safety gate for yards that legendary animal behaviour consultant Temple Grandin says is one of the best things she's seen.

And it all started with winning *The Land's* Farm Inventor competition at the 2010 Commonwealth Bank AgQuip field days.

Mr Evans discovered the hard way what can happen when a cow comes back at you through the forcing yard gate.

While he has been around cattle most of his life, at times running as many as 1000 head, a cow got the better of him one day after he treated it for a sore leg.

"I gave the cow some needles one night – as I let her out she turned around, kicked the gate, knocked me down and gored my leg," he said.

Years before, Mr Evans' sister-in-law had her face smashed by a gate in a similar situation, he said, and after hearing of other similar injuries he decided to create a solution.

It took about a year from when he started his plan to actually having a prototype gate ready to fit in his yards.

His design is a forcing yard gate with a hinge 800 millimetres from the latch end which allows the gate to swing away from the handler when a collision occurs.

He patented his design in 2009 and about six months later heard of another incident – this time where a man died – which triggered his decision to take his new gate to the AgQuip field days.

This started a domino effect of successful exposure for his design.

Mr Evans won the AgQuip regional judging (under \$1000) in the NSW Farm Inventor competition and went on to win the national final at the Australian National Field Day, as well as the Queensland Farm Inventor and the Workcover Safety Award at Darling Harbour before entering ABC's *The New Inventors* program, where he also won.

Part of the prize from the ABC series was \$9000 towards product testing, the outcome of which has been an improved product with magnetic hinges at little extra cost.

From the media exposure his design was noticed by some businessmen friends with whom he teamed up, retaining 50 per cent of the intellectual property rights.

His business partners brought in the aid of independent consultant Mike Agnew, Wenga Consulting, Brisbane, who helped them with a commercialisation Australia grant of \$50,000 allowing the fledgling company to establish a business plan.

With testing due to be completed at the end of this week, Mr Evans said they hoped to launch by the end of this year and have been back on the road promoting it at events such as Beef 2012 at Rockhampton, Qld, in May.

They have also obtained a patent co-operation treaty which allows them 18 months to get patents in other countries.

And all this from just one decision to enter the AgQuip Farm Inventor competition.

The biggest win, however, has been the interest shown by Canadian cattle behaviour specialist Temple Grandin.

“She said ‘we need to get this into our environment’,” Mr Evans said.

They have organised through her to meet with North American yard and gate manufacturers.