

**BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET**1. CONTROL NUMBER  
PN-AAJ-2682. SUBJECT CLASSIFICATION (USS)  
ARCO-0000-0000

## 3. TITLE AND SUBTITLE (340)

Low cost beds made at home

## 4. PERSONAL AUTHORS (100)

## 5. CORPORATE AUTHORS (101)

USDA/FES

## 6. DOCUMENT DATE (110)

1966

## 7. NUMBER OF PAGES (120)

12p.

## 8. ARC NUMBER (170)

645.6.A278a

## 9. REFERENCE ORGANIZATION (130)

USDA/FES

## 10. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES (500)

## 11. ABSTRACT (950)

## 12. DESCRIPTORS (920)

Furniture

## 13. PROJECT NUMBER (150)

## 14. CONTRACT NO. (140)

USDA/FES

## 15. CONTRACT TYPE (140)

## 16. TYPE OF DOCUMENT (160)

645.5  
A278a

PN- AAJ- 268

# LOW COST BEDS MADE AT HOME

AN AID TO EXTENSION AND  
VILLAGE WORKERS IN  
MANY COUNTRIES



FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
IN COOPERATION WITH THE AGENCY  
FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT — UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE



**This is for**  
**YOU**  
**The Home Economics Extension Worker**  
**or**  
**Village Worker**

This booklet was prepared for use in countries cooperating with technical assistance programs of the Agency for International Development. You will find these directions simply written for teaching purposes.

Information in this booklet was adapted from materials from the University of Puerto Rico, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Caribbean Commission.

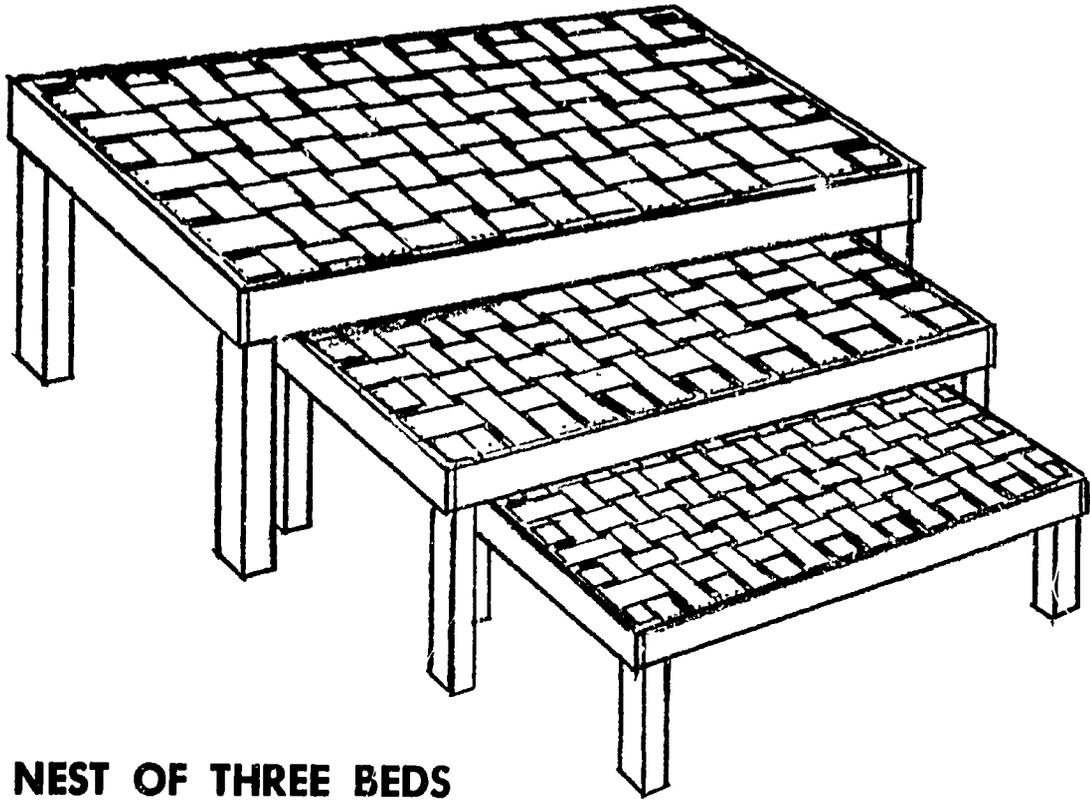
*Cover: A family with beds they made.*

*Issued January 1966*

**CONTENTS**

A Nest of Three Beds -----	3
How to Make the Frames -----	4
A Surface to Support the Mattress -----	6
A burlap surface -----	7
How to make a stretcher -----	10
A wood slat surface -----	11
A baling surface -----	11

# LOW COST BEDS MADE AT HOME



## A NEST OF THREE BEDS

Each bed is a different height and length, so the smaller ones can be placed under the others.

The largest bed is 72" long—20" high.

The medium bed is 66" long—15" high.

The small bed is 60" long—10" high.

All are 36" wide.

This nest of beds:

- Provides more sleeping room
- Makes it easier for children to have separate beds
- Saves floor space in the house
- Can be made at home at little cost

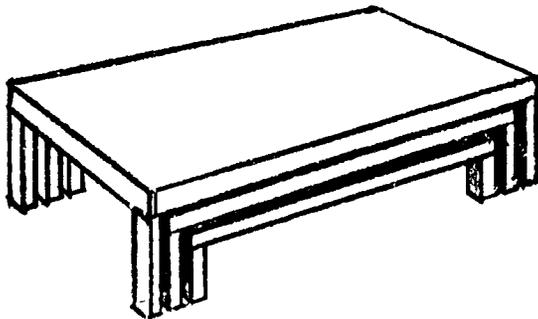
*A good place to sleep is important.*

Sound, restful sleep is necessary to health.

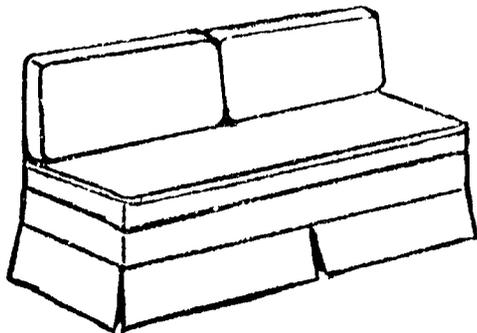
Where you sleep makes a difference in how you sleep. A clean, comfortable bed can help you sleep well. Most people like a bed up off the floor or ground.

It is healthier for a child to have his own bed.

A nest of beds can make a separate bed for each child. The beds store under one another during the day. This saves floor space.

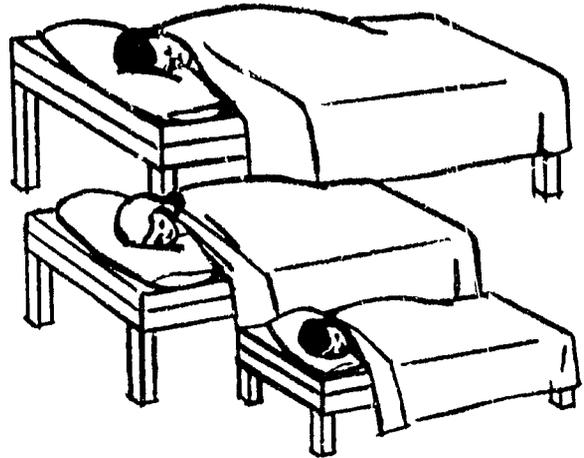


The nest of beds is especially good to use in the living room. During the day it serves as a couch to sit on.



### *Essential Parts of a Bed:*

- The framework
- Firm surface on top of frame
- Mattress—pad or mat
- Bedding



## **HOW TO MAKE THE FRAMES**

Wooden frames can be made at home. The frame should be strong and be made of a hard durable wood.

*Materials you will need:*

Largest bed—

- For side rails—2 boards 1"x3"x72"
- For end rails—2 boards 1"x3"x36"
- For legs —4 boards 2"x2"x20"

Medium bed—

- For side rails—2 boards 1"x3"x66"
- For end rails—2 boards 1"x3"x36"
- For legs —4 boards 2"x2"x15"

Small bed—

- For side rails—2 boards 1"x3"x60"
- For end rails—2 boards 1"x3"x36"
- For legs —4 boards 2"x2"x10"

Paint and sandpaper

*Tools you will need:*

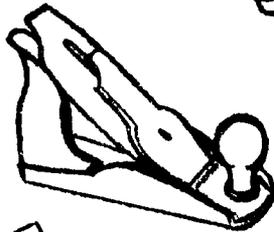
Saw



Hammer



Plane



Square

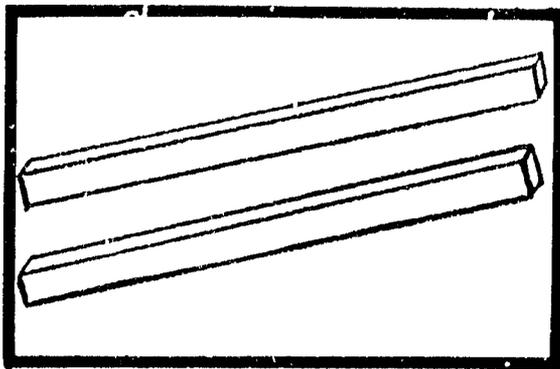


Yardstick or Ruler

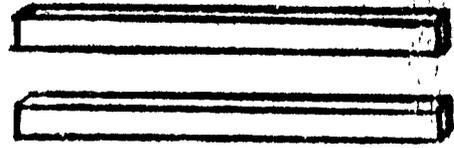


*Directions*

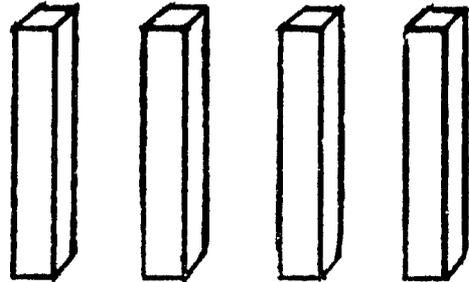
1. Make Largest Bed First.  
Cut two side rails—1"x3"x72".



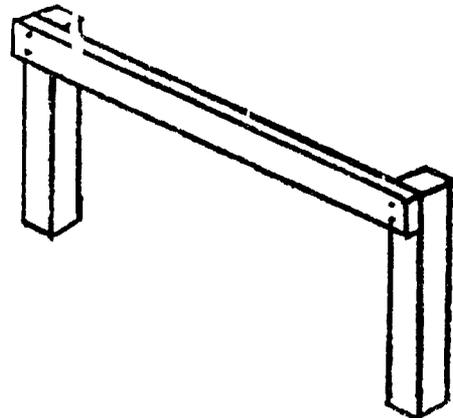
2. Cut two end rails—1"x3"x36".



3. Cut 4 legs—2"x2"x20".

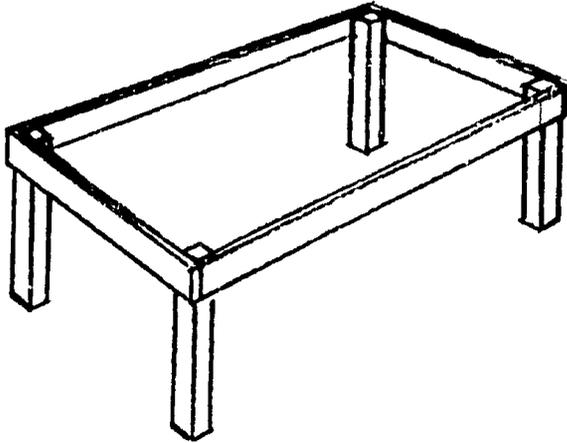


4. Sandpaper rails and legs to be sure they are smooth and have no rough places. A plane will be needed for smoothing if lumber is very rough.
5. Nail each end of the 36" rail to two legs. This makes one end of the bed frame. Be sure the top of the legs and the top of the end rail are even.

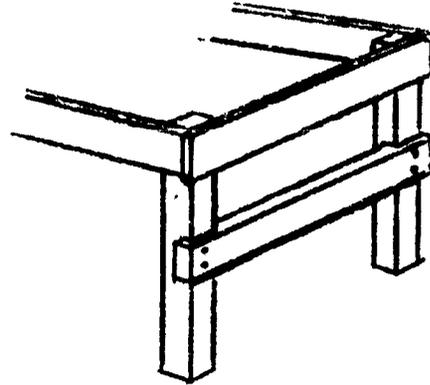


6. Nail the other 36" rail to the other two legs. This makes the second end of the bed frame.

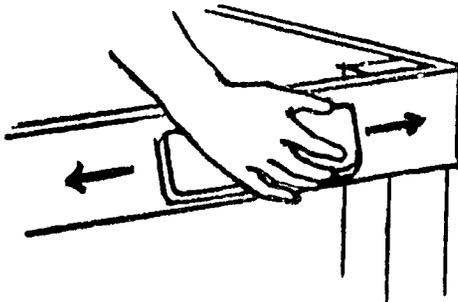
7. Nail each 72" side rail to the two prepared ends of the bed frame. Be sure the tops of the side rails are even with the tops of the ends.



from the bottom on both ends of the bed frames.



8. Sand the frame again to be sure all edges are smooth.



## A SURFACE TO SUPPORT THE MATTRESS

The framework of the bed must have a surface to hold the mattress or pad.

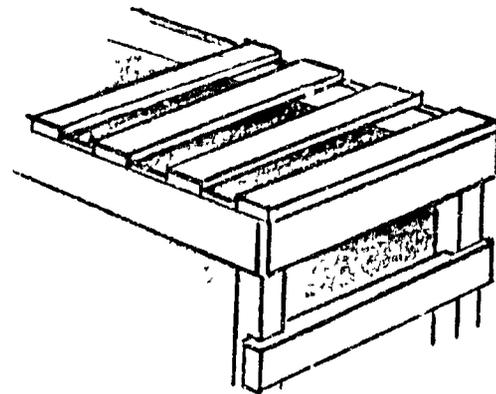
The surface that holds the mattress should be very firm. It is this that supports your body.

9. The bed frame will look better and last longer if you paint it.

The frame of the largest bed is now finished and ready for the springs to be attached.

For medium and small beds follow the same method.

To strengthen the large and medium beds a piece of wood 1"x2"x36" could be nailed about 6 inches



Strong, firm support for your body is important to health. Children need a good firm bed for sleeping while their bodies are growing.

The surface to support the mattress can be made from:

- . burlap sacks
- . heavy canvas
- . rope
- . baling bands (such as the steel bands that come around big boxes and crates or bales of cotton)
- . wooden slats

You may wish to use springs on top of slats to support a mattress:

Do not make the surface out of chicken wire.

### *A Burlap Surface*

Burlap is a coarse strong material used in making sacks. These may be called "crocus" or "gunny" sacks.

Burlap is also used for wrapping large bundles, such as bales of cotton. Often burlap is discarded and you can get it at little or no cost.

To make a surface from burlap, cut the burlap, fold into strong strips, and nail on to the bed frame. Then weave together as described below.

#### *Materials Needed*

- 6 or 8 burlap sacks or about that much burlap material
- 1/2 yard khaki, heavy canvas, or other firm material
- 1 spool strong thread
- 1-inch nails (no longer) with large heads

#### *Tools*

- |                       |           |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Large scissors        | Saw       |
| Needles               | Plane     |
| Tape measure or ruler | Stretcher |
| Hammer                |           |

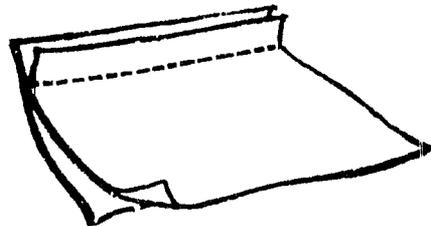
### *To Prepare the Burlap Strips*

1. Wash and dry the burlap. If using sacks, open them.
2. Cut strips 8 inches wide lengthwise of the material.

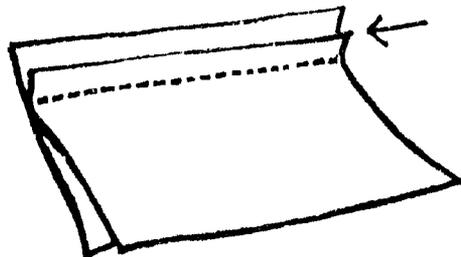
Length of strip that can be cut will depend on size of sack or material used.

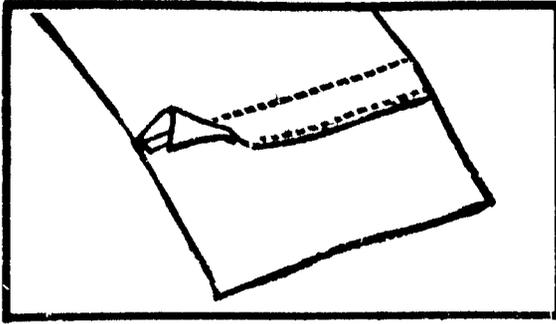
3. Prepare 11 or 12 strips to go lengthwise of bed. To make the strips the desired length, join two or more strips together by sewing with strong thread, using a backstitch. Make a strong flat felled seam. Here's how to make this kind of seam . . .

*Sew two strips together*—use strong thread and backstitch. Make seam 1/2".



Then cut one edge to leave 1/4".





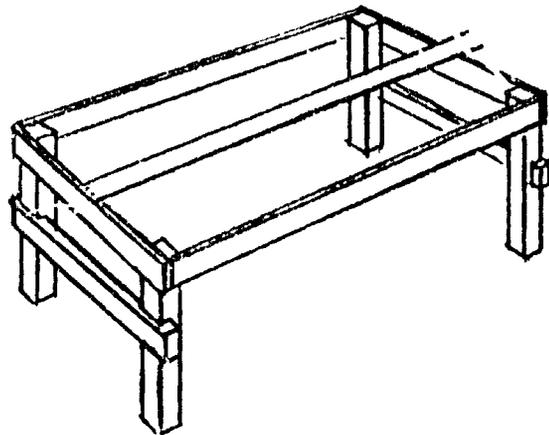
*Nail the long strips to the bed frame first.*

Turn down  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches on one end of each strip.

Nail the turned-down end of one strip to one end of the bed frame at the center. Use three nails to fasten the strip securely to the frame.

Now fold other edge over the cut edge. Make a flat seam using a strong backstitch. The edges must be well turned under in the seam so they will not pull out.

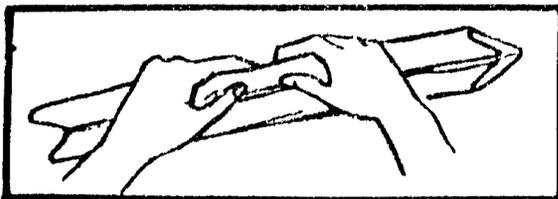
4. Make these strips 5 inches longer than the bed, to allow for turning the ends under when nailing to the bed frame. For a bed 72" long, make the strips 77" long.
5. Prepare 22 or 23 strips to go cross-wise of the bed—and make these 5 inches longer than the width of the bed. For a bed 36 inches wide, make the strips 41 inches long.
6. Turn down  $1\frac{1}{4}$  inches on both sides of the strips and press well, either with hands or hot iron. Then fold strips in half lengthwise, making all strips  $2\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide.



Nail the other long strips in the same way on each side of this strip, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch space between them.

Stretch each long strip tight and nail to other end, turning down the ends to come even with the edge of the rail.

It will be a good idea to drive these nails only halfway in. After all the weaving is done, these long strips may need to be stretched and tightened again. Then you'll want to move the nails and drive them firmly.



### *Nail and Weave Short Burlap Strips*

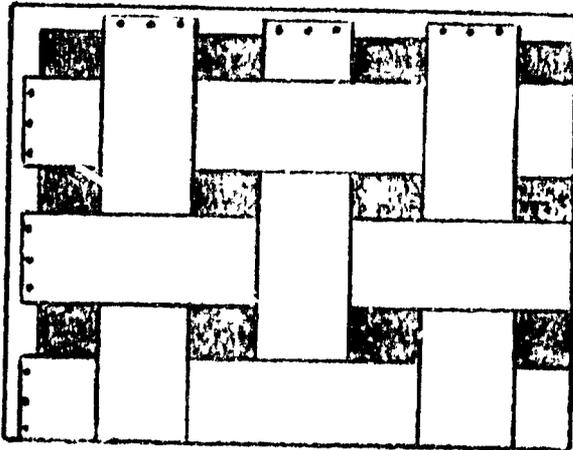
Turn down  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches on one end of the short strips. Nail the turned down edge of one short strip in the center of one of the side rails.

Nail the other short strips on each side of this center strip, leaving  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch between each strip. Use three nails, as you did for the long strips. Leave the other ends of the short pieces loose for weaving.

Weave in the short strips.

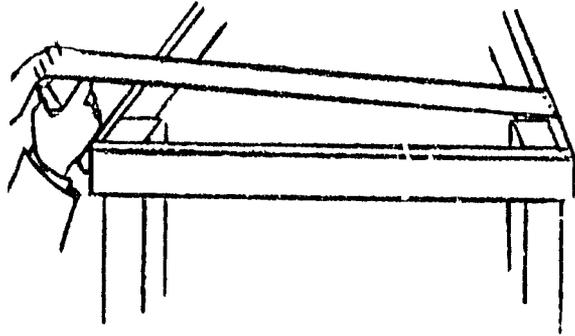
Begin at one end of the bed. Take first short strip and put it *over* the first long strip and then *under* the second long strip. Continue *over* and *under* to the other side.

Take second short strip and put it *under* the first long strip and *over* the next. Continue *under* and *over* to the other side.



### *Stretch short strips*

When all the short strips are woven in, use the stretcher and pull each strip as tight as you can and nail to the top of the side rail. Fold the rest of the strip back over these nails and nail again. Trim off any extra.



### *Finish the edges*

Cut heavy material, canvas, or khaki into strips 3 inches wide. Sew together to make two strips for the sides and two for the ends.

Turn down  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch on each side. Fold again lengthwise to make the strip one inch wide. Finish the surface by tacking the strips of material over the ends of the burlap strips all around.

You can use smooth wood strips to finish the edges, instead of cloth.

## How to Make a Stretcher

To make the strips of burlap tight enough, you need a "stretcher." You can make a stretcher at home. (See directions below.)

Hook the nail end of the stretcher in the end of the burlap strip. Pull the burlap strip tight against the frame to nail it.

### Materials you need:

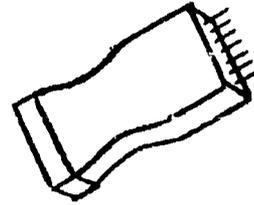
- Piece of wood  $\frac{3}{4}$ " x  $3\frac{1}{2}$ " x 7"
- 5 or 6 ten-penny nails
- Sandpaper

### Tools you need:

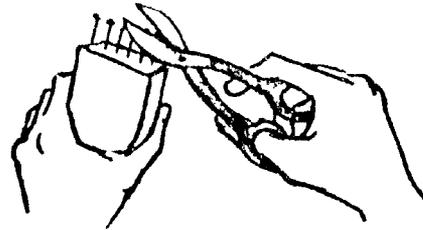
- Hammer
- Sandpaper
- Large tin shears to cut off nail heads, or a chisel
- File

### Directions

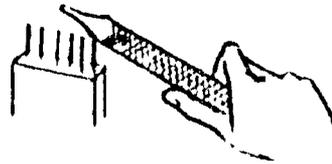
1. Make a light curve on each side of the piece of wood with a knife, if desired. This makes it easier to hold with the hand, but it's not essential.



2. Smooth the piece of wood with sandpaper.
3. Drive five or six ten-penny nails into one end of the block, leaving the nails extending about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.
4. Cut the heads off the nails with large shears or chisel.



5. File the ends of the nail to make sharp "teeth"— $\frac{1}{2}$ " long.



6. Cover the other end of the stretcher with some heavy material, canvas, or old felt. This makes it easier to hold against the bedframe and to keep the stretcher from slipping when you pull the burlap strips.

### ***A Wood Slat Surface***

Slats of wood nailed crosswise of the bed will give strong support to the body. These will make a harder bed than the burlap or baling spring.

#### *Materials needed:*

- Wood strips about 2½" wide—1" thick. It will take about 50 feet to make slats for one bed.
- Nails—1½"
- Sandpaper

#### *Tools needed:*

- Hammer
- Saw
- Plane
- Square

#### *Directions:*

1. Measure carefully the outside width of the bed.
2. For a bed 72" long cut 16 or 17 slats exactly the same length as the outside width of the bed. If the bed is 36" wide from the outside—cut the slats of wood exactly 36" long. The ends of the wood slats should be even with the outside edge of the long bed rails.

3. Smooth each slat with a plane, if the wood is very rough. Then sandpaper each to make very smooth.

Give particular attention to the sawed ends to make them smooth.

Nail the strips crosswise to the side rails, two inches apart. Use 2 or 3 nails for each end of these strips.

4. See that the edges of the slats are even with the edge of the side rail.
5. Be sure the edges of the slats are smooth.

### ***A Baling Surface***

#### *Materials You Need:*

- Strips of metal baling, preferably 1" wide
- Nails—1"
- Aluminum paint

#### *Tools You Need:*

- Pliers
- Hammer
- Saw
- Tin Shears
- Paintbrush

## ***Directions***

1. Straighten baling bands. If the metal is rusty or corroded, rub with sandpaper. Then clean with kerosene. Wipe dry.
2. Measure the length of the bed from the outside edges. Cut the lengthwise strips of the baling 2 inches longer than the bed. If the bed measured 72" from the outside, cut the baling 74" long.
3. For a bed 36" wide, cut about 18 long strips.
4. Measure the outside width of the bed. Cut the crosswise strips 2 inches longer than the bed is wide. If the bed measures 36" wide from the outside, cut the strips 38" long. For a bed 72" long, cut about 36 short strips.
5. Find the center of one of the end rails. Nail one end of a long strip in the center, using at least 2 nails. Nail the other long strips on either side of the center strip, leaving one inch space between each strip.
6. Stretch each long strip very tight with pliers and nail to the other end, leaving the nails half way out.
7. Weave in the short strips under and over to fill the entire length of the bed. Leave one inch between them.
8. Stretch and nail both ends of the short strips tightly to the side rails.
9. When the weaving is completed, the long strips will need to be tightened again. Take out the nails you left halfway out. With the pliers, stretch each long strip tight and nail it securely.
10. Protect the sharp ends by covering with baling, nailed evenly all around the bedframe.
11. Apply a coat of aluminum paint on both sides of the surface.

