

## “Ag Art Wear” Contest Creates Interest At Show

Corrugated iron, baling twine and chicken wire have all been used to create “cutting edge” fashion at an attention-getting fashion show that requires contestants to create their garments out of anything they can find on the farm.

The Ag Art Wear competition is held each year at the New Zealand National Fieldays in Mystery Creek, New Zealand. The rules are simple: create a piece of wearable art from farm products or equipment. “Pretty much anything you can find on the farm,” says contest coordinator Jodi Bennett, who works for the Fieldays.

The unique fashion show has grown each year since it started 6 years ago, says Bennett, noting that entries come in from across New Zealand. They’re expecting a record number of entries this year to compete for nearly \$5,000 in prizes. A “fashion” show is held one day and 15 finalists are selected to compete on the final day. An entry fee is charged. This year’s show will be held June 14-17.

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Attention-getting fashion show, held at a major New Zealand farm show, requires contestants to create a piece of wearable art from anything they can find on the farm.

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## Rock With Sentimental Value Moved To Family’s New Home

FARM SHOW’s story in our last issue about Rob and Donald Slayton, Casey, Iowa, and the giant rock they dug out of their field, prompted other readers to tell us their “rock stories”. Here’s one of the best.

The big rock was there when Steve Gray’s parents, Ernest and Ethel, moved to Page County, Iowa, in 1937. That was several years before Steve was born.

Because the rock was in a pasture, it didn’t cause any problems for equipment. But it always held a fascination for the Gray children.

“The top of the rock was level with the soil so we often played on it. My older sisters and I had a lot of picnics on it when I was little,” says Steve.

The big granite rock was somewhat of a mystery, too. “Because the top of it was flat, we were always wondering how big the rock really was,” he says.

Steve’s mother was also curious and she had a special affection for the rock. That’s the main reason the rock was eventually dug up.

“When my parents celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 1983, we wanted to do something special and memorable,” Steve says. He and his wife Lisa, his sisters and their families, and numerous cousins, too, decided the best gift they could give Ernest and Ethel was to dig up the rock and bring it up to the house where they could see it every day.

Steve’s cousin was in the construction business. He dug around the rock with a backhoe and then pushed it out with a bulldozer. It measured nearly 10 by 8 by 6 ft. high.

“The grand kids found out it was a terrific place to climb and play, and it was a natural backdrop for family photos. We’d all stand around it, sit on it, etc., and shoot a photo. We have one photo where there were so many people you couldn’t see the rock,” he says.

Steve’s mother passed away in 1990 and in 1998, his father decided it was time to auction off his possessions and sell the farm. He asked Steve and his sisters to select something they wanted. The only thing Steve and his wife Lisa wanted was the rock.

So before the auctioneer sold the land, he announced that the buyer would get everything except the rock.

On February 25, 2000, the rock was moved more than 100 miles to Steve and Lisa’s new house near Indianola, Iowa. Steve’s cousin brought in a couple of crawler tractors equipped with buckets. With these, they picked the rock up and backed a semi-trailer under it. Once the rock was on the trailer, they ran it across the scales at the co-op in Clarinda before heading down the highway. It tipped the scales at 31,920 lbs., just 80 lbs. shy of 16 tons.

“We didn’t need any special permits, since it was under highway weight and width limits,” he says.

“We could have found a bigger rock closer to home,” Steve says. “But my parents’ farm holds a lot of good memories for me and my family. Even though the farm is no longer in the family, this is a little piece of it that we can keep.”

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To Steve Gray, this 16-ton rock is an important reminder of his childhood home. When his parents’ farm was sold, he decided to keep the rock.



A pair of crawler tractors with buckets were used to load the rock onto a semi trailer for transport.



Gray family members pose at the rock after it was moved 120 miles to its new location.