

“World’s Oldest Horse”

Horses typically live only 20 to 25 years. That’s why people are so amazed at a little pony down in Virginia named “Ted E. Bear” which is reportedly 58 years old.

When you consider that one horse year equals three human years, the little Shetland is the equivalent of 174 years old. He’s listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the oldest horse on the planet.

“Ted E. Bear” has been owned by Katherine Pennington for the past 20 years. According to Pennington, Ted received no special care throughout his life but is still in relatively good health and gets around well. The pony is now slightly affected by arthritis and is blind in one eye with very little sight in the other. In the evening, when it’s time for him to come in, all you need to do is call him and he whinnies an answer.

“As you call and he answers, he will walk unerringly to you,” Pennington says. “I think he answers each time you call because, since he has had to use our voices to find us, he thinks we also cannot see him and must find him by sound, too. If we are late coming



“Ted E. Bear” is reportedly 58 years old, which is the equivalent of a human being 174 years old.

home to put him in, he will start to call us as soon as the car door shuts – I guess, just a reminder that he is still waiting.”

Pennington says Ted can no longer eat hay, but manages to eat a special Purina feed designed especially for older horses.

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Flicka, who lives in Florida, still gets around fine despite his 50 years.

Other “Very Old” Horses

Here are two other old horses. “Flicka”, a black gelding near Myakka City, Florida, is 50 years old. Flicka’s current owner, 15-year-old Sara Spanial, has provided him with tender-loving care since she was six years old. Spanials bought the gelding from a disbanded therapeutic riding program where he had been for seven years, and prior to that, he was used to wrangle cattle on a central Florida ranch for 37 years.

Spanials says that, although her beloved Flicka shows many signs of advanced age (arthritis, poor teeth, sagging back), he still has a gleam in his eye, a shiny coat, and still romps with the family’s other horses when feeling frisky.

In Canada, “Peaches,” a 13.3 hand unpapered Quarter Horse, also has a color-

ful past. His current owner, Jane Morrow of Camp Creek, Alberta, says her brother-in-law, Trevor Helmig, bought him in the fall of 1979 from two cowboys at Smokey Lake, Alberta, who owned him in partnership. At that time, Peaches was thought to be 18. He originally came to Canada in a trailer load of calf-roping horses brought from Oklahoma to Alberta in the spring of 1977.

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Peaches is a healthy and happy 39-year-old cow horse.

Wheat Farm Sells Crops A Different Way

By Janis Schole

Harold Moen knows how to take lemons and make lemonade.

In 1993, Moen inherited the family grain farm near Swift Current, Saskatchewan and inadvertently became a farmer. He took a look at the state of farming and decided to sell the farm’s product in an entirely different way. “It was amazing to me that even though I inherited 480 acres and all the machinery, it still wasn’t economical for me to farm it in the traditional way,” he says. “In Canada, a conventional grain farm of this size does not have the economy of scale to make money or to break even. We did extensive research to find a way to make a profit and the result was setting up a retail business that sells six innovative products.

“Using just 39 acres for the business, Moen grows triticale, bearded wheat, green oats, flax, safflower, canaryseed, and black bearded wheat. He harvests and markets the entire plant to the dried flower market using a special preservation process.

He also began harvesting 29 species of wild plants that grow on the farm’s 180 acres of native prairie, and in the ditches. He sells these plants to the floral industry and the North American nutraceutical industry. The remaining 280 acres on his farm produce conventional durum wheat, which is harvested and marketed in the traditional way. “Market research showed that the flower industry wanted a preserved product that, would shatter less, and last longer,” he says. “I decided to develop a commercial process and license the production process to others.”

Moen paid \$50 for a six-foot drill he found in someone’s junk pile and pulls it with a Massey 44 tractor. He uses a specialized Japanese rice harvester to bring in his whole-plant crop. The “walk-behind” unit travels at about 3 mph per hour and has a binder that makes a sheaf every 6 sec.

“To harvest 10 acres, you have to walk 70 miles,” Moen says, pointing out that his operation is no “cake walk” in the heat of July. He hires high school students, university students and farm wives, and also has contract pickers from as far away as British Columbia to fill orders for his prairie plants. Workers are paid according to how much they pick. Moen begins harvesting the wild plants as early as late May, and the grains at the end of July. Harvest continues until winter.

His value-added grains and oilseeds reach consumers, not as flour or oil, but as retail products such as bird feeders, decorative sheaves and swags, craft kits, and handcrafted corporate gifts. He also wholesales to Canadian and U.S. craft manufac-



Here’s an example of the floral arrangements Moen sells.

turers in bulk, offering cleaned and field run sheaves. These companies had previously imported their supplies from Italy. Designers use the preserved botanicals in dried/preserved arrangements and as an accent or filler in fresh bouquets.

Moen preserves the decorative plants with glycerin, which keeps them soft for many years. Some are dyed various colors before being arranged into attractive displays, which are later purchased by consumers for home decorating. In addition to wholesaling, he markets these products via mail order catalogues, as well as through distributors.

Moen knows the value of diversifying, and tries to spread his risk out over a variety of markets. He also sells hydroponically grown herbs and “forest products” such as evergreen wreaths and swags.

He says the company generates “substantial revenue — enough to make a good living,” but he’s the first to admit that his new approach to farming is still not devoid of a lot of hard work.

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