

"IT PUTS EXCITEMENT IN OUR LIVES"

Rattlesnake Hunter Loves His "Sport"

"The most snakes I ever caught in one day was 188," says Joe Kuntz, Yuma, Colo., who has hunted rattlesnakes as a hobby since 1941 when he was first bitten by a rattler.

"I was struck by one while I was trying to catch another one on a prairie dog mound. The one that struck me was coiled in a clump of grass. I thought I had only brushed against the stiff grass but when I pulled up my pants there were two dots of blood 1 1/2 in. apart, the mark of a rattler. My brother and I jogged to a nearby farmhouse and hitched a ride into town. Luckily I got help in time and, after a week of rest, I was back out hunting again," says Kuntz.

He primarily hunts prairie rattlesnakes that inhabit the Colorado plains, although he travels to other parts of the country to hunt. His biggest catch ever was a 6-ft. long diamondback he caught in Oklahoma in 1976. "Prairie rattlesnakes are the most exciting to hunt because they're quicker and smaller which makes them much more difficult to catch," says Kuntz, who invented his own snake catcher, a 4-ft. long pole with spring-loaded jaws on one end controlled by a squeeze handle. He also designed a special double-walled snake cage - there's a 1 1/2 in. gap between the walls - so he can take rattlers to schools and organizations that contact him to talk about his hobby.

Kuntz says springtime, when snakes first come out of hibernation, is the easiest time to hunt. But his favorite time of year to hunt is fall, when they're out looking for dens. "In this part of the country, snakes often use prairie dog holes because they're below the frost line. You can find many different species in a single den, all intertwined to conserve energy and heat."

The most success Kuntz ever had in a single day occurred one spring several years ago. "We came upon an old cistern filled with trash, cans, wire and old lumber. After removing the lumber, they had no way of



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getting out. All we had to do was put them in a cage with our catcher. We got 188," says Kuntz, adding that in his most successful year ever he caught 428. In nearly 50 years of snake hunting Kuntz figures he's caught more than 13,000 snakes. He's never had a serious "accident" since the first time he was bitten and, in fact, he doesn't even take along a snake bite kit. "We leave the medicine at home and take our respect for them along with us," he says.

Kuntz kills the snakes by putting them into a deep freeze. He sells them to dealers for the skin, which is turned into belts, hatbands, billfolds, and other items.

Wildlife officials generally don't condone rattlesnake hunting. They say snakes eat rodents and insects and should only be killed when they're around homesteads or pose a threat to livestock.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Joe Kuntz, 200 S. Gum St., Yuma, Colo. 80759 (ph 303 848-5942).

**DO-IT-YOURSELF HOLSTEIN OUTFIT
HELPS PROMOTE MILK**

Cow Costume Big Hit At Local Fairs

If you're looking for a way to promote milk and dairy products at local fairs and exhibitions, you might want to take a close look at "Molly Moo", a cow costume designed by a Grandin, N. Dak., farm wife.

"In the spring of 1985, as a member of our local North Dakota Dairy Women association, I was asked to make a cow costume. I searched many pattern and fabric shops and could not find the type of pattern I needed. So I decided to build my own," says Gloria Porter, who dubbed her creation "Molly Moo".

The design features a soft, lightweight sculptured head with horns, and a two-piece fully adjustable body suit that adapts to nearly any size wearer.

"When we started using it for promotions at fairs, shopping malls, food stores, nursing homes, day care centers and at many other places or events, people started asking me if they could buy a pattern. I had it printed up and continue to have tremendous interest," says Porter.

The pattern is full-size with no enlarging needed and comes complete with fabric recommendations and sewing instructions. Sells for \$12.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Gloria Porter, Rt. 1, Box 63, Grandin, N. Dak. 58038 (ph 706 436-4026).



Cow costume consists of a soft sculptured head with horns and a 2-piece, fully-adjustable body suit.

**"THEY'VE GOT TREMENDOUS
STRENGTH AND STAMINA"**

He's Breaking Zebras To Saddle, Harness

Zebras can be broken to harness and will even tolerate a saddle with enough training, says California horseman Viri Norton who's doing what everyone says can't be done. He's training zebras.

Norton bought his pair of zebras for about \$5,000 apiece at the annual Exotic Animal Auction in Cape Girardeau, Mo. Within a week after the first animal had arrived, he had the zebra - which is named Zeke - pulling a wagon alongside a mature, patient mare.

"I had to tranquilize the animal before I could get close enough to put a halter on the first time. Then I had to tie his mouth shut because otherwise he'd bite like crazy," Norton told FARM SHOW, adding that during training he made sure he was the only one who fed and watered the zebra so that the animal would become dependent on him. After a week of almost continuous work, he hitched Zeke up and drove down a busy nearby highway, causing a minor traffic jam.

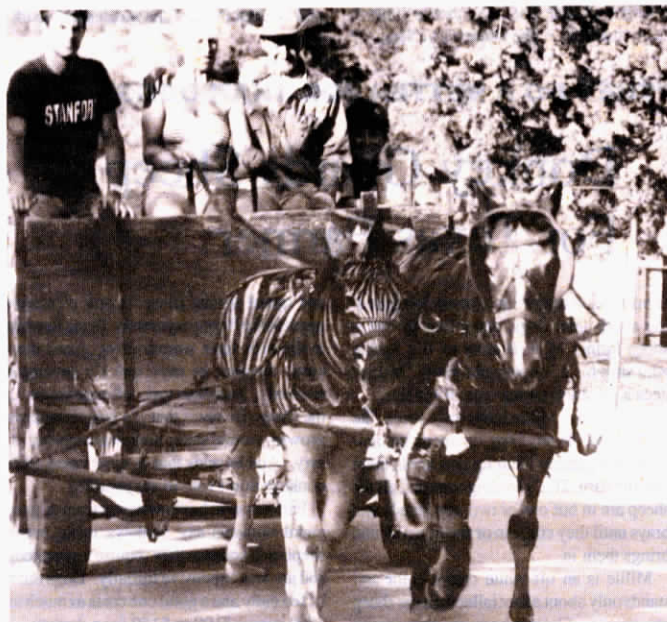
Norton says the problem with zebras is that they've been wild for so long they have little aptitude for training. "You have to start from the beginning again every time unless you work with the animal constantly.

They've been wild for 5 million years or more so a few weeks of training isn't going to make much difference."

In addition to the male Zeke, Norton also owns a large mare that he hopes to breed to an Arabian stallion to produce a "zabian". He hopes the offspring will make a good riding horse. "The zebra is extremely strong and has tremendous endurance. If we can combine those qualities with the personality and brains of an Arabian, then we would really have something."

Norton points out that zebras have already been bred successfully to Welsh ponies (to produce "zonies") and donkeys ("zeedonks"). He notes that there's a lot of interest in zebra crosses from participants in cross country endurance races in which participants ride horses over rough terrain for long distances. Norton himself is in the Guinness Book Of Records for the fastest horseback ride across the United States. Competing against 102 riders from 13 countries, the 70-year-old Norton won the event by averaging 32 miles per day and covering the entire 3,500 miles in 315 hours.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Viri Norton, 20206 Harry Rd., San Jose, Calif. 95120 (ph 408 268-1745).



One week after he first got Zeke the zebra, Norton had him broken to harness.