

Butterfly Ranching Catching On Fast

A California production company once contacted David Bohlken, requesting some of his "livestock" the next day for a TV commercial it was filming. While Bohlken says it was hectic, he was able to meet the company's request in just 14 hours.

Bohlken, of St. Paul, Minn., is one of a growing number of butterfly ranchers in the U.S., and business has never been better, he says.

"Demand for butterflies to release at weddings is simply exploding," he says. "A lot of attention is also being paid to butterflies for pollinating fruit trees, because of a decimation in the wild honey bee population due to a widespread mite infestation."

However, Bohlken's biggest regular customers are zoos, butterfly gardens and educational programs all over the U.S. Last year, he sold 45,000 butterflies in minimum orders of 1,000 "head" at a cost of \$3,000 per order. This year, he expects sales to reach to over \$200,000.

The butterflies he starts as eggs - laid by female caterpillars in aquariums in early spring - go on in a few days to feed on an open 40-acre milkweed plot near St. Croix Falls, Wis. He now gets most of his breeding stock - 300 to 400 adult Monarch butterflies - in Minnesota but gets others (he raises 19 other varieties besides Monarchs) from Texas and California. Each adult lays about 300 eggs.



Bohlken sold 45,000 butterflies last summer.

Bohlken sells and ships his butterflies as chrysalides, or cocoons, in priority mail packages. His season lasts six months, beginning in March when adult butterflies begin migrating north for the summer and ending in late summer.

He helps others get started in butterfly farming and sells breeding stock, too.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Monarchs Forever, 1137 Lincoln Ave., St. Paul, Minn. 55105 (ph 612 228-0180; fax 224 9353).



Gourd climbed up woven wire against building (left) and then found its way to the peak (right). Arrow points to gourd.



"Ambitious" Gourd Grows Through Barn Roof

"My son, Tom, plants gourds on my place along the south side of an old barn. Last year, one of the plants decided to take off on its own," says Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa.

"The gourds climb up woven wire against the building. One of them went in through a window and followed the rafters up to the peak of the roof. It was seeking the light which came in through a hole at the top. It

came out the hole and grew a perfect gourd that hung from the peak of the roof.

"We finally picked the persistent gourd along with the rest of them but not before it provided a lot of amusement for us and friends. It was a Birdhouse variety gourd."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tom Gogerty, 1952 QL Lane, Madrid, Iowa 50156 (ph 515 795-2685).

Round Houses Not Just For Trains Anymore

You won't get cornered in this round house designed to provide a breathtaking panoramic view when it's located out in the country, near oceans, mountains or lakes.

Deltec's round house is highly wind resistant with less exterior surface than a square building of the same sq. footage, according to the Asheville, N.C., company. This helps to cut energy and heating costs in half, compared to a conventional square house, the company says.

The design is also more versatile than a conventional square house, fitting virtually any size or shaped lot or location, the company adds.

Components, such as half scissors truss

radial roof, pre-sided walls, double headers on wall panels, I-joint floor beams, floor panels, etc., are all pre-cut to go together easily.

The houses can be built up to three levels high and conventional square or rectangular additions can be added.

Models range from 328 to 2,070 sq. ft. per level.

Shell prices start at \$15 per sq. ft.

Free brochure available. Catalog \$12 or \$19.95 with video.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Deltec Homes, 604 College St., Asheville, N.C. 28801 (ph 800 642-2508 or 704 253-0483; fax 254-1880).



Lighthouse near Cochin, Sask., was built as a tourist attraction. It's reached by a 153-step stairway built out of railroad ties.

"SERVES AS A LANDMARK TO SNOWMOBILERS"

Little Lighthouse On The Prairie

This might be the only functioning lighthouse in the world that's not along the shores of an ocean. It's actually in the middle of the Canadian prairie.

The Saskatchewan tourist village of Cochin, population 180, put up the beacon on a hill primarily to attract tourists to the area. It also serves as a landmark for snowmobilers and boaters on nearby lakes. Retired livestock and grain farmer Tom Archdekin, a former mayor, came up with the idea back in 1989.

"We got a grant for \$27,000 from the tourism department and we raised \$12,000 through taxation," Archdekin says. "The land was donated by Hilda and Don Pirot, for whom the 120-ft. high hill is named - Pirot

Hill."

Completed the same year it was conceived, the lighthouse stands 37 ft. tall and is built entirely out of wood. It has an observation deck on top and features a revolving airport light that automatically turns on at dusk and goes off at dawn.

A 153-step stairway built out of railroad ties leads up to the lighthouse.

"Our population grows to 3,000 during the summer and the lighthouse offers a breathtaking view of Cochin and the surrounding area," Archdekin says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tom Archdekin, Box 46, Cochin, Sask., Canada S0M 0L0 (ph 306 386-2551).

Rama The Cama

Scientists in the United Arab Emirates recently announced the first-ever cross between a camel and its ancient cousin, the llama, through artificial insemination techniques that took two years to perfect.

The result is Rama the "Cama", a male born in January with a birth weight of 12 lbs. His mom was a 165-lb. llama and his dad a 990-lb. camel.

"We hope it'll have the best qualities of both animals," Dr. Lulu Skidmore, a camel reproduction specialist in Dubai, told the Associated Press. "In size it's somewhere between a camel and a llama."

Rama has the short ears and long tail of a camel, but the cloven hooves of a llama. He was also born without a camel's hump.

Skidmore said the cama should have the prized fleece of the llama, but because of its larger size, should give more wool.



Rama's breeders hope he has the best qualities of his parents.

"In temperament, it should also be calmer than a camel, and therefore better suited as a track animal," she said.

Both the camel and the llama descended from a species that lived about 30 million years ago. (Associated Press)



Round houses are designed to provide a panoramic view of surroundings. They're also more versatile than conventional homes because they fit any size lot.