

# Massive Harvest Crew Gathers To Feed The Hungry

The old adage, "many hands make light work," couldn't be more true for volunteers in the Alberta farming communities of Leduc, Camrose and Ponoka. Area producers came together for three days, with 46 combines, 23 balers and more than 20 grain trucks, to reap an immense harvest of wheat, barley and canola... all in support of the Canadian Food Grains Bank (CFGB), based in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The Christian charity's goal is to provide food for emergency hunger situations in developing countries.

Members of the three farming communities banded together to sponsor the cash rent of 250 acres at Leduc, 140 acres at Camrose and 175 acres at Ponoka. All grain and straw was sold, and an additional \$10,000 in cash was gathered for a total of more than \$130,000. When matched at four to one by Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), over \$650,000 was raised for food aid.

After three years, the Ponoka CFGB project has grown so much that there's not enough work for everybody, according to coordinator, Peter Doornenbal. All of the seed, chemical and fertilizer needed for the projects was donated by local chemical, fertilizer and grain companies. Volunteers from the Camrose Rotary Club canvassed funds for their project through various drives. The Camrose Hutterite Colony got directly involved by adding to the army of combines and manpower. Other individual farmers and machinery dealerships provided combines, balers, trucks and labor to get the job done. According to Leduc project coordinator



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Cor Abma, the hard times farmers are experiencing has made them want to help others even more, so finding willing participants in the growing project was not difficult.

The tangible result of the 2000 central Alberta projects is that 117,000 people were

fed for 90 days, thanks to a healthy dose of compassion and the desire to "do God's will by feeding the hungry." It all happened in the amount of time it would take to enjoy a long weekend holiday, but for those who participated, it was much more satisfying.

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## Zebra Ranching: Raising Horses With A Different Stripe

Driving through the range and pasture regions of northeastern Colorado, you're likely to do a double-take if you pass by Monopoly Ranch near Eaton, which is owned by Dee Neiman and his wife Cheri Kula.

Like most ranchers in the area, they have their share of horses. But occupying some of the irrigated pastures on their spread are equines of a different stripe.

Since 1999, the couple has been raising zebras. They got their start with four mares and a stallion bought from a Missouri breeder.

To avoid excessive inbreeding, they have since bought another stallion and mare from a breeder in Tennessee.

Monopoly Ranch is now home to 12 purebred Grant's Zebras - eight mares, two foals and two studs. Their plan is to sell zebra stallion colts, while keeping the fillies to build a herd of 20 or more brood mares.

"There are zebra owners all over the U.S., mostly with just one animal or a smaller herd," Cheri says.

Zebras normally have an 11-month gestation period, like horses, ponies and donkeys. However, Kula says they can go as long as 13 months and zebra mares are very good at hiding the stage of their pregnancy, so it's difficult to predict when a foal will arrive.

Zebras can be crossbred with other equine species. The hybrid offspring, called "zorses", "zonies" or "z-donks", are sterile.

Neiman and Kula say that while zebras can be managed much like horses, there are some differences in temperament. "Horses have been bred for centuries to be handled by humans. Zebras are wild. They don't take well to being handled and will fight a chute and even pens," Kula says.

When threatened, zebras bite and kick to protect themselves and their offspring. "Trying to work them through a chute or catch them in a pen is stressful on people and animals, so we don't do it," Kula adds.

Keeping them in fenced pastures is another challenge, but the zebras have learned to respect electric fence wire with five stands of hot wire.

While they lost one of their original mares to an unknown disease, Kula says zebras hardly ever get sick. If they do need to give them medication, though, they have to do it in their feed, since getting close enough to use a syringe is almost an impossibility. They've found that, like horses, zebras do better when they're dewormed so they use a dewormer in their feed.

They've found they can produce tame foals by taking them off the mothers at about 10 days of age and hand feeding them with bottles and milk replacer.

The couple says there are four markets for zebras and zebra hybrids: other breeders, zoos (including petting zoos), novelty pet owners, and movies. Pet owners and movie production companies may pay \$10,000 or more for a hand-raised foal, while untamed adult mares, depending on age and disposition, go for \$5,000 to \$7,500. Average stallions are worth from \$2,500 to \$3,500 each. Prices for zebra hybrids vary, depending on traits, such as coloring, amount and pattern of striping and disposition.

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Monopoly Ranch near Eaton, Colorado, is home to 12 purebred Zebras.

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