



"Katie" enjoys an afternoon snack at the kitchen table with Danny.

## ONE REAL-LIVE PET BEAR LEADS TO ANOTHER

# Minnesota Farmer Grins And Bears It

By Elaine Clinger

When Danny Larson hops in his truck for a quick trip to town, Kate often goes along for the ride. She sits up in the cab, looking like a chubby adult with a heck of a fur coat.

Kate is a one-year-old black bear who has found her niche at the Larson family farm near Odessa, Minn. Danny bought the animal from a farmer north of Alexandria and just recently purchased a 6 week old male bear, which has been named Casey, as a friend for Kate. Danny would like to raise bears for resale to wildlife units or private parties interested in bears as pets. He explains that permits are necessary only if more than one bear is kept by a private individual.

"There's absolutely no problem in keeping Kate," says Danny. "She sleeps in the old milk room just off the main barn."

When Kate was brought to the Larson farm last fall, she was kept tied to a post outside, but Danny notes that she didn't like that at all. "She doesn't like being confined, but really likes being with people. She's very tame and very friendly. There's absolutely no danger in keeping her around people, because her front claws have been clipped." Kate visited the local school and has made other personal appearances locally. Danny keeps her on a leash when he takes her off the farm.

Although Kate is plenty frisky, Danny has found that she has been fairly easy to train, with a few "buttslaps."

Kate is invited into the house and is learning her manners. She can stand up on her hind feet and open the doors, then shuffles over to her own special cookie jar. She'll clean out that jar, then go looking for more. "She eats almost anything and everything, especially candy, cake, fruit, honey, watermelon and suckers," says Danny. Kate eats as a human



New bear cub "Casey" being bottlefed by Tammy, Danny's sister.

would, using her paws to hold the food. She also will eat directly from Danny's hand.

She makes herself at home in the house and helps herself to a drink of water at the kitchen sink when she gets thirsty. "She's not fully house-trained yet, but I hope that she'll improve on her domestic traits," Danny points out.

Kate is becoming well-known, even outside of western Minnesota. A Minneapolis television station came to the Larson farm to photograph Kate and Danny. He admits that he's had his hands full with Kate, but hastens to add that "she's not too far away from being the ideal pet."

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Reprinted from *The Land Magazine*, Mankato, Minn.

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# Ag World

**Editor's Note:** Most of what goes into *Ag World* stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of *FARM SHOW* touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching — everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit.

If you've read or heard a good *Ag World* type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: *FARM SHOW*, Box 704, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.



Photos courtesy Ortonville (Minn.) Independent.

"Katie" is tall enough to turn on the faucet and help herself to a drink at the kitchen sink.