

Critter "Rodeos" Draw Big Crowds

If you're looking for a new fund-raising event, or just a fun activity for a local celebration, you might want to try a "Critter Rodeo".

"Each year in June, we have a guinea pig 'Picnic' that's open to the public. It's a great way to draw attention," says Wild Rose Cavy Club president Joan Manley of Airdrie, Alberta. "Last year, we had guinea pig chuck wagon races, piggy buck riding, and an apple eating contest.

"For the wagon racing, we made little chuck wagons out of Styrofoam and harnesses from ribbon so the guinea pigs could pull them down a track made from colorfully painted boards. We ran the races in heats of eight."

For the piggy buck riding competition, Manley says they used stiff paper to make cut-out dolls with bowed legs so they would fit behind the guinea pigs' shoulders. The rodents were turned loose in a 3-ft. square cardboard box that was one foot high, and timed to see how soon they would unseat their riders.

All that was required for the apple eating competition were apples and hungry guinea pigs.

The club charged entrants 25 cents per event and awarded novelty prizes.

"We had guinea pig lovers from all over come and join us, and there were a lot of spectators, too, who learned a lot about the good

natured disposition of guinea pigs," Manley says.

The unusual event went over so well, that it was copied and expanded on by some business owners in a nearby town the following month.

This group organized the "Little Critters Rodeo" which included events for rabbits, hamsters and gerbils, as well as guinea pigs.

In addition to charging a nominal fee, organizers sold advertising spots for \$10 each on the chuck wagon "tarps" to raise money for charity. The idea paid off, as they raised \$484 for "Backpacks for Kids," a charity that provides school supplies to disadvantaged children.

Added activities included Hamster Hot Rods and Rabbit Bronc Busting.

The business alliance plans to organize a critter rodeo again this year, and the Wild Rose Cavy Club is planning a circus theme for their 2004 Picnic.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wild Rose Cavy Club, c/o Joan Manley, 240 Springhaven Court, Airdrie, Alberta, Canada T4A 1L5 Alberta. (ph 403 948-5947; email: shiloh0@shaw.ca; website: <http://wildrosecavyclub.lhwy.com>) or Crafting With Carol & Company, c/o Carol Pearse, #2 400 Main St. N., Airdrie, Alberta, Canada T4B 2N1 (ph 403 48-7052; email: craftrat@telusplanet.net).



Wagon pulls, bucking contests, and other events draw large crowds, say organizers of Critter Rodeos.



Hamsters race in hot rod cars. Advertisers sponsored the contestants with the money going to charity.

Ohio Steer Claims Horn Record

A Longhorn steer from Ohio has a set of horns that surpass horns ever grown in Texas.

Twelve-year-old "Gibraltar" boasts an official total horn measurement of 124.75-in. (10 ft., 4 3/4 in.). This "total horn" measurement is obtained by measuring along the top side of one horn, across the head, and up to the tip of the other horn.

The tip-to-tip spread is also impressive at 7 1/2 ft.

In October, Gibraltar won the International "Call of the Horns" championship in Louisville, Kentucky. His was the largest "total horn record" from any Call of the Horns event.

Despite his amazing rack, the 2,100-lb. animal still fits comfortably in stock trailers, as long as they are the newer 8-ft. wide models, so transporting Gibraltar around the country isn't an issue.

Joint owners, Dickinson Cattle Co. Inc. of Barnesville, Ohio and Robert Snyder of Columbus, Ohio recently sold the prized animal to Wayne Forister of St. Augustine, Florida.

Longhorn breeders vying for the total horn record also select for maximum corkscrew effect in their cattle's horns. This adds to their total horn measurement and makes the animal more valuable.

"We expect a 4 to 5 year-old steer's horns

to measure 6-ft., tip to tip, and go on to 7 or 8 ft. by the time they're mature, but keep growing as long as the animal is alive," Darol Dickinson says.

Dickinson Cattle Co., Inc., has one of the biggest Texas Longhorn herds in the world, with a 650-cow breeding herd and up to 1,400 total head in the summer.

According to Dickinson, the family operation's feedlot currently contains 75 steers of various ages that they've saved because of genetic potential for growthy horns.

By measuring the horns regularly and calculating a daily growth record for each animal, they are able to cull slow horn-growing animals by the age of two.

"If their 'total horn' hasn't reached six feet by four years of age, we slaughter those animals and sell halves of beef to the public," he says. "We're confident that we have some younger steers than Gibraltar that will grow longer horns than him, so we hope to win the International Championship again in the future."

Also, each year, the Dickinsons halter break as many as 20 "exhibition" steers and teach some of them to accept riders. They are selected for color and especially long horn growth. Some are entered in shows, and the family sells others to people as pets and for parade entries. Prices generally range from



Full grown "parade" steers can sell for \$3,500 to \$10,000. Five year-old steers are expected to have 6-ft. horns tip-to-tip.

\$3,500 to \$10,000.

At their on-site "Head to Tail Store," they sell all kinds of products made from various bovine body parts. These things include steer shoulder mounts, mounted steer tails, tanned hides, bull walking canes, bull golf clubs, hoof lamps, and healthy, all natural lean beef. Cleaned and polished skulls often sell for more money than a normal commercial living cow would bring at auction.

The family sells 50 to 80 skulls per year at prices that begin at \$130 and go to \$950.

According to Dickinson, the Texas Longhorn breed is very feed efficient and hardy. These cattle eat almost anything and have the

best longevity of any breed - cows commonly calve up to the age of 18 to 22 and on rare occasions, have been known to do so at age 32.

The Dickinsons sell quality Texas Longhorn breeding stock and also produce Watusi and BueLingo cattle.

You can visit the Head to Tail Store's website at www.head2tail.com.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dickinson Cattle Co., Inc., c/o Darol Dickinson, 35000 Muskrat Rd., Barnesville, Ohio 43713 (ph 740 758-5050; email: darol@texaslonghorn.com; website: www.texaslonghorn.com).

Baby Blue Panzer 2-Seater

"I was looking for something out of the norm in looks and operation and this was it," says Scott Werling, Decatur, Ind. "I've put in a lot of work and attention to this tractor over the last six months."

Werling bought a 1962 Pennsylvania Panzer at a gas engine show in Portland, Ind. "Everything was original and complete," he says. "I have the 8 hp electric start model, but it was also offered in 6 to 7 hp models."

The Panzer has a Chrysler rear end and individual brakes for quick, tight turns. The transmission is a 3-step pulley for forward

and you pull back on the gearshift against a rubber wheel on the motor shaft for reverse.

"I also sandblasted over 50 parts on the tractor and painted it back to its original powder blue color. The tractor now has new tires and a few other additions," says Werling.

"I added an extra seat, mounting both of them on a homemade frame and used motorcycle shocks to absorb the added weight," he notes.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Scott Werling, 302 W. 400 N., Decatur, Ind. 46733 (ph 260 724-4190).

Motorcycle shocks absorb the added weight of the second tractor seat. Over 50 parts were sandblasted before tractor was repainted its original powder blue color.

