



Bailey the buffalo is so gentle and friendly he's allowed to visit the Sautner's living room.

Pet Buffalo Welcome In Owner's Home

A buffalo named "Bailey," has been a huge media sensation in recent weeks north of the border.

Owners Jim and Linda Sautner of Spruce Grove, Alberta, say they're surprised at how much attention 1,634-lb. Bailey has garnered, but admit that it's probably unusual for a buffalo to become a house pet. Bailey is tame because he was bottle-fed after his mother abandoned him at birth.

"Usually, bottle-fed buffalo calves become more aggressive by the time they're six months old," says Jim, who has a herd of 260 bison. "Bailey remained tame and gentle so we started bringing him into our kitchen and living room and he liked it. However, he sleeps on the lawn."

Bailey was castrated at one year of age to help preserve his docile nature.

A feature article in the Edmonton Journal set off the surprising media domino effect. The story of Bailey was picked up by Reuters news service and has since been featured in TV broadcasts (CBC and CNN), and newspapers including some in Australia, New Zealand, Scotland, Germany, Africa, Russia and all of Europe.

Bailey has been invited to visit fairs and

parades from British Columbia to Quebec, but travelling expenses are a big issue, especially in this post-BSE environment, according to the Sautners who are scrambling to make ends meet on a daily basis.

"Bred cows that I paid an average of \$6,200 for four years ago are now worth as low as \$100 apiece," says Sautner, citing recent BSE scares. "Bailey's the only bright spot in the buffalo industry right now."

He jokingly says it's quite ironic that they've been receiving such international attention, and yet can't always afford a tank of gas to get across the city.

"Money is a real problem, but you can't let it get to you. If you've got your health and can keep a good attitude and a sense of humor, you'll be alright," he says.

The Sautners are hopeful that Bailey's fame might lead him to a career as a movie star.

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World's Oldest Living Dog?

There's a 27-year-old dog in England that is alert, active and healthy. Its owner claims that it's the world's oldest living dog.

Affectionately known as "Bramble", her owner, Anne Heritage, in Bridgewater, Somerset, believes the purebred Papillion owes its longevity to a combination of genetics and her totally vegetarian diet which consists of rice, lentils and vegetables.

Adequate exercise is also a factor. Bramble is taken for a walk four times a day and a weekly swim. The half hour dip was deemed necessary therapy for a back injury the aged dog sustained last year, and which doctors said could have paralyzed her. A canine hydrotherapy pool in Stolford helps keep her limber, though she does have a touch of arthritis.

Bramble narrowly escaped death at the tender age of two. Just one day after Heritage took her home from an animal rescue center, the kennels flooded and the other dogs drowned.

"So she's been incredibly lucky," says

Heritage. "She's an inspiration and just goes to show that if you do eat the right things and keep on exercising, you can extend your life."

A 14-year study conducted by University of Pennsylvania and published in the May, 2002, Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, states that a calorie-restricted diet in dogs results in extending their life a median 1.8 years longer than the average dog. Of course, Bramble has far surpassed this average, and is living proof of the study's secondary conclusion – that dogs on such a diet are also slower to develop chronic diseases, such as osteoarthritis, so quality as well as quantity of life is extended.

The world's longest-lived dog ever was reportedly an Australian cattle dog called Bluey, who herded cattle and sheep in Australia for nearly 20 years before retiring. Bluey died at the age of 29 years and five months in 1939, according to AnimalNews.com.

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Goats are the ideal pack animal for back country trips, says Wind River Pack Goats, because they're more sure-footed than horses or llamas.

Sure-Footed Goats Ideal For Backpacking

Goats are the ideal pack animal for back country trips, says Charlie Wilson, owner of Wind River Pack Goats in Lander, Wyoming. He notes that research scientists often use them to transport delicate equipment high into the mountains for data collection.

Wind River Pack Goats is an outfitting/guiding business that has been around for 16 years. It employs three people from spring until fall, with the busiest time being summer. The company operates in both Wyoming and southern Utah.

According to Wilson, the goats have been used to carry all types of things, from food to weather stations, lawn chairs, cast iron skillets, and so on.

They're particularly valuable for areas that are too rough for horses or llamas. Because of the Wilderness Act, helicopters can no longer be used in these remote areas, making it necessary to use goats.

Wilson says goats are more sure-footed than horses and llamas, create less environmental impact, and don't require any feed to be brought along on the trip since they will forage on almost anything.

Mature goats can pack an average of 60 lbs., but in rough mountain terrain, Wilson says tries to keep it down to 45 lbs. per animal. He has had three goats with exceptional breeding and training that had no problem with 110 lbs.

Wilson uses larger breeds such as French Alpine, Oberhasli, Saanens, LaMancha, and Toggenburg.

"What surprises a lot of people is that goats actually live longer when you pack with them," he says. "They generally live to be eight or 10, but with the wild feed that they select on their own and the added exercise they get, pack goats often live to be 16 years old."

On an average trip, Wind River Pack Goats usually takes a group of eight to 10 people (including two staff people) and 12 to 16 goats.

"If one person stops for some reason and stays behind, the goats will get pretty upset and will stop and start bleating," Wilson says. "They consider the people a part of the herd, so that's why we refer to our whole group as the herd."

Wind River's trips run from mid-April to late October and range from three to nine days long. Prices average \$165 to \$170 per day per adult, and some trips can accommodate kids at 20 per cent lower rates.

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