

Fierce Karakachan Dogs Catching On Fast

The very large livestock guardian dog breed known as the Karakachan is increasing in numbers across the U.S., according to breeder Carol Kloiber of Peru, Ind. This ancient Bulgarian breed has tripled its population in the past 6 yrs. But there are still only 120 purebreds in the U.S.

This growing popularity is due to the fact that these loyal canines take their job very seriously. They voluntarily stay with the livestock and chase predators until they've either caught them or driven them too far away to return.

"Karakachans come in a variety of colors and most have dense, wavy coats. They have hips like a wolf, a low posture with an average height of only 24 in., and they're fast," Kloiber says. "In the U.S., they weigh between 100 and 150 lbs. and have massive,

powerful heads, making them willing to take on wolves, bears, coyotes, big cats and even packs of domestic dogs if they threaten their herd."

It's believed that Karakachan ancestors go back as far as the third millennium B.C., making them one of Europe's oldest breeds. They were named by the Turks in recognition of the nomadic Karakachan people who are believed to have brought them to Bulgaria from Thessaly hundreds of years ago. Translated, the word means, "black runaway." Karakachans have also been called "Bulgarian Wolf-killers".

"At one time, Bulgarian cattle herders used 100 dogs or more to protect and move up to 10,000 animals at a time," says Kloiber. "Karakachans were often employed by the Bulgarian Army prior to World War II



Karakachans are large livestock guardian dogs that trace back to ancient Bulgaria.

but during the Cold War, their numbers began to drop off sharply until they became endangered. Now there is a newly formed registry called the Karakachan Dog Association of America (www.karakachandog.com).

Kloiber says a 5-month-old dog usually

sells for around \$500.

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Front Rake Puts Hay Under Tractor

Whether gathering a swath or just dressing up a windrow, Edwin Egli's front-mounted rake lays a nice tight windrow just where he wants it.

"I can swing it right or left on-the-go about 3 ft. to better position the windrow," says Egli.

He designed the rake for maximum flexibility. In addition to moving left to right, it can also flex up and down and flex as needed should one wheel go over a gopher mound.

"It floats across the ground," he says.

The arms that connect the rake to the tractor attach to the tractor loader mounts with universal joints. A dolly frame made from a rear axle off an 800 Deere self-propelled swather supports the front end of the rake.

The rake connects to the left end of the rake dolly with a bushing that is pinned vertically to the dolly and horizontally to the arm. This ensures that the dolly can flex up

and down, as well as left and right, in relation to the arm. While the right arm is a straight-boxed beam, the left one has a bend in it, allowing the rake its 3-ft. swing.

To move the rake back and forth, Egli mounted a hydraulic cylinder to the front frame of the tractor. When fully extended, the rake is to the far right and delivers the windrow just inside the right front tractor wheel. When fully retracted, the rake swings to the center and delivers the hay just inside the left front tractor wheel.

The rake wheels were picked up from a junk dealer. Mounted to a boxed beam that angles out from the dolly, they're raised and lowered by a second hydraulic cylinder.

While the rake comes in handy, it isn't always needed. Egli took that into account in the design.

"It's only connected to the tractor at the loader mounts and the cylinder at the front



Egli's front-mounted rake can be swung left or right, and also flexes up and down.

of the tractor," he notes. "If I don't need it, I can unhook it by pulling just three pins and backing away."

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A 10-ft. length of 6-in. dia., flexible plastic pipe, with a rubber sewer connector attached to one end, slides over exhaust muffler on Binion's diesel-powered pickup.



Exhaust Pipe Keeps Diesel Soot Out Of Garage

Jeff Binion has driven diesel pickups for about 10 years. A couple of years ago the Newnan, Georgia, man went to paint his garage and was surprised at how much black diesel soot was on the walls and doors.

"I had to spend a lot of time wiping off the soot with a cleaning solution before I could do any painting. It was a difficult job. That's when I decided to do something about it."

He bought a 10-ft. length of 6-in. dia., flexible plastic pipe at a hardware store and attached a rubber sewer connector to one end that slides over the exhaust muffler on his Dodge diesel. The back end of the pipe extends beyond the garage door, so whenever he starts up the pickup the smoke goes outside.

Binion keeps the pipe on the garage floor so that it's between the pickup's wheels as

he drives in. A bungee cord is attached to the middle part of the pipe. Before he starts up the pickup to leave the garage, he slides the pipe over the pickup muffler, then hooks up the bungee cord to the receiver hitch to support the pipe. As he backs up, the pipe slides along the floor. Once he's on the driveway, he disconnects the pipe from the muffler and puts it back on the garage floor.

"You always get a lot of smoke when you start up a diesel pickup. This idea keeps it out of the garage," says Binion. "If I hadn't come up with this idea I'd have to park the pickup outside."

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Self-aligning 3-pt. hitch is equipped with a 1-in. thick steel guide, and a locking mechanism that automatically locks into the drawpin in the implement's tongue.

Quick Hitch Pulls 20-Ton Load

"My self-aligning 3-pt. hitch lets me hook and unhook implements right from the tractor seat. It eliminates the need to get on and off the tractor to insert pins," says inventor Curtis Schwickerath, New Hampton, Iowa.

It consists of a steel frame equipped with a 1-in. thick steel guide and a locking mechanism that automatically locks into the drawpin in the implement's tongue. Schwickerath simply backs up until the guide wraps around the pin. A spring-loaded safety flap locks the pin in place. To unhook, he trips a rope tied to a lever on a safety lock and releases the pin.

"It's all mechanical with nothing to wear out," says Schwickerath. "I use it on my

tractor's quick hitch but it could also be fitted to the 3-pt. hitch. The only way the drawpin can come out is if I trip the rope.

"I use it mostly when moving round bales with a semi trailer flatbed that I pull behind my Deere 7920 front wheel assist loader tractor. It makes it easy to load bales onto the trailer, and then pull the trailer a few miles down the road to my farm. Sometimes I'm pulling loads that weigh up to 20 tons."

Schwickerath would like to license his design to a manufacturer.

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