

Horse-Powered Snowplow

When a 90-house development went up across the road from Sam Lapp's farm in Pennsylvania, he found a unique way to provide a valuable service to his new neighbors. His horse-powered snowplow quickly became the talk of the development.

The Amish farmer doesn't use tractors or any equipment with rubber wheels so he had to get creative when designing a snowplow to clear driveways. He came up with a push-from-behind plow that's powered by 2 or 4 draft horses harnessed between the front and rear wheels.

The 7-ft. wide front blade is raised and lowered hydraulically, powered by an 8 hp. gas motor mounted in back under the operator's seat. Steering of the front wheels

is also controlled hydraulically. There are a total of 4 hydraulic cylinders on the machine, which can turn on a dime thanks to its single rear wheel. The angle of the blade is changed by hand.

Lapp, who recently relocated to Wisconsin, says horses quickly learn to follow the moves of the machine. For most snowfalls, two horses provide plenty of power.

But when snow piles up deep, he can hook up two more horses, hitching them four across behind the blade.

Lapp will custom-build the snowplows to sell. He says once he started using it, word of mouth about the unusual plow rig got him



plenty of customers.

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Giant Horseshoe Pile Represents 55 Years Of Work

Every week Tim and Joe Kriz add to a collection that started nearly 55 years ago. They dump a couple of buckets of horseshoes on a 16-ft. pile of horseshoes outside their shop. Buried in the pile are horseshoes once worn by Budweiser Clydesdales as well as horses owned by famous Hollywood celebrities.

All the horseshoes in the pile come from horses shod by members of the Kriz family. In fact, Tim and Joe are eighth generation farriers.

However, the majority of the horseshoes in the pile came from their fathers, Johnny and Joe Sr. The brothers served as farrier instructors in WWII and shod horses and mules for Armed Forces in Osaka, Japan. Joe even shod Emperor Hirohito's white Arabian stallion during the occupation of Japan.

The brothers returned home to carry on the family tradition. As draft horses became less popular after WWII, the brothers bought horses by the semi-load in the Midwest.

In an article by Stacie Lynch in "The Draft Horse Journal," Joe says he was one of the first "flying farriers" in the 1970's. He flew to Florida every six weeks to work on his clients' horses. The Krizes shod the horses of many celebrities including Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and Marilyn Monroe. They also shod the Dunromin' Arabians, Ringling Brothers Barnum and Bailey Circus horses, Disneyland's Percheron Hitch, and three of the world's largest horses.

"Big John was 19.2 hands tall and weighed in at 2,640 lbs.," Joe Kriz recalls. "It took 32 in. of steel to make one shoe to fit him."

Tim remembers coming home from high school and bending steel (usually 22 in.) for horseshoes for his dad, Johnny, who died at 71. Joe is still alive at age 92 and still lives,



sleeps, and breathes horses," Tim says. The family continues to keep anywhere from 25 to 40 draft and draft-cross horses at a time.

The horseshoe pile on the Kriz property is part of the family's history - but not all of it. A flood in August 1955 washed away the horseshoes at the brothers' old blacksmith shop in Seymour, Conn. They moved about -mile north of the site and started another shop. In 1978, the pile was moved to the Kriz farm by using a crane with a clam shell bucket to fill a tri-axle dump truck three times.

The pile has grown substantially since then. "There are rasps in the pile too," Tim says. "They don't last long when you shoe

a lot of horses."

Like his father, Tim shoes the Budweiser Clydesdales - two of the four teams, or 50 to 60 horses every six weeks. Today there are some new techniques, better tools and ready-made horseshoes, Tim says. With Connecticut's high horse population there is plenty of work - enough for a ninth generation to join the forces. Tim's son, Cody, 17, helps shoe and Jesse, 13, may start helping in the future.

"We've always been farriers. It's a family tradition," Tim says.

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