



Doug Tarrant raises nightcrawlers as a sideline weekend business. Wholesale prices for worms start at about \$65.

GOING FULL-TIME WITH PART-TIME SIDELIGHT

Squirmy Sideline Business: Worms!

If you've ever wondered about those "get rich quick" ads in the back of magazines about setting up your own "worm farm", you might be interested in one rural Illinois resident who decided to find out for himself if money can be made raising worms.

"I haven't made a ton of money yet - it's still a part-time, weekend venture - but I know it's going to pay off eventually," says Doug Tarrant, Taylorville, Ill., who started a worm business to supplement his income a year ago after spotting an ad in a local publication. After learning he could get into the commercial worm business without a substantial up-front investment, he decided he'd have nothing to lose.

Working with UNCO, a large Racine, Wis., worm supplier, he's learned there's a market both for worms and for worm castings, which are highly valued by nurserymen as potting soil. He's also discovered that many home gardeners like worm castings for fertilizing fruit trees, flowers, or just to build up garden soil. The odor-free castings can also be used on house plants. He had to choose between African and Canadian night crawlers. Canadian night

crawlers need refrigeration to keep soil temperatures under 50° so he went with the African breed, which can tolerate hot weather.

Worms can be shipped throughout North America by UPS or Federal Express.

Last spring, Tarrant set up his earthworm hatchery in a walled-off and heated section of his barn. Worms are hatched out and grown in plastic 5-gal. buckets. He has dozens of buckets, stacked one on top of the other. Each must be "processed" every two weeks which involves using screens to separate worms from the castings and mature worms ready for sale from younger ones. Then the buckets are refilled with fresh bedding for the next generation.

Tarrant calls his business "The Worm Firm" and he keeps about 100,000 worms on hand at all times, a number he hopes to triple within three years. Orders from bait shops, farmers, greenhouses, gardeners and golf courses range from hundreds to tens of thousands of worms at a time. Wholesale prices start at about \$65 per thousand.

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Built-From-Scratch Toy Waterloo Boy

What makes this built-from-scratch Waterloo Boy toy tractor unique is that the man who made it, Don Selle, Turtle Lake, Wis., built it entirely out of "junk" parts including old tachometer gauges, nails, washers, electric fence wire, baling wire, etc.

Selle, who does small engine and tractor work and belongs to a local steam and gas engine club, has built eight 1/16-scale Waterloo Boys over the past few years and says he plans to build three more.

"I often bring them to toy exhibits where they draw a lot of attention," says Selle. "I make them out of scrap iron and sheet metal and other odds and ends that normally get thrown out of my repair shop. I got interested after I restored an original 1918 Waterloo Boy in my shop. I made the first toy without a pattern, but I use a pattern now. It takes a lot of time

to make one - a pair of rear wheels takes about five hours, and the front wheels take about three hours."

"The tractor's frame is made from flat iron. The wheels are painted bright yellow, the engine is painted red, and the rest of the toy tractor is green. The steering wheel - made from baling wire - turns the front wheels via a chain fashioned out of electric fence wire. Every link is handmade. To make the wheels, Selle cuts the center out of old tachometers and uses the canister for the rims, then welds nails in to make the spokes. The wheel hubs are made from pieces of steel tubing with washers welded onto each end. A length of baling wire is soldered around the rim of the front wheels to make a "skid ring". "The skid ring kept the wheels from sliding in the dirt whenever you turned," says Selle.

He makes the fenders and radiator by



Photo courtesy Farm Week

"Blindfold" tractor contests are popular events at antique tractor shows.

CHALLENGING WAY TO HAVE FUN

"Blindfold" Tractor Driving Contest

If you're looking for a fun new activity for a local fair or celebration, try setting up a "blindfold" tractor driving contest. Brian Ferguson organized and competed in such a contest last fall at an antique tractor show near Rockville, Ind.

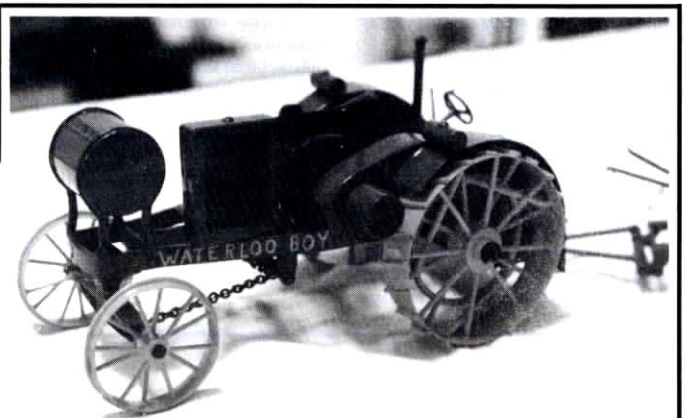
Ferguson drove a 1953 Deere 70, receiving instructions from his brother Jason as he steered the tractor between obstacles. Both men are members of the Hoosier 2-Cylinder Club.

"It's fun to watch and is becoming more popular at antique tractor shows," says Ferguson. "We had 12 tractors compete last year which was our third year for the contest. The blindfolded driver has to zig zag back and forth between big orange traffic cones. The first one to cross the line is the winner. My brother walked beside my tractor as I drove, shouting when I should turn left or right. The faster you go, the harder

it is to keep the instructions clear between driver and helper. Last year a helper on one team stood on the tractor and tapped the driver's left or right shoulder to tell him which way to turn. It worked pretty well so we plan to try that next year."

The show also featured a "fast start" contest for hand-cranked tractors. There were two starting lines - one for the driver and one 15 ft. away for the tractor. "The tractor has to be out of gear, but the starter ignition key can be on, the pitcock can be open, and the hand crank can be in place and ready to go. When the whistle blows, the drivers run to their tractors, crank them up, then hop on and put them in first gear. The first tractor to cross the finish line wins."

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This 1/16-scale Waterloo Boy toy tractor is made entirely out of junk parts.

cutting out sections of small engine fly-wheel covers, then welding the sections back together. The kerosene tank in front of the tractor is made by welding a metal cap on each end of a spring steel bushing. The engine is made from scrap metal welded together. The intake pipe is a length of steel tubing flared out at the top. The seat is fashioned out of a big washer, and the steering gears are made from old speed-

ometer gears. The pulley is made from a piece of steel shaft. "It's the only thing on the tractor that's machined out," notes Selle.

He sells the toy tractors for \$300 apiece.

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