

Fall “Spooktacular” Attracts Thousands To Farm

With an exploding still, five grinning pumpkin-headed cornstalk landmarks, and 17 restored Oliver tractors, Jim Anderson can't help but enjoy running his “agritainment” business and fall “spooktacular”. After years of typical crop farming and operating a feedlot, the Erie Colo., farmer and his family now attract as many as 70,000 local and city folks from Denver and Boulder to their farm in the fall to buy pumpkins, go through a 30-acre corn maze, and get spooked for Halloween.

The scary stuff includes a haunted hayride through the corn maze, and a trail walk through a cemetery and old West town – all with masked monsters popping up unexpectedly.

Anderson also came up with the idea for pumpkin-headed landmarks and built two 22 1/2-ft. tall ones and three smaller ones.

“I use 10-in. diameter thin-wall steel pipe for the bodies and weld on 2-in. pipe for the arms,” he says. Pipe braces on the base hold it up. He wraps the whole thing with chicken wire and wires on cornstalks. Anderson purchases the 4-ft. Styrofoam pumpkin heads from a local artist.

The still he made, complete with a fake fire, appears to blow up when he hits a switch to shoot a propane flame out the top – when visitors are near, of course.

Despite all the clever ideas, his biggest pride and joy is his collection of Oliver tractors, which started with two tractors his father bought after WWII. Anderson started collecting and his father-in-law (Alden Elshof) restored them. Now Anderson has 17 models from between 1949 and 1964.

The old tractors haul people on hay racks, pull a water tank, and do other work associated with the business. He also raises 35 acres of pumpkins and 100 acres of corn.

“We’ve been doing this 15 years and we’re having fun,” he says, noting a daughter and son-in-law recently joined



Jim Anderson and his family attract up to 70,000 people each year to their fall “spooktacular”. Restored Oliver tractors are used to haul people on hay racks.



Pumpkin-headed landmarks – two 22 1/2-ft. tall ones and three smaller ones – greet visitors.

the business.

In addition to the fall activities, the farm has a party barn with a commercial kitchen to hold weddings, company picnics and other events, such as an all-school reunion attended by 2,000 people.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Anderson Farms, 6728 County Rd. 3 1/4, Erie, Colo. 80516 (ph 303 828-5210; www.andersonfarms.com).

Beekeeper Sells Caramel And Chocolate-Flavored Honey

“We sell honey varieties based on their floral source – never blended with other honeys. We also don’t heat or filter raw honey,” says Steve Goldstein, owner of Range Honey.com. “That’s what Texas RangeHoney is all about. It’s pure, fresh, raw, unprocessed Texas honey.”

Unique flavors are available such as wildflower, Indian Blanket, Rare Scabiosa and a Texas favorite, Guajillo. “We also combine handmade caramel with wildflower honey. The outcome is unbelievable. Another big favorite is dark chocolate with creamed honey and honey cinnamon. Nobody has this,” Goldstein says.

Made with dark sugar, heavy cream and butter, the specialty honey blends are great on sweet rolls, ice cream, or melted in a hot cup of coffee. A set of caramel and chocolate honey jars sells for \$15.

Range Honey also offers creamed honeys, made by a controlled crystallization process that results in honey that spreads like



Texas Range Honey sells a variety of unique flavors, including caramel honey.

peanut butter. Comes in cinnamon, peach, Jalapeño and traditional flavors (\$8 to \$9/ lb.).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Texas Range Honey, 116 Main St., Weston, Texas 75097 (ph 972 567-2542; www.rangehoney.com).

How To Make A Playground For Horses

With some inexpensive materials and minimal building skills you can make a playground for horses that benefits both you and your horses, says Cindy Chase, Phillips, Wis. She and Dawn Schroeder show how to do it in a DVD, accompanied by a 64-page, illustrated PDF manual.

“It’s our goal to give you creative ideas to help you and your horse have fun and enjoy each other,” says Chase.

She built her first equine toys when she had a horse that was afraid of everything. She knew she needed to do some serious training.

“The first thing I made was a ‘car wash’ by hanging objects in trees, like shower curtains that would touch him as he walked through. Later we started making pvc stands with objects attached to them like foam noodles, plastic cups, bottles, and other objects. Going through it helps desensitize a horse from being touched from all sides.”

They use the same methods to create jumps, a line of poles to weave through, or tunnels for “squeeze chutes” with foam noodles.

Other toys include a tipi made of 4-in. pvc pipe, a mailbox that can be opened and closed, and fabricated “road grates” out of old belting. A bridge that can teeter and a 3 by 3-ft. pedestal further challenge

the horse – and rider.

Chase and Schroeder’s business, Horses Just Wanna Have Fun, also sells products such as big exercise balls for playing soccer and other games, colorful cones, and various kinds of riding equipment.

“The product customers like most right now is our slick stick,” Chase says. It’s a modified version of the training stick used by popular natural horsemanship trainers. The stick telescopes from 8 in. to nearly 4 ft. and is light and easy to carry in an arena, on a trail ride or anywhere.

“They’ve been selling like crazy all over the world,” Chase says.

About 80 percent of customers are women, many who don’t like to ride trails by themselves. The games provide a fun way to spend time with their horses – and to overcome fears, for either the horse or rider.

Chase recalls Breanna, a young girl who is part of their DVD video. She was afraid of her horse, but as they gave her tasks to accomplish, it took her mind off riding and distracted her from her fear.

“You will be able to play with your horse for a longer period of time and find that you actually enjoy spending more time with her,” Chase says. “The benefits for your horse are far reaching. She will develop confidence and independence from her herd mates and a trust and bond with you that will spill over



Horse “toys” include big exercise balls for playing soccer and other games (left), “squeeze chute” tunnels made with foam noodles (right), and a 3-ft. sq. pedestal.



into every activity you do with her.”

The DVD (\$19.95) and other products are available through the business’s website. Chase says a second DVD with more games and toys is in the works. Customers also receive email newsletters about horse-related news and activities.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Horses Just Wanna Have Fun, LLC, N5405 County Rd. A, Prentice, Wis. 54556 (ph 715 820-3107; www.horsesjustwannahavefun.com).

