

This 1949 Minneapolis Moline R tractor ran around by itself with no driver in sight at the Farm Progress Show, squirting water at people and talking to them.

## DRIVERLESS TRACTOR SQUIRTS PEOPLE WITH WATER, BLOWS BUBBLES, EVEN TALKS

### “Crazy Tractor” Is Real Crowd Pleaser

Showgoers at the recent Farm Progress Show in Illinois got a big kick out of a 1949 Minneapolis Moline R tractor that was running around by itself with no driver in sight, squirting water at unsuspecting people and talking to them.

Eddie Sloan, who put radio controls on the antique tractor, had just as much fun, operating the rig from out of sight.

“It shocks people when they see water squirt out from the tractor and hear it talk,” says Sloan, who farms near Atlanta, Ind. “Some of them look up in the air to see where the water came from. Once they see what’s happening, most people stand off to the side and wait for someone else to get squirted.”

Sloan uses a radio transmitter to send signals to a receiver mounted inside a box at the rear of the tractor. The receiver activates all of the driverless tractor’s electric control systems.

Besides squirting water and talking, the crazy tractor can also blow bubbles, sound a siren and horn, and flash its lights on and

off. It can also start itself up by remote control.

“Sometimes in parades the tractor goes along by itself until there are a lot of people around, then I shut the engine off,” says Sloan. “Little kids become curious and walk over to investigate. As soon as they kick the tires, I start it back up again. They really get a surprise.”

A windshield washer is used to squirt water out of a hole at the front of the tractor. A hidden paddle wheel dips into a tank full of solution and a fan blows it through a hole to make bubbles that float up from the rear of the tractor. The siren and horn are mounted inside the radio signal receiver box at the rear of the tractor. An electric motor, mounted inside another box on the side of the tractor, controls the steering. Sloan uses a wireless intercom and a speaker mounted in the seat to make the tractor “talk” to people.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Eddie Sloan, Rt. 1, Atlanta, Ind. 46031 (ph 317 963-5434).

## HE TAKES IT TO PARTIES

### Milk Bulk Tank Makes Good Hot Tub

There’s nothing as relaxing after a hard days work as a dip in the swirling waters of a hot tub jacuzzi, says Colorado dairy farmer Greg Krush, who converted a 400-gal. bulk milk tank into a portable hot tub that he uses at home and also takes to parties.

Krush, a bachelor who milks 60 head of cattle (with a herd average of 19,820 lbs., he’s not partying all the time!), got the idea when getting rid of an old tank. “I hate to throw anything away and I had the tank, so I looked around to see what else I’d need to make a hot tub,” says Krush who spent less than \$100 to build the tub.

He mounted the tank on the chassis of a 1969 Chevy Chevelle, and then cut down the sides of the tank, reattaching the lids of the tank to the inside walls of the tank to serve as benches. Then he built a wooden deck and stairs on one side of the tank.

Water is heated with coils from an old water heater teamed up with a propane furnace. The copper heating coils are hooked up to the drain of the tank. As water heats, it rises through the coils and drains into top of tub.

To agitate the water he used an old vacuum pump. A piece of milk line runs from the pump to the bottom of the tank where he fastened a piece of pipe with holes in it. The pump is mounted above the water level to keep water from siphoning back into it. A styrofoam lid goes over the top of the tub after use to hold in the warmth.

The hot tub holds 6 or 7 people comfortably but 14 is the record. He’s taken it to caroling parties, volleyball parties, bachelor parties and other events.

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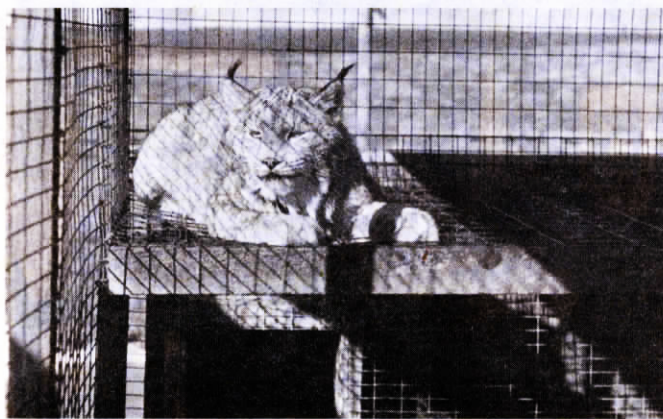


Photo courtesy Farming Today

One of the problems of getting into the lynx business is the lack of knowledge on how to do it. Bollert keeps his cats in large wire enclosures, one cat per pen.

## “I’M ALWAYS LEARNING SOMETHING NEW”

### Canadian Lynx Farmer Pioneers New Ground

Mike Bollert’s family has been in the fur business for three generations but until now it’s mostly been smaller animals like mink and fox. He’s changed all that in recent years by raising lynx - big, wild cats that bring premium prices because of the scarcity of quality pelts.

Lynx are larger than bobcats and smaller than cougars. Adult males weigh 40 to 45 lbs., females somewhat smaller. They have long hind legs and huge furry paws that don’t quite go with their small heads and tufted ears that make them look just like a housecat.

Raising lynx is a slow business. Bollert got started in 1979 with a pair of cats trapped up in northern Canadian and he’s been building up his breeding herd ever since. No pelts have yet been sold. He now has a herd of about 60 animals, 35 of which are female. He says he’s ready to start selling limited numbers of breeding stock.

The reason it took so long to build up his herd is that it takes 2 to 4 years for lynx to start reproducing and three kittens is considered a large litter. They’re particular about their mates and often, even though a pair may seem to get along, they may not breed. Gestation period is about 66 days. The mortality rate of kittens is high.

One of the problems of getting into the lynx business is the lack of available knowledge on how to do it. Bollert has had to learn by trial and error, in many cases using

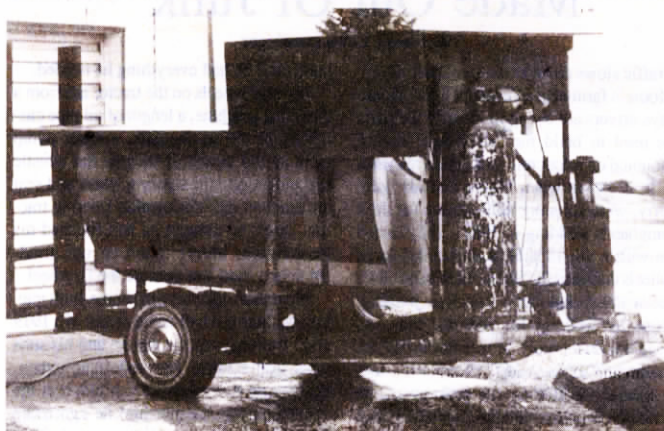
vaccines and other medicines intended for common housecats. “I’m always learning something new. As more people get into the business, I’m sure more products will be developed,” he says.

Another problem with raising lynx is that unlike fox and mink, which have been raised domestically for decades, lynx remain a wild cat that must be handled with care. Bollert regularly gets bites and scratches and says he has to dope up the animals for any hands-on work.

The cats are kept in large wire enclosures, one cat per pen. Breeding pairs are put in adjoining pens with removable gates so they can get together. Bollert says they can easily handle the coldest weather - all they need is a small roofed area in the corner of their pens to get out of rain and strong winds. He feeds them a mixture of fish and chicken offal as well as commercial cereal-based feeds. Adults eat from 1 to 2 lbs. daily.

Lynx have predominately brown coats. Market price per pelt ranges from \$300 to \$700, depending on condition. Although prices for fur recently have been poor, Bollert says they’re beginning to rebound. Breeding pairs sell for about \$2,000.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Bollert, Rt. 5, Simcoe, Ontario N3Y 4K4 (ph 519 426-4319).



Krush mounted the tank on the chassis of a 1969 Chevy Chevelle.