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## Oregon Ranch Raises "Lots Of Llamas"

Richard Patterson's farm near Sisters, Ore., is a real traffic-stopper. With more than 500 llamas on his 350 acres, he owns the largest llama herd in North America.

Although his chief business is raising Polish Arabian horses, Patterson has always had a soft spot in his heart for llamas. He estimates there are some 2,500 llamas in the U.S. and Canada, with about 800 in zoos and safari parks. The rest are privately owned.

Since it has been illegal for the past 40-50 years to import llamas from their native South America, private owners have a seller's market. Patterson has buyers on waiting lists for llamas, at prices up to \$5,000 for an adult pair.

In North America, llamas are raised for pets, wool, pack animals and as curiosities. They grow to be 3 to 4 ft. tall and weigh between 350 and 500 lbs. They live an average of 16 years, according to Patterson.

Although best adapted to high elevations, llamas do adjust well to lower elevations. They'll also adapt to hot, cold, dry or wet climates.

Llamas are generally friendlier and more cooperative than their distant relative, the camel. Like camels, they use spitting as a means of self-defense, but only rarely. "Their disposition is calm and stable," Patterson explains. "Under normal conditions, they will not bite, kick or spit.

"Llamas are ruminants and adapt readily to local feeds. Hay or pasture are about all they really need, along with plenty of fresh water and a trace-mineral salt block," he notes.

Wool production from llamas is 4 to 10 lbs. per year and sells for up to \$32 a pound to craftsman, spinners and weavers looking for something different. Llama raisers who do sell wool usually leave an inch or more on the skin to protect the animal from the sun.

Health problems are practically non-existent in llama herds. "Llamas are disease resistant, although we occasionally lose a llama from a cold or pneumonia," Patterson told FARM SHOW.

Patterson keeps a stud book and complete records on his llamas to prevent inbreeding. He has a number of separate blood lines and names all his llamas after movie stars to make record-keeping easier.

"Sheep raisers like llamas because of their anti-predator stance. They band together to run at attacking coyotes and dogs to scare them away. A few sheep raisers have put llamas in with their flocks as protection. It must be a small pasture, though, so the llamas will stay within sight of the sheep," Patterson points out.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Patterson Llamas, Box 188, Sisters, Ore. 97759 (ph 503 549-3831).

### "WE SELL EVERYTHING BUT THE QUACK"

## Wisconsin Duck Farm Largest In The World

"We ship birds to Hong Kong, Japan, South America, Egypt and all 50 of the United States," says Jim Christopher, president of C & D Duck Farm, Franksville, Wis., said to be the largest duck farm in the world.

The farm had small beginnings way back in 1923 but has grown to the point where some six million ducks are sold each year.

"Today, we sell everything but the quack. We even market the feathers and feet of the ducks. This revenue helps keep the price of processed ducks down," says Christopher.

The ducklings arrive at C & D's "growing houses" when they are one day old from the farm's new hatchery in Wisconsin. "We breed our ducks for more meat and less fat," explains Christopher. "We raise Pekin ducks that are ready for processing in 49 days. They weigh about 6½ to 7 lbs. at that time."

The farm has 85,000 to 90,000 breeders at the present time. One drake is used on every five females.

There are some 50 buildings on the farm of various sizes where the ducks are grown. Some are 25,000 sq. ft. in size. "We also have contract farmers as far away as 75 to 90 miles," says Christopher. "One of our managers visits these farms regularly to check their progress and help solve any troubles that might arise."

The farm's ducks consume 50,000 tons of feed a year, most of which is purchased from five different feed companies in the area.

Over 410 people from surrounding communities are employed at the duck farm. About 235 of the employees work in the processing plant and process from 22,000 to 25,000 ducks a



Jim Christopher, left, and Jim Hoben, hold processed ducks ready for market.

day on an eight-hour shift. The ducks are packed in plastic bags under C & D's own label and frozen. Some are sold as further processed meats, such as pressed duck, duck rolls, or special Gold Label duck with 30% extra breast meat.

C & D Farms sells more than 1.5 million lbs. of feathers each year. "They're used in making ski jackets, pillows, comforters, camping clothing and other articles," says Jim Hoben, vice president of sales and marketing. "Duck down is next to goose in popularity."

The majority of another by-product, the duck feet, find their way to Hong Kong as a delicacy in that country. The Chinese pull the bone out of the shaft of the foot, then stuff them with lobster or crab meat and serve them as an hors d'oeuvre. Every four weeks, a 40,000 lb. trailer leaves the farm loaded with duck feet bound for Hong Kong.

As for the manure, "right now most of it's spread by surrounding farmers and used on their fields. In the future, we're thinking of turning it into compost for gardening," says Christopher.

## Hog Designer Glasses

Gloria Vanderbilt (or is that Vander-gilt?) eat your heart out! Latest fashion fad in the swine world is customized eyewear as modeled by this trendy porker owned by Ray Hauser, of Richland Center, Wis.

The glasses were made from plastic coffee can lids and wire. Although they're not recommended for improved vision or cutting down the glare of the sun, these glasses are just right for the porker who wants to "hog" all the attention or "ham" it up in front of a crowd!



Pork producer Ray Hauser made these "designer" glasses from coffee can lids.