



Fred Peck drives his vegetable team of horses created from squash and pumpkins.

## WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

By Wally E. Schulz

# Wisconsin Farmer Drives Unusual Team Of Horses

Every fall, Wisconsin vegetable farmer Fred Peck, of Spring Green, creates a pair of horses to hitch to his old, antique wagon.

He creates the horses from squash and pumpkins. "I use long, slender squash for the heads and legs. I paint in the eye features, nose and lips of the horse," explains Peck.

The body is made up of pumpkins and squash — about 4 large ones in all. To hold the body together, he runs a pipe through the center of the squash and pumpkins. Another pipe is run through the squash legs and into the ground for support. The top of the leg pipes extend into the rear and front pumpkins and squash to hold up the body. It takes about 9 squash and pumpkins to create a horse.

To make his vegetable horse team even more realistic, Peck puts an old

horse harness on them. He fills the wooden wagon with bright colored pumpkins and green squash, making it appear as if the team has just brought in a fresh load of vegetables from the field.

"Motorists passing on the highway are attracted by the unusual team and many turn around and drive back for a closer look. They climb up on the seat of the wagon and take the reins to pose for pictures. It serves as a grand piece of advertising," explains Peck. "When folks stop to take pictures, they wander through my vegetable stand and usually end up buying something."

His vegetable team of horses stands on the premises throughout the fall selling season. Vegetables used to make up the horse don't deteriorate very rapidly in the cool, fall temperatures, he points out.



Elk rancher Vernon Johnson says there is a lucrative market for elk antlers, which buyers grind up for sale as an aphrodesiac.

## 8-FT. WOVEN WIRE FENCE HOLDS THEM IN

# Wild Elk Provide Unique Ranching

Vernon and Cynthia Jonson have fenced off 100 acres of their Flasher, N.D. ranch with 8 ft. high woven wire fencing to contain that state's only privately-owned wild elk herd.

The Jonsons bought two bulls and a heifer calf from the Gold Seal Company in Medora, N.D. for \$250 apiece in 1972. Gold Seal was raising elk to be used in a wildlife zoo. They had a few extra, so the Jonsons bought them. Today, they have increased herd size to 11, with six more calves being expected soon.

Vernon and Cynthia got into elk-ranching because they want to see elk preserved in North Dakota. "Elk used

to be common in the state. They're a very secretive animal. When the plains began to be settled, the elk moved into the mountains of Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and anywhere else where they could be alone," Cynthia points out.

The Jonson's elk are wild despite being fenced in. Vernon only goes into the fenced area about once a year to count the herd. He feeds them no grain or hay and thus has no feeding contact with them.

So far, the Jonsons have "harvested" five animals. Cynthia says the first three were for appreciation dinners for the men who helped build

the fence and for wild game banquets. The last two were trophy hunts. A man from Minnesota and one from California each paid to shoot one of the elk. The Minnesota hunter paid \$2,000 in 1979 for the privilege, and the man from California paid \$4,000 this year. Each got a large bull. "The meat is excellent and has no gamey taste like deer," Cynthia points out.

Raising elk requires a propagation permit from the North Dakota Fish and Game Department. Obtaining one was easy and cost just \$1, according to Cynthia.

Earlier, the Jonsons tried raising

buffalo and deer on their ranch. "The buffalo were too hard on the grass, and the deer were too susceptible to coyotes. Elk, on the other hand, are easy on the prairie. Also, they're tough and can take care of themselves. Coyotes don't bother them," says Cynthia.

Cynthia adds that, "Our dream is to fence in 500 acres of our ranch for elk. We'd like to put up cabins and host weekend hunters willing to pay to shoot a trophy elk. But that's all it is at this stage — a dream."