Catch Critters Safely With Net Guns

Years of experience capturing wild animals led Mike Ross to develop a gun that safely nets critters alive. First introduced to the public about 3 years ago, Ross developed it nearly a decade ago for his own wildlife capture company.

"Our primary market is to other companies that specialize in animal capture," says Ross. "We also sell the net guns to government agencies and ranchers. They can be used from helicopters as well from trucks."

Ross uses the Wildlife Capture Equipment (WCE) he sells in his own Helicopter Wildlife Services business that he operates in North and Central America, as well as southern Africa.

To use the net gun, it is broken open like a shotgun and a blank charge goes into the barrel. Once the barrel is closed, the hammer has to be pulled back before it can be fired.

The net is folded into a canister with four barrels. Each barrel holds a weight connected to the net by a lanyard. A simple loop technique allows the lanyard to be quickly attached or detached from the net.

When the gun is fired, the weights are propelled forward, pulling and spreading the net to entrap the target animal. The canisters and weights come in small and large sizes, with the small size canister holding 10 and 12-ft. nets and the large size holding a 15-ft. net. Charges to propel the weights and nets are available in small, medium, heavy and extra-heavy loads. Canisters are lightweight, interchangeable and offer a quick reload. Once a canister has been fired, a net can be quickly loaded with new lanyards placed in the barrels.

"The interchangeable canisters mean more animals netted and less time spent in the air when using high-cost helicopters," says Ross. "Other net guns are shoulder held, but ours isn't, thanks to lower recoil. This makes it easier to aim and fire from a moving vehicle or helicopter."

The WCE net gun has a pistol grip with an adjustable fore grip for left or right-handed operators.

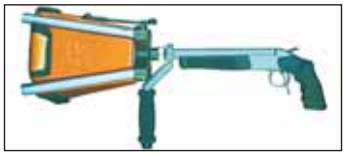
The nets are made from monofilament cords that are spliced rather than knotted. The net is 80 percent softer than competitive nets. Soft doesn't mean weak, as the cords have an 850-lb. breaking strength.

"Full-grown moose have been caught with our nets," says Ross.

He explains in his instructional videos that a knotless net travels faster with less drag. Once the animal is entrapped, the net spacing stays intact. Knots can slip under pressure, creating larger openings.

Once the target animal has been caught, special capture hoods and hobbles designed by Ross help subdue it.

Net gun doesn't have to be shoulder-held, thanks to a low recoil. When gun is fired, weights are propelled forward, pulling and spreading net to entrap animal.



Buffalo calf caught in net. Gun has a pistol grip and breaks open like a shotgun.

The net guns start at $3,690 with the package including the launcher, 2 canisters with 2 nets, 8 weights, 3 boxes of assorted blanks, a carrying case and accessories.

Other animal capture options can be used to deliver a wide range of tranquilizers, drugs and vaccines to animals of all sizes. Items range from blowpipes and jabsticks to CO_2 rifles and pistols, pump pistols, darts and needles. Prices start at around $215.

Ross offers a wide range of instructional videos on use of his net guns and other equipment.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wildlife Capture, 501 W. Powell Lane, Ste. 201, Austin, Texas 78753 (ph 512 920-4757). orders@wildlifecaptureequipment.com; www.wildlifecaptureequipment.com).

Phoenix windmill produces AC electricity. Fan assembly and tail drives a gearbox and driveline, which in turn chain-drives a generator.

First-Of-Its-Kind Windmill Produces AC Power

It looks much like an ordinary windmill but instead of pumping water, this new-style windmill produces AC electricity. And it can do so in winds of more than 100 mph without damaging anything.

The patented Phoenix 10 kw windmill was on display at the recent Husker Harvest show near Grand Island, Neb. Mounted on a trailer, it can be easily transported to different locations. It's also available as a stationary model. A 25 kw Genesis stationary model is also available.

The unit stands on a tall triangular metal tower and has a big fan assembly and tail on top that catches the wind. It drives a gearbox and driveline that chain-drives a generator. An electrical outlet box mounts above the generator.

"People have tried to make this idea work for many years, and we've finally figured it out," says Don Newell, Hawkeye Wind LLC, Cheyenne, Wyo. "My dad Jerry Morel and I have both ranched most of our lives and have always been around windmills. We've designed a built-in braking mechanism that slows everything down so the driveline doesn't rotate too fast and cause the generator to overrev. The Phoenix model is designed to begin producing power in 18 mph winds and is rated at its full 10kw production at wind speeds of 40 mph. Even in gale force winds, it'll continue producing its rated full load of power. By pressing a button, you can stop the driveline completely and even lower it to the ground to protect it from the wind.

"So far we've built and sold just a couple of units, but there's a lot of interest in it. You can use the generator to operate shop tools, pump water, and even help power a center pivot sprinkler system. It has no problem providing power to a 1,200 sq. ft. home and operating all the appliances in it."

The bottom part of the windmill frame is hinged and connected to a hydraulic cylinder, so you can lower the windmill to the ground for maintenance work. "We expect that you'll only have to bring the tower down once a year or so to check fluid levels in the gearbox," says Newell.

The Phoenix A 10 kw model sells for $26,900, and the 25 kw Genesis model for $45,000.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hawkeye Wind LLC, Cheyenne, Wyo. (ph 307 275-2654; wyowind2@hotmail.com).

Homemade Heated Waterer

Mike Roub of Chickaloon, Alaska, got tired of replacing the infrared heat bulbs on his heated chicken waterer, so he came up with his own design.

He used 1/8-in. steel to weld together a 1-ft. square box with a hinged door on front. Inside the box he mounted a thermostat and a porcelain light fixture for a 60-watt light bulb. A plastic waterer sets on top of the box and is warmed by the box's top plate.

"I built it in a couple of hours with stuff I already had, and wish I had come up with it sooner," says Roub. "I had been using an infrared bulb suspended over a waterer, but I went through too many bulbs. Also, I had to close the chicken coop to keep it warm enough inside so the water wouldn't freeze. I couldn't bring myself to pay $75 for a cheaply-built commercial heated waterer," says Roub.

"The heat on my waterer is where it needs to be, right under the water. I set the thermostat at 80 degrees and the light cycles on and off accordingly. The box stays warm but not hot - I can hold my hand on top of it with no problem. I now go through only about one light bulb per year.

"Now I can leave a small door on the coop open and let the chickens go in or out, even in winter," he says. "Allowing the chickens to free-range this way has made an amazing difference. They stay healthier and don't peck on each other as much, which keeps their plumage in better condition."

Steel box encloses a thermostat and porcelain light fixture for a 60-watt light bulb. A plastic waterer sets on top of box and is warmed by its top plate.

He covers the area around the box with wood shavings that serves as bedding. "I made the box tight enough to keep bedding from getting near the heat source, and I bent down the oversized edges on top of the box to keep any water that gets spilled away from the electricity," notes Roub.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mike Roub, P.O. Box 1236, Chickaloon, Alaska 99674 (ph 907 232-4323; mroub3@gmail.com).

Magnetic Spray Rig Reduces Drift

An Irish company called MagGrow says it has developed a new system that reduces spray drift by more than 80 percent while providing better crop spraying coverage.

The MagGrow system uses an electronic device that carefully creates magnetic fields in various flow and fluid conditions to effectively disperse and target fine spray droplets. The smaller size droplets result in greater coverage, better adherance to plants, and reduced drift. The technology works on new and existing spray equipment and any type nozzle, including small backpack sprayers used in greenhouses.

MagGrow CEO Gary Wickham says the patented technology is simple and user-friendly with no moving parts. The company has studies that show using 50 percent less spray in small droplets can produce the same results as higher quantities of larger droplets. A large flower producer in Ethiopia using the MagGrow system says it delivered 3.5 times better disease control with 40 percent less water. Another producer says increased coverage with reduced application rates offers great opportunity for reducing chemical costs, a clear return on investment.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, MagGrow Drift Reduction, Orchard House, Block 2, Clonskeagh Square, Clonskeagh Road, Dublin 14, Ireland (ph 011 353 1 567 6060; www.maggrow.com).