

Sensor Controls “Chicken Door”

Two engineers who are friends teamed up to create an automatic chicken door. Tony who is an electrical engineer and Mark who is a manufacturing engineer got tired of feeding the local wildlife because they kept forgetting to close the coop door at night.

After looking at wood sliding doors and doors that required massive assembly they decided they could come up with something better.

The guillotine doors were never reliable and always had problems with the pull string getting off track or out of alignment. So the 2 engineers went to work and the pullet-shut door was developed based on a standard hinged door, always reliable and very low maintenance.

The Pullet-Shut door is made of aluminum so it will not rust, warp or rot. The door is hinged on brass pivots and has stainless steel hardware. It has no switches that can fail. It is programmed to open and close with a magnetic sensor.

You can choose the option to have a photo sensor installed which will open at dawn and close at dark each day. The 12-volt battery and charging systems are all offered as options.

For programming the door hold the magnet over the red circle at the time you want to open in the morning. When programming



the door you can program how far you want the door to open. And then do the same thing that evening when you want the door to close and the door will repeat that every day afterwards.

The set times are not affected if you use the magnet to open or close the door during the day or night such as during a rain storm or to move the birds.

As a safety feature, if a chicken is outside when the door closes the door will open a second time and give the last bird one last chance to get into the coop before it closes for the night.



Automatic door is programmed to close at night and open in the morning.

Installation is simple. Cut a rectangular hole, drill the 4 mounting holes and bolt the door on with the stainless screws provided, hook it to the battery and you're done.

Tony and Mark are building the doors in Lockhart, Texas. The door starts at \$180 plus shipping. Don't forget to check out the options and the other size doors. They make 3 sizes – A large door (for turkeys), A medium door (for chickens) and a small chicken door (for small coops).

Contact : FARM SHOW Followup, Pullet-Shut Automatic Doors, 1401 Lovers Ln., Lockhart, Texas 78644 (512-995-0058; www.chickendoors.com)

Reader Inquiry No.99

Rare English Longhorns Making A Comeback

While Texas Longhorn cattle entered the U.S. through the Southwest, English Longhorn cattle landed in the East from England as early as the 17th Century. With horns that curve down around its face, the English Longhorn has unique characteristics that made it popular with early settlers.

But don't be surprised if you have never seen one or heard of them. There are only about 40 of them in the U.S.

The main herd is in Virginia, and several others are part of the collection of heritage breeds at Conner Prairie in Fishers, Ind., a non-profit outdoor living history museum with educational and entertainment programs.

As livestock manager, Kevyn Miller is an enthusiastic supporter of preserving the English Longhorn and other rare, heritage breeds. Besides caring for the cattle, he has learned how to work with them and participate in 1836 reenactments using the steers to pull an oxcart.

“They were here in the 1600's to early 1800's. They did go extinct in the U.S. and were brought back as exotics,” Miller

explains. “We want to raise them and show what we started with. This was a multipurpose animal before we specialized.”

Used for work, milk and meat, the breed is hardy and self-sufficient. Despite the threatening appearance of their horns, English Longhorns have an easy-going gentle nature and are very intelligent.

“I enjoy how smart they are – to keep up with them and train them. I have a hitch of four steers now. It's fun to figure how to communicate with them and to learn to be a better stockman,” he says.

In addition to the steers, Conner Prairie has five cows, three crossbred heifers and a new full blood bull calf.

“It's an embryo calf – to get an embryo is a big deal. It's a new genetic line,” Miller explains.

The breed shares common characteristics such as a brindle color and a white strip down the back.

Conner Prairie gives visitors the opportunity to see livestock breeds that were around when America was young and to learn about the changes in agriculture and livestock



Several English Longhorns are part of the collection of heritage breeds at Conner Prairie in Fishers, Ind., a non-profit outdoor living history museum.

breeding since then, Miller says. There are about 100 head of livestock, including Ossabaw hogs, Tunis sheep and Arapaw goats. As the numbers of the animals grow, the center is setting up satellite farms interested in preserving the heritage breeds.

Since English Longhorn cattle numbers are so low, it may be a long time before that happens with them, however.

The best way to see them and learn about them is to visit Conner Prairie, Miller says. Check out the website for times and scheduled events.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Conner Prairie, 13400 Allisonville Rd., Fishers, Ind. 46038 (ph 317 776-6000; www.connerprairie.org; miller@connerprairie.org).