

Editor's Notebook



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World's "Most Expensive" Fruit

There's a story going around about the Yubari King Melon, grown in a small town in Japan, that is the "world's most expensive fruit". Reportedly a pair of the hybrid canteloupes recently sold for \$45,000.



A pair of Yubari canteloupes recently sold for \$45,000.

We looked into it a bit and learned that the Yubari melon story might be the most successful farm-related PR stunt ever.

Fruit production is often tied into the gift giving culture in Japan and it can also have spiritual connotations, with the best produce sometimes offered up to the gods within Japanese temples.

One thing that makes Yubari melons so sweet is that the area is surrounded by volcanos, and the ashy soil provides excellent drainage. The town also experiences extremes between daytime and nighttime temperatures, which leads to sweeter melons.

Each plant is cultivated to produce just a single fruit, which farmers wipe clean daily. The growing melons are even capped with paper hats to prevent sun scald and other blemishes. Each is harvested by hand, with the stems carefully snipped with scissors.

After harvest, Yubari melons are classified into one of four grades: yuki, shiro, yama, and fuji. Only one out of 1,000 fruits make the highest fuji grade. Certified melon inspectors tap and smell the melons, seeking out a low, deep sound and sweet fragrance. So the melons ARE special, but they're not \$45,000 special.

What happened with the \$45,000 melons is that a Japanese produce company bought the melons as part of a special promotion and then got lots of publicity when they served up the tasty melons at a public event. The result was millions of dollars of publicity for the sweet little melons that typically retail for the very high price of \$28 to \$71. That's still very expensive but it's not \$45,000.

The lesson here is that if you can come up with a really good story, you might be able to sell your fruits or veggies for a fortune.

A ship's giant engine broke down and no one on board could repair it. So they hired a mechanical engineer with over 30 years of experience. After carefully examining the engine from top to bottom, the engineer unloaded his bag and pulled out a small hammer. He knocked something gently. Soon the engine roared to life again. It had been fixed!

The engineer told the ship's owner that the cost of repairing the engine was \$20,000.

"What!?" said the owner. "You did almost nothing. I need to see a detailed bill." So the engineer put together a bill that said:

Tap with a hammer: \$2
Knowing where to knock and how much to knock: \$19,998
Moral of the story: You don't get paid for the minutes on the job. You get paid for your years of experience.

Liberty Quotes

"Each man must for himself alone decide what is right and what is wrong, which course is patriotic and which isn't. You cannot shirk this and be a man. To decide against your conviction is to be an unqualified and inexcusable traitor, both to yourself and to your country." *Mark Twain*

"Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence." *President John Adams*

"A nation that destroys its soil destroys itself." *Franklin D. Roosevelt*

"Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." *George Washington*

"Life without liberty is like a body without spirit." *Kahlil Gibran*

"Freedom is the open window through which pours the sunlight of the human spirit and human dignity." *Herbert Hoover*

"Everything that is great and inspiring is created by the individual who can labor in freedom." *Albert Einstein*

"Is freedom anything else than the right to live as we wish? Nothing else." *Epicetus*

"The only real prison is fear, and the only real freedom is freedom from fear." *Aung San Suu Kyi*

"For what avail the plough or sail, or land or life, if freedom fail?" *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

"No person is your friend (or kin) who demands your silence, or denies your right to grow." *Alice Walker*

"Tame birds sing of freedom. Wild birds fly." *John Lennon*



DeBoer's models are so detailed most people assume they're made out of metal.

He's Been Carving Wooden Tractors, Combines For 80 Years

We get to talk to amazing people all the time while putting together each issue of FARM SHOW. One who really stood out recently because of his incredible skill level is 92-year-old Jim DeBoer of Orange City, Iowa. He's been carving intricately detailed tractors and other farm equipment out of wood for 80 years.

From a distance his models look like the expensive die-cast metal models that all of us are used to seeing. But each tractor replica is constructed almost entirely from wood, though DeBoer admits to occasionally "cheating" with paper for fine details as well as bits of wire and tin.

DeBoer first began carving at 12 years old and has perfected his craft during the 8 decades since then. When he started, it was simply a way to make his own toys. One of the first models he carved was a manure spreader. After completing it, he carved a tractor to pull it with. As his carving skills have improved, his models have become incredibly detailed with realistic-looking moving parts.

DeBoer starts each job by sketching out a scale model on paper before looking for a suitable piece of wood. His main tools include a wood file, a coping saw, and lots of sandpaper. Each replica is a labor of love. He estimates it takes him over 80 hrs. to complete each one.

Altogether, DeBoer has carved more than 100 pieces, including over 30 tractors and a handful of combines, corn pickers, harvesters, balers, field cultivators, and trailers. His Peterbilt truck and forage harvester took the most time, at approximately 250 hrs. each.

Most of DeBoer's models are John Deere replicas, although he has also dabbled in Case tractors and hay balers to please family members with other brand loyalties. While DeBoer tries not to play favorites, his 4020 cabbed tractor has sentimental value as it's based on the last piece of machinery he owned.

You can see an excellent documentary video of DeBoer's work at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=7U9TxSjXSi8

Lydia Noyes, Contributing Editor



Photos courtesy KLEM Radio

Moving parts on this Deere thresher amaze everyone who sees it.

I recently got a new primary care doctor. After two visits and extensive lab tests, he said I was doing "fairly well" for my age. Since I've been focusing on getting healthier, I was concerned that he didn't sound that enthusiastic. I asked him, "Doc, do you think I'll live until I'm 90?"

He asked, "Do you smoke tobacco or drink alcohol?" "Oh no," I replied. "And I've never done drugs either."

He continued, "Do you eat ribeye steaks and barbecued ribs?"

I said, "Not much. My former doctor told me red meat is very unhealthy."

"Well, do you spend a lot of time in the sun playing golf, boating, hiking or bicycling?"

"No," I said, somewhat proudly, "I try to stay out of the sun as much as possible."

He looked at me and said, "Well, then, why do you even care?"

Points To Ponder

- Light travels faster than sound. This is why some people appear bright until you hear them speak.
- A fine is a tax for doing wrong. A tax is a fine for doing well.
- Have you heard of the 50-50-90 rule? Anytime you have a 50-50 chance of getting something right, there's a 90 percent probability you'll get it wrong.
- Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man to fish and he will sit in a boat all day drinking beer.
- Definition of a flashlight: A case for holding dead batteries.
- When you go to court, you are putting yourself in the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty.
- I used to eat a lot of natural foods until I learned that most people die of natural causes.
- Being healthy is merely the slowest possible rate at which one can die.
- Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in a hospital dying of nothing.
- When weeding your garden, the best way to make sure you are removing a weed and not a valuable plant is to pull on it. If it comes out of the ground easily, it's a valuable plant.

\$1 Million Deere Tractor

In the past couple years fully-equipped top-of-the-line Deere combines have increased in price to more than one million dollars.



This 9RX can set you back nearly a million dollars with all the options.

So about a month ago we went into Deere's "Build Your Own" website and entered our request for a 9RX 640 tractor with all the options (<https://configure.deere.com>). The base price was \$900,224. Attachments and accessories cost \$17,115 and the options we selected (upgraded engine and transmission and "comfort" packages) added another \$73,504. Grand total: \$990,843.

FYI, in 2015 the base model 9RX sold for right at \$554,000 while a tricked-out unit would cost you about \$680,000.

Ole got pulled over by a cop, who said, "You were speeding. Didn't you see the speed limit sign?"

"Ya, I saw da sign," said Ole. "I just didn't see yew!"

Ole was trying to prove to his wife, Lena, that women talk more than men. He showed her a study which said that men use about 10,000 words per day while women use 20,000 per day.

Lena thought about this for a while. "Dat's because women have to repeat everything dey say to men."

Ole responded, "What did yew say?"

Lena came running into the store and said to her husband Ole, "Hey, Ole, somebody yust stole our pickup truck from da parking lot!"

Ole replied, "Did yew see who it was?"

Lena answered, "I couldn't tell, but I got da license plate number!"

Ole and Lena were arguing and decided to give each other the silent treatment. Ole realized he needed his wife to wake him at 5:00 a.m. the next morning for a flight to Wisconsin.

Not wanting to be the first to speak, he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me at 5:00 a.m."

The next morning Ole woke up to discover that it was 9:00 a.m. and that he had missed his flight. Furious, he was about to go see why his wife hadn't woken him when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed.

It said, "It's 5:00 a.m. Wake up."