



"They work the same as a team of horses," says Kieffer of his "Tom and Jerry" team of oxen.

Dennis Barnes Photo

**"I DON'T KNOW OF ANYTHING I'VE EVER ENJOYED MORE"**

By Patty Moss and Susan Salterberg

## Retired Ohio Farmer Works Six Oxen

In a small town in north central Ohio, Glenn Kieffer has found a way to get his farm work done and at the same time enjoy life.

The 68-year-old retired farmer owns six oxen and works them on four acres of his 180-acre farm near Nevada, Ohio. (He rents out the additional acres to one of his neighbors.)

While the oxen attract much attention because these draft animals are rarely found in Ohio, Glenn says two of his oxen--Tom and Jerry--amaze people because of their large size.

"They weight in at about 3,100 lbs. each. Although some teams are heavier than that, I only know of two, and they're in Maine, the heart of ox territory," says Glenn.

"We travel with the team a lot, though, and they're inclined to lose a lit-

tle weight on the road," he adds. Since acquiring his first team, Glenn has expanded his hobby to include Mut, Jeff, Amos and Andy.

In addition to his oxen, Glenn is now attempting to purchase a different type of draft animal -- water buffalo.

A friend helped him locate a pair, but the future looks grim. To get the team of water buffaloes, Glenn would have to go after them himself. "And they're in India," he laments.

Since it's costly to transport them to the U.S., he says he may delay his purchase, although he still concedes he'd like to work with them.

Meanwhile, since he's not able to procure water buffaloes, Glenn will continue to haul firewood, plow, plant, mow hay, and do other field work with his oxen. He also participates in parades and fairs

with his teams.

Glenn points out that, although he uses his oxen in a wide variety of ways, he's "self taught" and doesn't claim to be an expert teamster. He's read many books and has contacted a lot of people, yet he doesn't really drive them "true to style."

By true-to-style, Glenn refers to walking beside his teams and driving them with a whip or goad. However, because Glenn has arthritis, he can't walk beside them comfortably for very long. Instead, he rides on the wagon or cart and drives them with lines. This also eliminates the need for an extra person, which is convenient since Glenn lives alone.

"They work the same as a team of horses. They're broke to gee and haw but don't always mind," Glenn points out.

He and his big friends take in about a dozen or so outings each summer and

fall within a 100 mile radius of Glenn's farm. Last fall, for example, he took Tom and Jerry to the National Corn Husking Contest near Ostrander, Ohio. Along with 31 teams of horses, Tom and Jerry pulled wagons for corn husking contestants.

Neighboring communities also have invited Glenn to bring his oxen to their gatherings, where both children and adults are entertained. "We haul the children around in a covered wagon," he says.

Referring to his hobby, Glenn says, "I don't know of anything I've ever enjoyed more." He prefers working with "live" horsepower rather than mechanized sources. "Sure oxen are slower paced but I've got the time," he points out.

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### MADE 600-LB. BALES BACK IN 1928

## North Dakotan Patented First Big Round Baler

A North Dakota farmer patented the world's first big round baler back in 1928 but no one knows what happened to it.

What was remarkable about John Wolf's invention was not only that it made a 600 lb. bale and tied it with wire but also the fact that there were no front-end loaders on tractors at that time. He must have also developed a way to handle the big 5-ft. dia. bales.

The old baler is of interest to retired

Decre engineer Arnold Skromme of Moline, Ill., who's writing a history of forage and harvesting equipment. He's trying to find anyone who may have witnessed testing of Wolf's baler in the early 1920's in Ramsey County near Devils Lake, N. Dak. "Any young boy who lived in the area at the time would now be in his 70's or 80's."

Skromme says Wolf's patent indicates that the inventor must have done a great

deal of testing of the machine because he goes into great detail on specific ways to handle the baler without damaging rake teeth, and how to thread wire around the bale.

Wolf, who still has a niece in the area, homesteaded a piece of ground in 1914 and also studied auto mechanics. Although Wolf appears to have invented the first big round baler, it was not the first round baler, according to Skromme.

"That made small bales and was built way back in 1865," he told FARM SHOW.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Arnold Skromme, 2605 31st St., Moline, Ill. 61265 (ph 309 764-2168).