

HOMING INSTINCT STRONG IN THIS BRAHMAN COW

“Free Spirit” Cow Treks 35 Miles To Get Home

When Sidney Kraftsow sold Julieann, a pregnant, 700-lb. Brahman heifer, to a farmer 35 miles away in central Florida, he never thought he'd see her again. But he hadn't counted on the homing instinct in the young free-spirited animal and 20 hours later, after jumping fences, crossing rivers and trekking through a driving rain, Julieann arrived — 100 lbs. lighter and with a few scratches — back at the home of her former owner.

Kraftsow, who farms near Geneva, had sold the heifer to Read Hays in Christmas, Fla., because Julieann was a chronic roamer who frequently jumped 5-ft. cattle guards to wander up and down the road passing his place, browsing through citrus groves eating oranges and grapefruit.

“We were amazed when the cow showed up. I've heard of dogs and cats doing that but never a cow,” says Kraftsow.

Hays bought the heifer from Kraftsow and took her to his farm the same day. He put her in a pen and last saw her shortly after dark. That night,

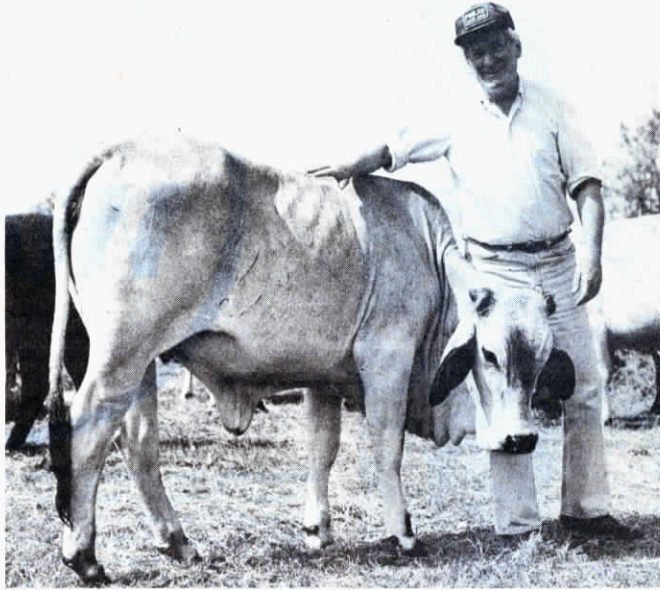


Photo courtesy Orlando Sentinel

Julieann arrived home 20 hours later and 100 lbs. lighter.

Julieann jumped out of the pen, leaped over two 4-ft. barbed wire fences that surround the pasture, and then made her way north.

The next day, Hays tracked the cow through a heavy rain but lost the trail when Julieann swam the Econlockhatchee River and several smaller creeks. She showed up at Kraftsow's that afternoon.

Kraftsow says he sold the cow because of her love for fruit. “She's a tame, loving gentle cow whose love for citrus got her in trouble. She'd go through most any fence or barrier to get a taste of an orange or grapefruit. After a couple close calls with passing autos and a schoolbus, I decided that for her sake, as well as mine, she'd have to go to a barnyard where her craving for citrus would be less apt to get her in trouble with traffic. I still go visit her and bring her a citrus treat.”

Hays, who bought the purebred Julieann to breed to his Brahman bull, says he's building higher fences to keep the wandering cow at home.

USING WINTER WHEAT

Farm Couple Weaves With Wheat

By Lyndon Anderson

Wheat weaving is a truly beautiful craft as evidenced by some of the many designs made by Arlie and Gladys Heier, who live south of Scranton, N. Dak.

Arlie makes many different designs such as windmills, hearts and crosses and attends craft shows to exhibit and sell them. Every design he makes is framed and put under glass.

Winter wheat is used as well as black bearded wheat imported from Italy. The black bearded wheat is a durum wheat and has very large heads and long black beards. It is purchased from a warehouse in Haven, Kan. which imports it for decorative purposes. This wheat is very expensive, so Heier has been planting some of the wheat in his own garden and now has two quarts of seed he planted this spring.

He uses this wheat on his windmill designs to represent the fans and it makes a very attractive design. The wheat has very tough straw and Arlie has to soak it for over two hours to make it pliable enough to work with. The length of the straw is usually around 18 in.

Arlie uses winter wheat grown right around his own community with some people bringing wheat from their own farm for him to make a design with. The winter wheat is easier to work with than spring wheat, which is shorter in straw length. “The straw should be 18 in. long from the head to the base in order to make a good heart design. It's harder to work with if any longer,” says Heier.



Guide photos by Lyndon Anderson

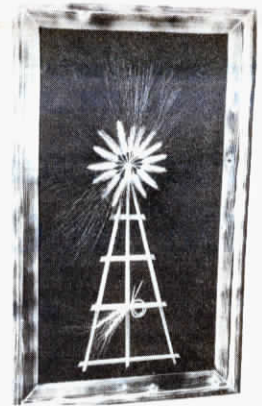
Heier holds the black bearded durum wheat which he uses in his wheat weaving.

The wheat is usually gathered when the crop is mature and golden colored. In the fall, Heier tears off the old leaves and stores the plants in an old deep freeze to keep them clean. Then he has to sort the heads to get ones the same length, which takes time to do. For his heart design, it takes 64 heads of wheat to complete the product.

He soaks the winter wheat in water for 20-30 min. so it becomes pliable and workable. Then he rolls the wheat heads and straw in a damp towel to keep them moist. The straw must be kept damp when weaving and this process of weaving should be done in one sitting. He uses anywhere from five to seven straws to weave and needs the long straws to be able to do this.

The hearts he makes have to be woven and are very complicated. “Very few people make them,” Heier says. Once a design is done and dried for 12 to 24 hours, Gladys sprays a clear plastic on to preserve it and make it shine. Weight is added to keep the design in shape before it is put under glass in a frame. Gladys puts different colors in the backgrounds of the designs to catch the eyes of someone wanting to buy the wheat weaving craft. She also ties ribbons on some of the designs to give them an added flair.

Heier says the hobby takes time and practice, although many more people are getting involved in the hobby as more classes are being offered on wheat weaving around the Dickinson, N. Dak., area. He has been at the



The Heiers sell their designs at craft shows.

hobby for three years now and works on it about every day. “You have to be nimble with your fingers.”

The craft of working with wheat straw is not new and goes back to the days of the ancient Egyptians who used it for decorative trim on clay pots. Straw was used by farmers through the ages to make decorative things for their homes, but the craft almost became a lost art with the invention of the mechanical threshing machines, which damaged the straw. But the craft has been revived in Europe during the last 20 years and is becoming more popular throughout the Northern Great Plains.

(Reprinted from *Farm and Ranch Guide*, Washburn, N. Dak.)