

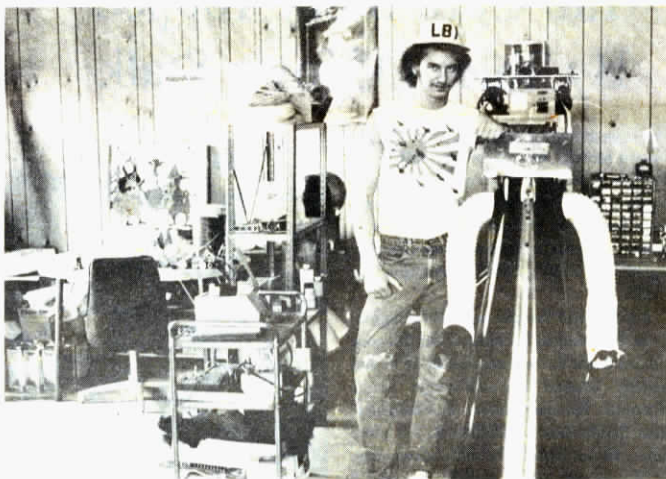
More than one traveler hit the brakes on the highway near this "alarming" round bale.

## "A FARMER CAUGHT UP IN HIS WORK" Farmer's Funny Bone Scares Passing Traffic

McComb, Miss., farmer Alan Pounds has a sense of humor that doesn't quit. So when he thought of a way to dress up a round bale, he didn't hesitate.

He put a pair of boots on sticks jammed

into the side of a round bale to illustrate a farmer who got too caught up in his work. The prank caused more than one passerby on a nearby highway to do a double take.



Ziebart's robots are powered by air pressure or a 12-volt battery.

## UNUSUAL FARMING SIDELINE

# North Dakota Farmer Builds Robots

There are strange goings-on in a North Dakota farm workshop where farmer Faron Ziebart, of Hamar, designs and builds robots. His unusual sideline to farming is literally "taking off."

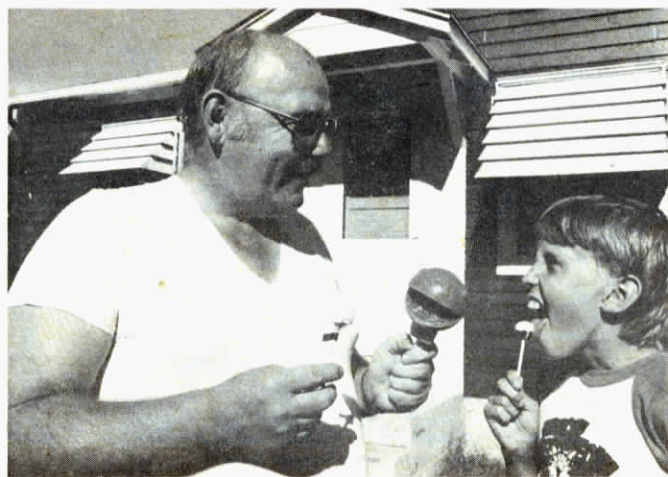
Ziebart, 24, has been actively interested in robots for the past eight years. "When I was in high school, I built some things for science fairs, including a replica of a human head that rolled its eyes and moved back and forth, and a 4-ft.-high rocket, powered by zinc and sulfur, that shot two miles into the air before a parachute in its nosecone drifted it safely back to earth.

The most successful project he's created to date is an animated, robotic display of an

entertainment group called "The Country Critters." It features a drummer, guitar player, singer and comedian, plus there are two separate stages, lighting effects, props, a 5 hp air compressor, a controller computer and an elaborate sound system.

"Robotics is at the same stage now as computers were in 1978, and you know how they've taken off," notes Ziebart. He feels that the first modern robots sold for practical home use will be designed for vacuuming floors, smothering fires and letting you know when visitors or burglars enter your property.

Ziebart notes that robots he builds are powered by an air compressor, or by a 12



The entire Williams family gets involved in the homemade sucker business.

## YOU BUY THEM AT 'THE LICKER STORE'

# Home-Made Lollypops "Lick" Unemployment

Home-made lollypops have "licked" an unemployment problem for Yvonne and Nelson Williams, of Truman, Minn. Both were working at a local bulk gas station which was sold, leaving them out of work.

Between unsuccessful job searches, Yvonne worked on her hobby of making home-made suckers. Her daughter Kristine started selling them to friends at school. Then the school's FFA Chapter placed an order for 800 suckers. Local filling stations and other stores started selling them.

One thing led to another and the entire Williams family, including daughter Kris, 17, and son Thomas, 12, who's better known as "TJ", soon found themselves in the midst of a booming lollypop business which they've appropriately named "The Licker Store."

A year ago, they were turning out a respectable 2,000 suckers per month, with most of the orders coming from within a 15 mile radius of Truman. Today, they're working six days a week and turning out 18,000 to 20,000 suckers per month. Orders are pouring in from all corners of the U.S. and Canada, thanks to a flurry of national radio, TV and newspaper coverage of their "Licker Store."

In addition to long hours of hard work, the

"secret" to their success, according to Nelson, is the special flavoring used to create about 30 different flavors. "With ordinary suckers, the flavor is generally only skin deep. With ours, the flavor carries through the entire sucker right to the stick. People of all ages can tell the difference," says Nelson.

A mixture of water, corn syrup and the "secret" flavoring is brought to a boil, then poured into forms. One kettle full makes 60 suckers. Clips are used to hold the sticks in place until the suckers harden. Once they've set up, the forms are removed, the seams cut down with a knife and each sucker is wrapped in clear plastic. There are two sizes — regular 1 in. dia. suckers, which account for most of the orders, and large "mega" suckers about the size of a baseball.

Best seller among the 30 or so flavors the "Licker Store" sells is strawberry dackeri. Other favorites include chocolate sundae, bubblegum, licorice, cherry cheese cake, and rootbeer. Regular suckers are packaged 100 to a bag, with each bag containing 4 of each of 25 different flavors. They retail at "The Licker Store" for 30 cents per sucker (\$1.50 each for "mega" suckers) but most retail stores charge 50 to 75 cents each for individual suckers sold over the counter.

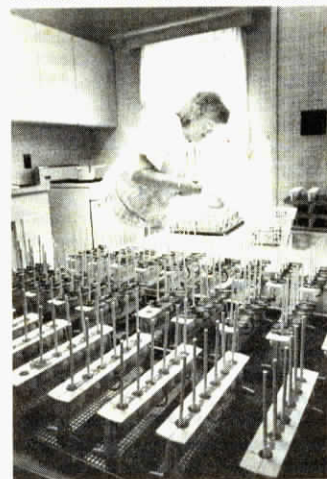


Photo courtesy Mankato Free Press

Once the suckers harden, forms are removed and each sucker is wrapped in a clear plastic wrapper.