

## "LUCKY" UP AND KICKING ON ONLY THREE LEGS

# Calf Doing Fine Despite Leg Loss

By Kimberly Gooden

"Lucky" wasn't born with that name, but it describes her life thus far. Lucky is a Holstein calf, born last Feb. 1 on the Glenn Ruble farm near Albert Lea, Minn. She was born normal, but sustained an injury to her front leg when she was only two days old.

"I called the veterinarian right away, and we tried to save the leg, but the tissue damage was very severe," Glenn's son, Doug, said. "The leg continued to decay, even after much treatment, and was finally beyond repair."

But Lucky still fought on. She used her crippled leg as a prop for three weeks, even though she could not bend it at all.

Finally, the veterinarian, Dr. Al Mendenhall, asked if he could use Lucky to gain knowledge for future reference. "I'd seen lots of three-legged dogs and cats, but never a calf. It's very seldom a calf sustains an injury serious enough to remove its leg. I thought the calf had a good chance to survive and I wanted to see how she would progress with only three legs," he said.

Doug said, "We considered the calf's pedigree, which wasn't strong, and the hopelessness of the situation, and agreed to let him experiment with her."

The decision was made to amputate the calf's leg at the shoulder to see if she would survive and how she would function if she did. Lucky was given an injection to make her unconscious, and the veterinarian made an incision high on her shoulder. Next, he removed the entire leg except for a very small amount of bone. Finally, he pulled the muscle down and over the bone to make a pad for the bone. Then he stitched it closed.

Again, Lucky's will to live came through. The very same night as the operation, she was able to stand. She needed a little help to get up, but she ate normally.

"It was really amazing," Doug said. "She never lost her appetite throughout the whole ordeal."

Lucky continued to need help getting up for a few days, but within a week of the surgery she was able to get up alone.



Photo courtesy The Land

"Lucky" stands up by getting on her back legs, leaning way back and then jerking her front end up.

How can a fairly large animal, such as a calf, get up with only one front leg? "She gets up on her back legs first, leans way back and jerks her front end up," Doug explained.

Lucky doesn't do much jumping and kicking, but she is able to move quite fast. Her remaining front leg

bows out somewhat and the pastern shows a little strain, but so far it hasn't affected her movement, he added.

The Rubles hope to keep Lucky as long as possible, and the veterinarian is keeping a close watch on her progress.

## TWO TEAMS OF DRAFT HORSES DO ALMOST ALL OF THEIR FARM WORK

# Young Farmers Operate With "Live" Horsepower

By Jeff Lyon

Someday Dennis and Steve Englebert will look back to the early 1980s and fondly recollect farming with horses.

That's right — 1984. The Door County, Wis., teenage brothers started using horses two years ago when they decided to try their hand at farming.

"One day, Steve and I asked Mom and Dad if we could get a riding horse," Dennis recalled. "Two weeks later we bought another riding horse." That was four years ago when Dennis was 13 and Steve was 11.

Two years later they bought their first team. "I really liked them (riding horses) so I decided I wanted a team," Dennis said. "We paid \$3,000 for the first team, but the horse price is way down now."

A desire to farm with the intention to keep capital investments low was one reason why the two brothers decided to use horses.

"We wanted to get started on our own, but we had to use our own money and it takes \$20,000 to \$30,000 to buy a tractor," Dennis explained. "It takes \$2,000 to \$3,000, plus machinery, to get started with horses. It takes twice as long to get the

work done, but it's fun."

Lack of experience on their part and a high spirited team led to all sorts of problems for the two Southern Door High School students. "We started dragging with them to try and break them for pulling but they began to run away all the time," Dennis said. "We were green ourselves so, in the fall of 1982, we traded our first team for another team owned by Levi and Elmer Yoder, a couple of Amish farmers near Amherst, Wis.

"In the winter of 1982, both of us decided we liked working with horses so we bought another team from Sam Borntrager another Amish farmer in Amherst," Dennis said. "During the winter about all we did was haul manure and take sleigh rides."

In the spring of 1983 almost all of the 80 acres of field work including dragging, seeding, planting corn, cutting and hauling hay was done with the horses.

"When we had one team, we were using the tractor. But now with two teams we hardly ever use it except to bale hay and do some late fall plowing," Dennis said.



Photo courtesy Country Today

Steve (left) and Dennis Englebert paid \$3,000 for their first team of horses.

This year they are farming 120 acres, 35 of which are oats, seven are corn and the remaining acres are in pasture and alfalfa.

Finding machinery that could be hooked up to a team of horses was a problem at first. But, through neighbors checking out their junk piles, going to auctions and acquiring by "word of mouth," the brothers have accumulated enough machinery to use and get parts from.

The boys father, Ron, a retired dairy farmer, has seen a change in the boys since they began using the horses to farm.

"Dennis gets off the tractor tired and grouchy but when he gets off the horses he seems satisfied," Mr. Englebert said. "He seems contented."

Pat Englebert, the brother's mother, had some reservations about them getting into farming with horses. "At

15-years-old I thought Dennis and Steve wouldn't stick with it. I think Dennis will stick with it but Steve is still young," she said.

"Some of my friends think I'm nuts farming with horses," Dennis said. "Some of the older neighbors think I'm crazy. One neighbor felt sorry for me so he came over with his tractor and helped me plow."

Dropping out of high school athletics to work with his horses is something that Dennis doesn't regret.

"I enjoy sports, but I found something I enjoy more and I know Dad enjoys watching us and taking a few turns himself," Dennis said.

While he wouldn't say how long or whether or not he would continue farming with horses, Dennis said that he would "always have horses."

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