



Johnson makes all types of straw animals including mules, pigs and sheep.

**LIFE-SIZE ANIMALS MADE FROM STRAW BOUND WITH FISH LINE TO WOOD SKELETON**

## “Straw Animal” Lawn Ornaments

You'll like these life-size "straw animal" lawn ornaments made by a University of Wisconsin student majoring in art.

Greta Johnson of Larsen has fabricated hundreds of animals made from straw which she binds to a wooden skeleton with clear fish line. She started with deer and has since gone on to make straw cows, pigs, sheep, mules, dogs, geese, and flamingos.

"They're fun to make and bring a lot of joy into peoples' lives," says Johnson, who sells the animals out of her home. "For example, I made a bull for a retired farmer whose wife ordered it because he was homesick for the farm. I've even made scarecrows and basset hounds. I depend on local farmers for a supply of oat or wheat straw and use about 150 bales a year. I don't use alfalfa because animals might eat it."

Johnson uses a 2 by 4 for the main trunk

of each body, nailing small willow tree trunks onto it for legs, head and neck. She then uses straw to form the animal's muscle structure. "As I add each handful of straw, I use fish line to wrap it onto the skeleton until it's secure. It takes 600 to 700 yards of fish line for each animal. I add a finishing coat of wood preservative to protect the straw from weather. Each ornament should last about five years. It takes about three days to make a cow. I use branches of the staghorn sumac for deer antlers because the wood turns velvety in the spring."

Bucks and does sell for \$60 each, cows for \$125, pigs for \$35, baby pigs \$25, and geese for \$22.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Greta Johnson, 5327 St. Rd. 110, Larsen, Wis. 54947 (ph 414 836-3772).

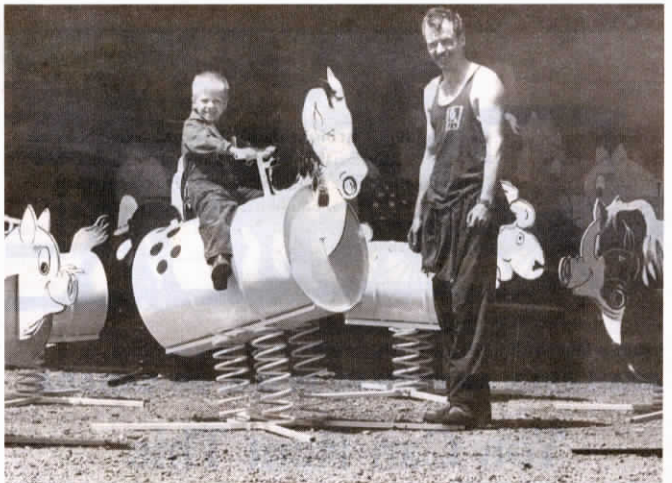


Photo courtesy New Zealand Herald

Kids hold onto handle made out of pipe. Horse head is made from piece of board.

**MADE OUT OF 15-GAL. OIL DRUM AND OLD TRUCK SPRINGS**

## Easy-To-Make Rocking Animals

Two New Zealand inventors were only horsing around trying to come up with a new toy for their kids when they hit on an idea that's turned into a thriving new business.

Ron Parker and Grant Kelson work as truck mechanics in a rural town. Their idea began as a joke when they decided to make a rocking horse for Parker's 4-year-old son out of a 15-gal. oil drum and a set of old truck springs. They made a horse head out of a piece of board to attach to one end of the drum and a handle out of pipe. Everyone got a big laugh out of it until one of his customers bought it. Next thing they knew, a lady walked in off the street and ordered a similar model in the shape of a pig.

"It turned out to be a real ugly pig but she bought it anyway," says Parker. The busi-

ness just grew from there and now they've set up a regular production line for the inexpensive, easy-to-build playtoys.

Parker says he still doesn't understand what people see in them. In fact, when he and his partner first began making the rocking animals, they were too embarrassed to work on them in the open. "If someone walked in off the street, we'd put our tools down in a hurry and pretend we were working on one of the trucks," he says.

Today, as demand has grown, they happily dig through junk yards looking for springs and other miscellaneous parts for the toys. They use 15-gal. drums for small kids and 50-gal. drums for older kids (or their grandparents, adds Parker).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ron Parker, Putaruru, New Zealand.

## World's Longest Whip

Although it's not official yet, Ohio part-time farmer and whip maker Krist King says he set the world record last year for the longest whip ever made and "cracked". He hopes to get listed in the Guinness Book of World Records.

King's whip is 184 ft. 6 in. long, excluding the handle. It's made from braided nylon parachute cord, and the first 60 ft. is loaded with no. 9 shot for better balance. The whip weighs 27 lbs.

"A lot of people are fascinated by it. It makes quite a crack if you do it right," says King, who turns out 400 to 450 whips a year. "It took me 9 days to make the whip and 6 months to learn how to crack it. I had to learn by trial and error and even had to change the handle design. It takes me 2 to 3 tries before I can crack it right and I figure it takes about as much energy as throwing the shotput.

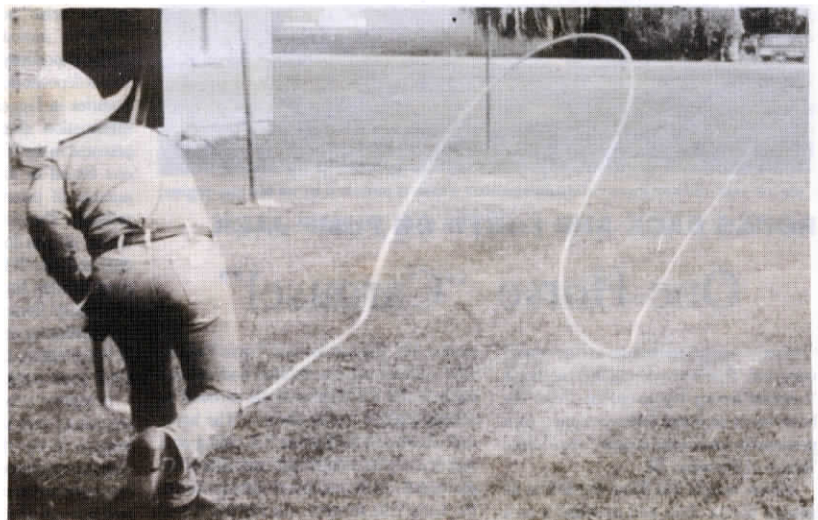
"I made it after I happened to look in the Guinness Book one day and saw the whip cracking record. It was for a 140 ft. whip owned by an Australian. I had never built a whip longer than 22 ft., but I was convinced that I could beat the record.

"A whip cracks when the tip breaks the

sound barrier and creates a miniature sonic boom. A long whip doesn't necessarily crack louder than a short one. In fact, a 10 to 12 ft. whip can make a lot louder crack than a long whip because it's much more controllable. When a cowboy uses a whip to control animals, usually he wants only the noise of the whip cracking. The whip doesn't even strike the animal."

King's interest in whips began as a child when he would braid feedbag strips into ropes. After graduating from high school, he worked on ranches where he learned how to use a whip. "The ranchers I worked for used them to control dogs. Instead of hollering at them, they'd just crack the whip to call their dogs back."

His commercial whips are made out of a



First 60 ft. of whip is loaded with no. 9 shot for better balance.

variety of materials, including nylon, leather, buckskin and kangaroo. He's sold them throughout the world, many to working cowboys.

King says his whip will be entered in the 1993 edition of the Guinness Book of World

Records "unless someone puts in a better claim before they go to press."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Krist King Braiding, Box 173, Pettisville, Ohio 43553 (ph 419 445-4277).