

WINNER RAISES BIG STINK

Manure Spreader "Sit-In"

If you've been thinking your local county fair needs a popular new amusement attraction, you may want to consider staging a "manure spreader sit-in" contest.

Here's the idea: You park a manure spreader in front of the grandstand, or along main street, then challenge contestants to sit in it for 12 hours a day for 5 or 10 days—or however long the fair runs. The prize: A jackpot of \$1,000, or whatever, to the winning "survivor".

You, or whomever sponsors the sit-in, will have to make a sticky decision on how to conduct the contest: Do you run it with or without manure in the spreader?

Ask Lloyd Petipren, winner of the first-ever manure spreader sit-in contest staged this past summer at the Ionia Free Fair, in Ionia, Mich., and he'll tell you emphatically to make it a true test of endurance. Put manure in the manure spreader!

When fair officials in Ionia issued the "manure spreader sit-in" challenge last summer, Petipren signed up and came fully prepared to battle the strong odors, outlast his competition and win the \$1,000 prize being offered. His "battle gear" included big rubber boots, skunk scent (to harass other competitors), a pair of long pants, and a long sleeve shirt. Stuff you need if you're planning to sit in a sloppy, stinky manure spreader for 10 hot days.

Although he won the contest, Petipren

has been raising a big stink ever since about the "cream puff" way it was run. When he arrived on the scene, here was this sparkling-clean "manureless" spreader parked in the shade of a tent with a cool breeze blowing by. Petipren couldn't believe it. A manure spreader sit-in — without manure!

But Petipren couldn't back out. He'd already boasted to friends that he'd win, and had called in to a radio talk show to publicly predict a victory. "If I'd reneged, everyone would have chided me for backing out of something so easy," he says.

So, the stage was set. According to contest rules, if more than one contestant remained at the end of the contest (4 p.m. on the last day of the 10-day fair), a drawing would be held to determine the winner. If the contest was decided prior to 5 full contest days, the award would be \$500; after 5 days, \$1,000.

On the 6th day of the 10-day fair, when the pot increased to \$1,000, Petipren made the other two contestants an offer they couldn't refuse. He'd pay them \$255 each on the condition they drop out, leaving him the winner. After sitting for 75 hrs., he collected \$490—a return of \$6.53 cents per hour.

"If I'd known the spreader would be empty, I never would have entered. I felt like a jerk sitting there in a sparkling clean spreader," laments Petipren.



Photo courtesy Sentinel-Standard, Ionia, Mich.

Contestants sat in this "sparkling clean" manure spreader.

Fair officials decided the spreader would remain "manureless" so it could be parked in front of the grandstand without raising a stink. Contest rules specified that each contestant had to stay in the spreader at all times, except for 30 min. breaks every 3 hrs. Contestants were to report in each day at noon and stay until midnight. Not hanging or sitting over the side of the spreader was permitted, nor was lying down. Each contestant had a chair to sit on and could stand up and move about if, in the judge's opinion, doing so did not interfere with other contestants.

A contestant could have one support person near the spreader, but that person

couldn't lean on, put his hands on, or otherwise touch the spreader. No radios or audio equipment were permitted. Contestants were required to furnish their own refreshments and supplies.

For anyone interested in sponsoring a similar sit-in, fair official Lionel Haskins offers these tips: "Make sure people understand whether or not the spreader will have manure in it. And make it clear that the contest is strictly for fun and amusement."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lionel Haskins, Ionia Free Fair, P.O. Box 96, Ionia, Mich. 48846 (ph 616 527-1310).

"I COULD SELL TWICE AS MANY OSTRICHES AS I CAN PRODUCE"

Big Birds Boost Dairyman's Income

By Phil Porter

Dale Coody had been looking for something to increase the income on his dairy farm. One day in 1983 he saw an advertisement in a magazine offering ostriches for sale.

He learned that the sellers wanted \$1,500 for an adult male. Grown females went for \$1,000. The giant birds reach 8 to 9 ft. tall. Adult males weigh up to 425 lbs. and females about 300 lbs.

"Friends and neighbors thought I was crazy," he recalls. "But one day I decided that I definitely wanted to have some ostriches. Before that day was over I had located some chicks about the size of turkeys. They didn't cost quite so much so I bought a male and three females. I have never regretted it a minute.

"Today I have about 40 adult birds and they are some of the most unusual and interesting creatures I have ever worked with. There's an excellent market for them. I could sell twice as many as I can produce. As a matter of fact, I am reducing my 110-cow dairy and increasing my ostrich business. Because of a write-up about me and my ostriches in the Wall Street Journal and some other national publicity, I receive telephone calls daily from interested people and owners all over the country.

"They are a real practical production animal. The skin is needed for leather to make cowboy boots, the meat tastes very much like beef, and the feathers are used in women's apparel and decorations. Also,

infertile eggs are in demand for their unusual size - some people like to decorate them."

Coody says he feels it will take five or more years before raisers in America can accumulate enough ostriches to supply the market for breeders. Then they can start broadening the market for skins, meat, feathers and eggs.

"Before I started raising ostriches I put a pencil to the possible profitability. It looked good then and still does," says Coody. "A healthy female will normally lay 30 to 50 eggs per year. If from these you can raise 20 chicks that sell for \$600 to \$750 each at two months old, that is a cash flow of \$12,000 to \$13,000 per year. No dairy or beef cow can provide that kind of cash flow. That's why I'm reducing my dairy herd and increasing my ostrich herd," declares Coody.

When he started raising ostriches he had a hard time getting good information on breeding, handling eggs, and raising chicks. The people who sold him the chicks wouldn't give him any information. He dug up the facts he needed himself.

"I'm happy to share what I have learned with anyone interested," says Coody. Evidence that he means what he says is given in the form of a 36-page booklet he has written, giving details on the practice of ostrich production. Everyone who buys one of his birds gets a copy of the book.

In his book, Coody makes it clear that



Coody owns 40 adult ostriches. Each female produces about 20 offspring per year.

raising ostriches requires work and special care. They must be kept in small groups, one male with two or three females. Good fences but no barbed wire. Eggs must be gathered daily and incubated under controlled temperature and humidity. Chicks should be kept off the wet ground for up to two months. "With proper handling and care, ostriches can become a great opportunity," says Coody.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Dale Coody, Rt. 1, Box 71A, Lawton, Okla. 73501 (ph 405 353-3078).

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Eggs are gathered daily and placed in this incubator. Once hatched, chicks should be kept off the wet ground for up to two months.