

Blind Cow Thrives On Nebraska Farm

Even though Girl, a 9-year-old Angus cow, has been blind since she was a calf, she has thrived and delivered seven calves. She's also earned the love and respect of her owners, Ron and Ann Lindvall of Edgar, Neb.

The cow responds to a simple, "Girl. Come here, Girl," walking across the pasture to Ann's voice.

Girl was born to an overzealous heifer that prodded her calf to stand too soon. When the Lindvalls found the calf, it was making the death bawl, and they suspected she had broken ribs. They didn't expect her to survive, but they put her in a convection-heated hot-box they use to warm calves. Ron milked the heifer and fed the milk to the calf through a tube for a few days; then Ann fed her with a bottle.

Girl's eyes looked fine at first, but then turned white and developed dry socket - probably due to the longer-than-usual period in the hotbox, which the Lindvalls didn't realize at the time.

When summer arrived, they put Girl on a 1-acre pasture. That winter, Ann discovered that by calling Girl's name, she would follow. Ann led her to shelter that first winter and has been leading her with her voice ever since. Girl manages to go through gates without hitting anything, but won't budge on ice and must be led around it.

The Lindvalls never expected that Girl would have calves. But when she was 18 months they needed a place for a bull, which the other bulls didn't like, for a couple of weeks after breeding season. They put him with her in a 7-acre pasture. Nine months later Girl calved. Ann moved the calf near Girl's head and Girl figured it out from there. Girl has had calves every year including a set of twins.

"We watch her for the first two or three days so she doesn't hide the calf and forget it," Ann says. "When she had twins, we put her inside to keep track of them for three or



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four days. You couldn't ask for a better mom."

The Lindvalls say they haven't made many special accommodations, though they don't put her in the big pasture with the whole herd. She's usually in a smaller pasture with other cows or calves with special, short-term needs, and she's also shared space with a horse.

"She knows where the water is. She manages to find her way," Ann says.

Girl's other senses seem to be very acute. Ann remembers switching from cracked corn to shelled corn and Girl's response to the sound of it going into her feeder. Other than occasionally walking in circles and holding her head a little to the side, it's difficult to tell by Girl's behavior that she's blind.

Most of the time the Lindvalls simply use voice commands, "come" and "whoa."

When she doesn't have a young calf to care for, Ann says Girl likes to lick her, as if Ann were her calf. Girl has never had any serious injuries and is as healthy as other cows her age.

"We just love her," Ann says. "She's pretty special."

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FARM SHOW



When the University of Wyoming sold a 160-acre farm to the town of Lyman, a group of local residents raised money to renovate the farm's barn. Now it's a thriving community center.

Historic Barn Becomes Community Center

For more than 90 years the University of Wyoming experiment station near Lyman, Wyoming, was important to area agriculture. Now the farm, and in particular the farm's 1936 barn, is playing an important social role in the community.

When the University sold the 160-acre farm to the town of Lyman, the barn's future was uncertain. A group of local residents raised \$170,000 locally and received a \$957,656 grant from the Wyoming Business Council to renovate it.

"It has been booked ever since with wedding receptions, meetings, private parties, family reunions, dinners, luncheons and picnics," says committee leader and local resident Dorothy James.

The renovation included installing a catering kitchen, restrooms, storage areas, an el-

evator, a deck and outdoor stairs. Floors were replaced and interior walls sided, except in the old haymow where the original bent wood rafters can be seen. The grant also included landscaping and adding parking areas and access roads.

The Lyman Heritage Barn is part of a community history center that eventually will include a chicken coop converted to a visitor center, restoration of the farm orchard, a windmill, root cellar and outhouse.

"The outhouse is of real interest to elementary kids when they come out here," says James.

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Kyle Rosfeld recycles old boot tops into purses, customizing them to fit the needs of his customers. All the purses have a 3 1/2-in. leather sole at the bottom.

He Makes Purses Out Of Old Boots

Bootmaker Kyle Rosfeld became a purse maker to solve a problem for his wife. She was tired of pulling up her pants legs to show people the fancy boot tops Rosfeld made. So, he made a purse with the same pattern.

"She got a purse out of it, and I got a new sideline business," says the Valentine, Neb., entrepreneur. He now recycles old boot tops into purses, customizing them to fit the needs of customers. All the purses include one thing - a 3 1/2-in. leather sole at the bottom.

"I warranty the sole," Rosfeld laughs. "I will replace it for free." The sole is a strip that runs the lengths of the purse.

Typically, the purses have one pocket and key hook on the inside. They can be closed with zippers or snap catches. He uses leather or belt blanks for the straps.

Purses can be up to 16 in. tall.

"Sometimes people are tired of their boots or they don't fit any more," Rosfeld says. "Or they find a neat pair of boots at a garage sale." One woman brought in her deceased husband's boots to make a keepsake purse.

When customers provide old boots, the purses cost \$300. Prices are higher and vary for purses made from his own material.

Rosfeld makes the purses on the same old sewing machines he uses to make boots.

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