



Chris McConnell made this 19-ft. long Holstein cow out of 2 by 4's and 25 car hoods.



McConnell's previous project, a 35-ft. long horse and buggy, was made entirely out of 2 by 4's.

Young Artist Creates A Car Hood Cow

Chris McConnell took 150 photos of cows and drew several rough sketches before he turned a pile of 2 by 4's and 25 car hoods into a 19-ft. long Holstein stationed in front of the Vancura Gallery of Fine Arts in Middlefield, Ohio.

It's the second large commissioned sculpture for the 23-year-old Cleveland Institute of Art student, and he has plans for even bigger sculptures in the future.

"Everyone had their doubts for about a month and a half," McConnell laughs. He

says his experience milking cows as a youth helped create the realistic sculpture.

He also had experience from his first project — a 35-ft. long horse and buggy all made out of 2 by 4's.

McConnell made several trips to a junkyard 30 miles away to pick up car hoods from all types of domestic and foreign models. He knocked out the supporting frames with a pickaxe and cut the hood with tin snips into pieces for the cow's body.

"The stomach is one whole hood. Some

pieces still have the window washer nozzles," he says. He added a couple old baseballs for eyes and a piece of Lake Erie shipping rope for the tail.

McConnell's 13-year-old helper, Wayne Byler, painted nine coats of driveway sealer over the entire cow. McConnell added the white markings with oil base paint.

The cow has quickly become a popular local attraction.

McConnell says he has "lots of energy" and ideas for even bigger sculptures in the future. He already has detailed plans to make a 116-yard long dragon out of telephone poles.

"If anyone has land that needs a dragon, give me a call," McConnell says.

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Kids Can Climb In Toy Maker's Corrals

The young sons that inspired Jerry Sims to build a toy cattle-doctoring chute, now help Sims design and build toys for others.

"It was the best babysitter ever," Sims recalls about the chute he made out of wood for his sons. "The boys played with it every day."

Sims raises beef cattle for a living, but on the side, he is The Happy Toy Maker of Happy, Texas. All his creations relate to handling cattle and horses. His toy corral and loading chute is large enough (128-in. perimeter) for small children to get inside to play. Corral panels are 8 in. tall, and the adjustable loading chute is 14 in. Made of 3/8-solid steel rod and wire welded, they're practically indestructible and can be easily moved on wooden wheels.

"The loading chute can be personalized with names, brands and short messages," Sims says. "We use a computerized plasma torch to personalize each set to your needs."

Sons Wyatt, 11, and Wesley, 13, set up the computer for the torch as well as help cut metal rods for the corrals. While the corrals are usually personalized with brands, some customers request messages such as "Love, from Grandma." One proud grandpa custom ordered solid panels so he could include each grandchild's name and birthdate.

The corral weighs 52 lbs. and costs \$300

plus shipping. Sims also sells sets that come apart and can be purchased by the panel.

While some customers purchase corrals for display, most purchase them for their children to play with.

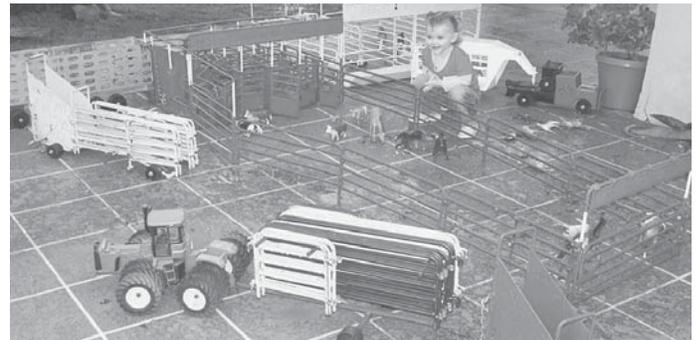
"They'll never break down, unless you run over them with a truck," Sims says. "Your kids will have them for their grandkids."

Check out Sims' website to see his selection of other toys, which includes a round bale trailer that hauls 14 wood round bales; a straight deck cattle trailer; a Quonset barn; a \$50 trailer that stores and hauls the panels for the corral, and many more items.

"The boys are making a half-top trailer with a bullet nose," Sims adds proudly. Sims recently developed a 3 by 7-ft. riding arena complete with a roping box that opens with springs, bucking chutes and a return alley. The arena takes more material and time and is more expensive: Call Sims for current prices.

"I love making toys," he adds. "I've lived in Happy for 44 years. Everybody kids me about being the happy toy maker. I'm kind of like a big kid that never grew up."

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Toy corral and loading chute are large enough for small children to get inside to play.



Made of 3/8-in. steel rod, corral is practically indestructible and can be easily moved on wooden wheels.

Articulated Lawn Tractor

As a retired welder, Maurice J. Peterson demonstrated his love for this type of work by turning two tractors into one articulated machine for his first retirement project.

"I happened to have two old Case lawn tractors with shot engines. I had to figure out something to do with them, so I decided to make an articulated tractor," Peterson explains. "They have hydrostatic drives so it was real easy."

He took off the mower decks before cutting the tractors in half, and removing the front wheels and the bad motors.

"I just hooked the two existing axles in series hydraulically. I bought a new 16 hp Briggs and Stratton engine and mounted

it on the front and above the battery," he points out.

Each set of wheels moves independently from the other, pivoted by a cylinder at the articulation joint.

"It took me a couple of months to build this tractor and I like it a lot. I paid about \$800 for the engine, \$89 for the steering valve, \$139 for the winch, and about \$200 for the hoses and hydraulic reservoir, for a total cost of about \$1,300," Peterson says. "I put 75 pounds of weight on each wheel to give it more traction so it's really nice for pulling logs out of the woods. I have a 6,000-lb. winch on it, and have the original snow blower that I also mount on it in

the winter."

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Peterson turned two old Case lawn tractors into an articulated tractor. Each set of wheels moves independently, pivoted by a cylinder at the articulation joint.

