

Rare White Elk Attract Attention To Farm

Leonard and Diane Witscheber sell elk for meat, but they won't part with any of their rare white elk. The unusual animals do get people's attention, however, and that's good for sales.

"They look like albinos but they're actually a breed known as Siberian elk, with blue eyes and pink inside their ears," explains Diane.

She and her husband currently have around 40 elk; 7 are white Siberians. Initially they added white stock to the farm by artificially inseminating several cows with Siberian elk semen. Then they also bought several purebred Siberians.

"The Siberians have softer hair than the crossbred white elk," notes Witscheber. "All the white elk are a little smaller than the rest of the elk."

Witscheber says the white elk sell at a premium, but it can be hard to find ones for sale. They plan to build their white elk herd numbers before selling any themselves.

The Witschebers bought their first elk

simply because they enjoyed watching them. As they added more, they started looking at them for income as well. Today they sell meat from excess animals through a local farmers market and to others in the local community.

While they keep their best bulls for breeding, high quality bulls are sold as trophy animals through a local hunting preserve. Prices for breeding stock varies significantly depending on the animal, says Witscheber. Trophy animal prices vary according antler shape and size.

"We have sold animals from \$700 to as high as \$6,000," she says.

Another ongoing cost is certification. In order to sell live animals off the farm, they have to be tested for Chronic Wasting Disorder, TB and, if sold out of state, Brucellosis. Witscheber says their farm is completely certified in those respects.

Although the couple is seeing a positive response to their meat sales effort, Witscheber doesn't recommend elk production for



A rare breed but not albinos, Siberian elk have blue eyes and pink inside their ears.

the profit. "If you want to make money, I wouldn't recommend elk," she says. "The market still isn't there for the meat. And there is no market for the antlers either. Fencing is expensive, and you have to respect the fact that elk are wild animals."

"Although they cost us money, we still

love looking at them, and we love the way elk tastes. Plus, it's good for you."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, River Birch Ranch, M179 Balsam Ave., Merrill, Wis. 54452 (ph 715 536-4818; witscheber@airrun.net).

Customized Incinerators Meet Highest Standards

Whether it's disposing of infected animals or pets that have died of natural causes, Larry Lewis has an incinerator to meet the need. Lewis is proud to make the only incinerator that is Environmental Protection Agency approved to dispose of experimental cloned animals. He uses one himself for custom incineration of drugs and drug paraphernalia found by law enforcement.

"We are building one now that will be portable with its own generator system and mounted on an air-ride trailer," says Lewis. "It will be 5 by 5 by 12 ft., big enough to hold two 2,500-lb. bulls."

Most of the incinerators Lewis builds are smaller and intended for pet cremation or for use by large poultry and livestock operations, vet clinics and research labs. Stock models range from a 60 by 37 by 33-in. model that's priced at \$4,595 to a 95 by 37 by 33-in. unit priced at \$6,395. All are fueled by diesel fuel.

Afterburners, which are required for use with animals that have been medicated

or X-rayed, raise the incinerator prices to \$6,995 and \$9,100, respectively. The afterburners eliminate odor and particulates and ensure minimal residue and smoke. They also ensure that maximum temperatures are achieved to meet federal guidelines before emissions are released into the atmosphere.

All units have cad cell eyes that sense the flame. If flame failure occurs during startup or during the run cycle, the unit will shut off within 15 seconds of flame out. This avoids fuel continuing to be pumped into a non-burning chamber.

"All my incinerators will burn at 1,800 to 2,000 degrees, which is hotter than any other incinerator on the market," says Lewis. "The outside temperature reaches only 250 to 300 degrees, so you can re-load during or immediately after the burning process."

The firebrick-lined interior offers longer life for the incinerator, and double-welded seams prevent leaking of fluids. An optional boom makes loading faster and easier.

Lewis says a 600-lb. sow can be reduced

Larry Lewis makes a variety of incinerators, most of them intended for pet cremation or for use by large poultry and livestock operations. All are fueled by diesel fuel.



to two scoop shovels of ashes in a few hours. He estimates that once in operation, the incinerator can dispose of up to 150 lbs. of dead animals per hour.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Larry Lewis Livestock Incinerator, 3045 Snyder Ave., Cedar, Iowa 52543 (ph 641 933-4762 or 800 933-4761).

Tips From A Country Vet

Veterinarian Roy Lewis sees a lot of cattle operations in his travels. Here's a collection of simple, yet effective ideas that save farmers time and money.

Hang a 100 to 250 watt light bulb in an old refrigerator to keep vaccines from freezing. A variety of shelves provides plenty of storage room and the option of positioning a vaccine closer or farther away from the light.

Paint ball guns can be used to mark animals to be pulled for treatment or they can even be used to spur on stragglers. They can also be used as a source of protection with a charging cow, or to break up fighting bulls. Shots can be fired in close succession, colors can be varied, and the final dye is all water-soluble. They can leave welts on people but the effect is minimal on cattle.

A cap with a miner's light attached makes night checking easier and frees up your hands for other things.

To hold the tail out of the way while examining a calving cow, you can use an old booster cable clamp attached to a tarp strap that's tied to the maternity pen. This is especially critical if you're by yourself, and helps keep the cow cleaner. If you inadvertently release the cow before untying the tail, only a few tail hairs are left behind in the booster cable clamp.



A 100 to 250-watt light bulb inside an old refrigerator keeps vaccines from freezing.

If your chute isn't close to a running water supply, a portable hand-pumped garden sprayer is great for cleaning wounds and providing hydrotherapy to swollen areas such as swollen sheaths on bulls. The wand can be directed right onto the problem area.

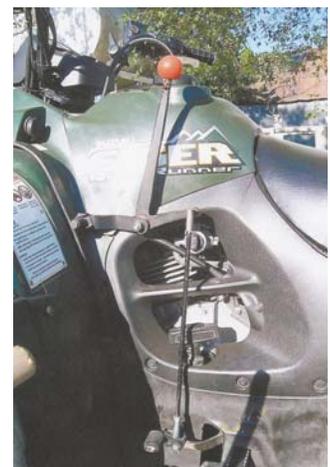
Hand Shifter For Suzuki 4-Wheeler

Edward Eveleigh designed and installed a hand shifter on his 400 Suzuki Eiger 4-wheeler. The Coffeyville, Okla., man has a medical condition called "foot drop" on his left foot which decreases his control of upward motion. He got the idea from shift levers he had seen on Honda 3-wheelers.

Eveleigh U-bolted a 1 by 1/4-in. flat strap to the front rack and bent it to follow the contour of the fender down to the foot pad. He fabricated the shifter out of flat steel and a 3/8-in. rod. Ball joints on the top and bottom of the rod allow the shift to move forward (higher gears) and back (downshift) and keep from binding. A U-shaped metal piece with a couple of bolts attaches the rod to the foot pedal. The lever knob is from an old valve handle.

When the handlebars are straight, the knob is about 6 in. away, so it's easy and safe to operate. Eveleigh notes that the whole thing can be unbolted in a few minutes, and that he didn't have to make any modifications to the 4-wheeler. He figures his design can be easily adapted for other model machines and says he's willing to share his sketches.

"I use the 4-wheeler on the farm all the time to check cattle and for other things," Eveleigh says. He adds that his wife and children use the hand shifter too, even though they can also use the foot shifter.



Shifter fabricated out of 3/8-in. rod connects to ATV's foot pedal.

"Everybody who rides it prefers it," Eveleigh says. "It's kind of like riding an old Harley."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Edward Eveleigh, Rt. 1, Box 377, South Coffeyville, Okla. 74072 (ph 918 255-6329; eveleigh@gmail.com).