

## He Whipped Up A Bull Whip Business

As a kid, Noah Allen was fascinated by the cracking of a bullwhip. He pleaded for one for his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday, but his parents couldn't find one at the time. Now, at age 31, the Oregon carpenter makes his own whips and sells them all over the world.

Making bullwhips is part art and part science. The design of the handle and woven look of the whip are important. But it also has to have good balance that makes it easy to crack the whip without fatiguing a wrist or shoulder.

Allen learned by trial and error—reading what he could find and purchasing a nylon whip to tear apart.

"I started making them out of leather and threw away five or six full cowhides," Allen says. He explains that hides have different thicknesses and he didn't have a leather splitter to make the leather even, which is important for bullwhips.

He switched to nylon (Paracord) and improved his skills over the past four years. Last year he started selling them through his business, Diamond Whip Company. His website includes a video endorsement by Robert Amper, an expert whip trainer. He compliments Allen on the balance and cracking ease of his whips as well as his use of brass or silver ferrules that add beauty to them. Allen is the first

to do that, Amper says.

"I also use a true shot bag (with No. 8 birdshot) instead of BBs to weight the core of the whip so I am able to taper the core to give it a more uniform look from heel to point. I also added a second shot bag in the light end of the whip," Allen says, explaining the differences in his style compared to other whip makers.

He buys exotic wood for the handles and quality material. Prices start at \$160 for a 6-ft. bullwhip and can go up to \$400 for custom designs with ferrules. He also sells stock whips and cow whips starting at \$125. Buyers can choose from a variety of colors.

Customers for his whips have included soldiers in Afghanistan, working cowboys, bullwhip performers and folks who just like to crack a whip. He recommends beginner adults start out with a 7-ft. whip, and he guides customers through the process of ordering.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Noah Allen, Diamond Whip Company (ph 541 570-2958; [www.diamondwhipcompany.com](http://www.diamondwhipcompany.com)).

**Making bull whips is part art and part science, says Allen. The design of the handle and woven look of the whip are important.**



Noah Allen sells his bull whips all over the world.



## Make Money Selling "Unique" Animals To Ripley's

When Paul Brown discovered a stillborn, deformed pig in January, at first he was going to take it to the compost pile. Instead, the pig will be seen by thousands of people in one or more of Ripley's Believe It or Not! museums located around the world.

When Brown realized the pig had two rear ends and eight legs, he showed it to his wife, Andrea, and she emailed photos of it to their son. He suggested contacting Ripley's.

Andrea went online, clicked on "Need to Contact Us" and filled out a form. "In less than an hour I got a response," she recalls, and Ripley's wanted to know their asking price.

With suggestions from \$20 to \$500, she decided on \$250, and was surprised when it was accepted right away. She was told

to put the pig in the freezer and wait for packaging to mail it. The check arrived before the packaging, which came shortly after along with several cold packs.

"We try to only spend \$200 for carcasses," says Ed Meyer, vice president of Ripley's exhibits and archives. "It's a standard offer."

Ripley's is taking a risk on the condition and has the further expense of taxidermy costs by a New York company willing to work with challenging items.

"This is the fourth eight-legged pig we've bought," Meyer says. With 32 museums (including a new one opening in Baltimore June 1), Ripley's continuously adds items to its inventory—including animal oddities.

The Browns' pig will likely be with the taxidermist for about 6 mos., then shipped to a warehouse. In May, 2013 it will be available

for museums to select for that year's displays.

"It could be on display at the museum in Branson or as far away as Australia," Meyer says.

People who have animals or items they think may be suitable for Ripley's can contact them through their website, he adds. It's important to preserve items by freezing. While Ripley's purchases some taxidermy items, they prefer animals in their natural state, because they know they are authentic.

"Ripley's paid for everything. They were wonderful to work with," Brown says.

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Paul Brown's stillborn, deformed pig has 2 rear ends and 8 legs.

## Llama Shearing A Good Side Income Job

"We started raising sheep and llamas about 20 years ago when our kids were in 4-H and FFA. We got pretty good at shearing the show lambs and our own llamas. It grew into a business from there," says Don Dipprey of Comstock, Wis. "This year I'll have about 30 to 35 llama-shearing customers in Wisconsin and Minnesota, most of them repeat business." Dipprey and his daughter Lisa also trim llama toenails to keep their feet healthy.

Dipprey says shearing llamas is different than shearing sheep, where all of the wool is removed from the animals. "We start by blowing the dust and chaff from the animal's coats. With llamas, there are different cuts that people want depending on how much hair they want to harvest and show requirements."

Shearing works best with two people, special clippers and a holding crate, Dipprey says. "My daughter Lisa has learned how to shear and trim feet so well that I jokingly say that I am now her right hand man." The Dippreys use a special

shears called a skip tooth plucking blade. It leaves about a half inch of hair on the animal, which protects them against sunburn. "If they were sheared right to the skin they'd fry in the sun and get eaten by flies," Dipprey says. Shearing is an annual job, done usually from April to June. They also do touch up-shearing for shows during the fair season.

"Shearing has been a great experience for me and my family," Dipprey says. "I've met a lot of wonderful people, and we've worked with many types of llamas. I've always said I've never met a llama owner I didn't like." Most of their customers are small farm hobbyists who have 2 to 8 animals.

Dipprey says the market for llama hair isn't as good as years ago, but the animals still need to be sheared every year to keep cool. Their services cost \$27 for a barrel cut with additional charges for other trims. The nude is \$47 because of the extra time required and the wear and tear on blades. Most of their work is done on the owners' farms, so they often travel several hundred miles a weekend to different farms.



**Don Dipprey and daughter Lisa make extra income shearing llamas for more than 30 customers. They use a special crate to hold the animals, which weigh 100 to 400 lbs.**

Dipprey says the animals can sometimes be skittish and nervous when he and his daughter show up. "We're strangers to them, so it's best if the owners who know and work with them are there to help us. I've seldom been kicked in 20 years, but I have been bounced around," Dipprey says. They shear small yearlings that

weigh about 100 lbs. up to older males that weigh more than 400 lbs.

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