



Certified bird trainer Kenny Coogan says chickens can be trained to do a variety of tricks.

How To Train A Barnyard Chicken

Teaching your barnyard chickens “tricks” may be low priority on your list, until you consider how handy it would be if they would willingly step into your hand. That would make it easier to check out any health issues or to move birds to another location.

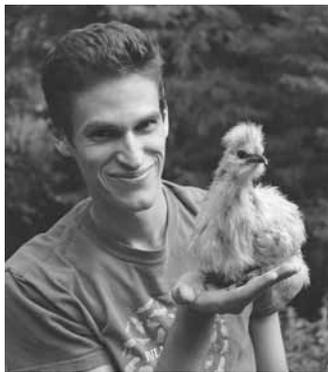
Certified bird trainer Kenny Coogan, of Tampa, Fla., says chickens can be trained to do a variety of useful behaviors - as well as entertaining tricks.

“I haven’t found any breeds that are easier or harder to train,” he says. “I train my eight chickens like I train other animals, using positive reinforcement and patience. When they do something that I ask, I give them a small food reward such as a piece of popped popcorn, minced fruit, vegetables or cracked corn.”

Start with a small treat in your hand and wait for the chicken to approach and eat it, he explains. Then switch hands so it has to walk further. Walk away and repeat until the chicken follows you around. Then place the treat in one hand and place your empty hand in front of it so the chicken has to step on your hand to get to the food. After a few repetitions, slowly raise the chicken up in your hand as it eats from the other hand.

“A few more repetitions and soon I can carry them around giving them treats,” Coogan says.

With a B.S. in animal behavior and as a certified bird trainer through the International Avian Trainers Certification Board (www.iatcb.com), Coogan has worked with animals since he was a child. He emphasizes he doesn’t use coercion for training.



“I haven’t found any breeds that are easier or harder to train,” he says.

“I don’t want my chickens to be fearful of me or new situations,” he says. “Training young chickens may have an advantage, in that they may not be as skittish to new experiences.”

“The most impressive behavior I have trained was to get chickens to jump on a fence railing, down a ramp, over a stump and into a kennel,” Coogan says. He uses treats on stations to train chickens to move through the course.

For more information, check out Coogan’s Facebook page “Critter Companions.” He also writes a weekly pet column, “Critter Companions,” and has written a children’s book.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kenny Coogan (Kenny.coogan@yahoo.com).

Prices Go Up When Pigs Take A Dive

If you happen to be looking for a combination of entertainment *and* lean pork, you might want to follow the example of some Chinese pork farmers. Teach your pigs to dive.

It’s for real. Just search online for diving pigs, and you’ll find stories and videos.

Huang Demin of the Hunan province, claims his pigs are happier, healthier and leaner than pigs that don’t dive at least 3 times a day. And, he says, he gets more money for them in the meat market.

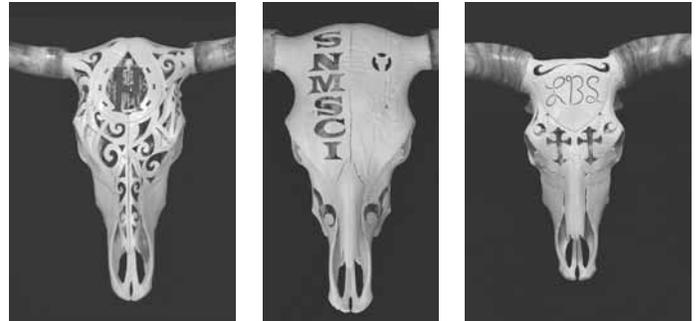
According to internet articles, it takes about 4 months to train pigs to enjoy taking the swine dive. One report notes that pigs must work for their supper - an hour of exercise and 2,000 steps (measured with a pedometer).

If you visit China, you may have a chance to see the pork belly flop for yourself. Diving pigs have turned into a tourist attraction at several locations, including the recreational park in Donglu, near Wenchang City.

If you prefer to watch it from the comfort of your home, check out the video at www.farmshow.com.



Some Chinese pork farmers teach their pigs to dive, claiming it results in happier, healthier and leaner animals.



Justin Levario carves designs into skulls. “I’ll carve on any livestock or wildlife skull, including Longhorns,” he says.

“Skull Art” Created By Western Artist

Justin Levario discovered his artistic media, when he saw his first carved deer skull. Since October 2013, the artist has been honing his skills in bone to create affordable pieces for clients.

Buffalo, red stag, Alaskan bear and cow skulls. Levario says he’ll work on any skull and has even carved on skulls as small as sheep and badgers. Prices range from \$75 to \$175 for pre-cleaned skulls and from \$150 to \$250 for skulls that need to be boiled and cleaned before carving.

From logos and ranch brands to collages of animal heads, Levario creates designs that clients request. After getting their approval, he carefully carves the skull with a rotary tool, then finishes it with a spray acrylic and occasionally acrylic paint.

“It’s pretty intense,” he says. “This is a

trophy. You can’t get too rough with the bone; it will break.”

Levario, a full-time oilfield worker, carves during his free time.

“I’ll carve on any livestock or wildlife skull,” he says. “I can also provide some Longhorn skulls.”

He’s eager for new challenges and open to all design ideas. Because he works full time, he notes that turn around time is usually 4 to 6 months.

“I’m just a small time country boy,” Levario says. “I’m hoping this little business can get me out of the oilfield.”

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Flywheel Tree Trunk Display

Bob Crowell is a great friend to FARM SHOW, promoting the magazine at antique tractor shows across the Midwest.

Last summer he took pics of a big tree trunk grown into a pair of giant flywheels. He saw the unusual display at a show in Greensburg, Ind.

“The flywheels came off a 25 hp. Superior Oil Field engine and had been sitting in a field not far from where I worked for an oil company in the 1970’s,” says Goble Rogers of Ravenna, Ky., about his eye-catching tree trunk display.

The flywheels had evidently been scrapped and left in the field as a remembrance of days gone by. Goble cut the tree off above and below the shaft running between the wheels and through the tree trunk. Then he had a friend build a special custom-built trailer so Goble could take the exhibit to shows and pull it in parades. “We can’t believe all the looks we get when we take this display down the interstate on our way to shows,” he says. When he cut the tree, it had 86 annual rings.



Eye-catching tree trunk grew into a pair of giant flywheels off an old Oil Field engine.

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