

Editor's Notebook



Mark Newhall
Editor &
Publisher

Monarchs Are Their Mission

The Monarch butterfly population has declined an alarming 80 percent since the early 1990's, in part because their main food source – the milkweed plant – has become scarce. That fact led to a life mission for Minnesotans Ward and Ann Johnson who have given away thousands of packages of milkweed seed purchased with their own money.

At 73, Johnson admits that he and

his wife are passionate about saving monarchs. Many people do not know, he says, that the delicate insects migrate more than 2,000 miles every year from across the United States and Canada down to Mexico. "The fact that monarchs travel so far every year is magic to me," says Johnson.

Monarchs lay eggs on the back side of milkweed leaves. The caterpillars hatch and eat 20 to 25 leaves before they grow big enough to create a cocoon and later emerge as a butterfly.

If you send a self-addressed stamped envelope to the Johnsons, you'll get up to 3 free packages of milkweed seeds you can plant. For a \$25 donation to their "Save Our Monarchs Foundation", you'll receive as many as 100 packages of 30 to 35 seeds. Couples interested in unique guest favors at a wedding can get a bulk discount.

During the first year of operation, the Johnsons and other volunteers distributed more than 500,000 packets of seeds to people in 48 states.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ward and Ann Johnson, Save Our Monarchs Foundation, P.O. Box 390135, Minneapolis, Minn. 55439 (ph 952 829-0600; www.saveourmonarchs.org; info@saveourmonarchs.org).



Big screen on back of semi trailer broadcasts the view from in front of the truck.

"See-Through" Semi Trucks

Passing big trucks on 2-lane roads may get a lot safer if this idea from Samsung catches on. A camera on front of a truck films the road ahead and feeds the picture to a big screen monitor on the back of the trailer. Cars following behind can check the monitor before venturing out into the passing lane.

Samsung has successfully tested the idea in Argentina - where nearly one person per hour dies in a traffic accident on that country's badly congested roads - and is working with governments around the world to meet road safety rules and regulations with the new system.

Ever Had A \$75 Steak?

Sometimes as publisher of FARM SHOW, I have to make tough executive decisions. Such was the case recently when I read the story in this issue (page 6) about Akaushi beef from Japan. Proponents of the "new" range-fed cattle not only tout the heart-healthy benefits of the meat, they also claim it's the best-tasting beef in the world. I'm not one to let a claim like that go untested so I decided I had to do a taste test.

The problem is these animals are still rare in this country so a single ribeye steak sells for \$50 - plus \$25 overnight shipping from Texas. As I placed the order online, I figured out that maybe what makes this meat good for your heart is the price because my heart was racing. It wasn't easy for this farm boy to pay \$75 for a single steak.

It arrived in Minnesota the next day, packed with ice in a small cooler (see photo). It certainly didn't look like much in the box but that night, after about 10 minutes on a very hot grill, I took my first bite and realized it was really something special. The meat was well-marbled, very tender, and absolutely the best steak I've ever tasted. Melt-in-your-mouth good! I don't know if Akaushi beef is really better for your health than any other beef, but it tastes really, really good. If they can ever get the price down, I hope to have more of it.



Steak arrived overnight in a FedEx cooler, packed in ice.



Ward and Ann Johnson have made the survival of monarch butterflies their life's work.

Cow Skull Bird House

Ten years ago I hung an old cow skull on a steel wheel in front of a farm shed as a Halloween decoration. I left it there over winter. The following spring, when my wife said, "The skull has to go", I had to tell her, "Absolutely not. There's a wren making her nest in there and we're going to see if she can raise a family."

A few weeks went by and sure enough, 3 baby wrens hatched. A few weeks later they flew off into the woods. I haven't moved the skull since then because every year there's a wren who uses it. The sliding door for the shed goes behind the skull so when I open it, the wrens fly away. But they quickly return.

Our neighbors have 2 cats who watch the skull from a distance when they hear the baby birds, but they've never tried to get inside, even though the skull hangs just 3 ft. off the ground. As of May, 2015, another wren is calling it home.

Lorn Manthey, Contributing Editor



When Manthey hung this bleached skull on an old steel wheel, he never thought it would become a popular bird house.

Liberty Quotes

"God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it." *Daniel Webster*

"You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom. You can only be free if I am free." *Clarence Darrow*

"Liberty is the only thing you cannot have unless you are willing to give it to others." *William Allen White*

"Give to every human being every right that you claim for yourself." *Robert G. Ingersoll*

"The U.S. Constitution is not neutral. It was designed to take the government off the backs of people." *Justice William O. Douglas*

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing; it was here first." *Mark Twain*

"Parties who want milk should not seat themselves on a stool in the middle of a field in hope that a cow will back up to them." *Elbert Hubbard*

"When government accepts responsibility for people, the people no longer take responsibility for themselves." *George Patakai*

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world." *Anne Frank*

"No man is great enough or wise enough for any of us to surrender our destiny to. The only way in which anyone can lead us is to restore our belief in our own guidance." *Henry Miller*

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Any questions? Email me: mark@farmshow.com.

Deep Thoughts

- The other night I was confused all night. I couldn't figure out where the sun went. Then it dawned on me.
- One time I had to go to a funeral at 6 a.m. I shouldn't have been there. I'm not a mourning person.
- Sometimes the thoughts in my head get bored and go out for a stroll - out through my mouth. This is never a good thing.

The Pledge

Every summer my son, Kevin, and I put up a 3-wire electric fence around our sweet corn patch to keep out raccoons. The job is hot and sweaty because it's in an area with very little breeze.

Every year we swear that it's not worth all that work just to protect a patch of corn, even though we love the corn - whether on the cob, frozen or giving it to friends. So 3 years ago we finally drew up an informal agreement that we called "The Pledge". It stated that we would never, never, never raise sweet corn again. We added the third "never" because I had just backed into a hot wire. But every spring at corn planting time, we seem to forget about "The Pledge" and start planting sweet corn again. And then we set up posts, unroll wire, and attach insulators in spite of the heat and mosquitoes.

Maybe next year we'll honor our agreement and start buying sweet corn in town. But sometimes I wonder if the corn would taste as good without the sweat and hard work.

Rex Gogerty, Hubbard, Iowa

Ole and Sven went fishing during opening weekend and decided to rent a boat from a resort instead of fishing from shore. They had tremendous luck, catching fish after fish all day long.

Ole says to Sven, "I vish ve could mark dis spot. It's da best fishing I'f had since I vas a boy."

Sven replied, "No problem. I got some chalk in da tackle box so why don't I put a 'X' on da bottom ov da bot?"

"You dummy!" said Ole. "Vhat if we don't get da same bot next time?"

One day Sven saw Ole walking down the street, obviously depressed. "Ever since vee got married, my wife has tried ta change me," Ole said. "She got me ta stop drinking, smoking and runnink around all of da night. She learned me how to dress vell, how ta cook good, and I even took da class on how to invest in da stock market."

Sven says, "Vhat's da problem? Are yew mad dat she changt yew so much?"

"No, dat's not it," said Ole. "Now dat I'm so improved, she just ain't good enuff for me!"

Lena asked Ole, "Could yew please go shopping fur me and buy one carton ov milk and, if dey haf peaches, get six of dem."

A short time later Ole came back with six cartons of milk. Lena asked him, "Vhy did yew buy six cartons ov milk?"

Ole, replied, "Vell, because dey had peaches!"