

Grass-Fed Corriente Cattle Perform Well

Iowa farmers Rick Schlutz and his son, Marshal, operate Yoke S Ranch near Russell, Iowa, a profitable beef operation raising the rare Corriente breed that thrives on grass but doesn't do well on grain.

Corriente cattle are in high demand at rodeos for team roping and steer wrestling competitions and for training cutting horses and cow dogs. The Schlutzes got their start in the late 1990's when they bought a registered Corriente heifer and three registered cows.

Today they maintain a herd of 100 Corriente cows and about a quarter of each year's yearlings are leased to team ropers and rodeos around the Midwest.

Corriente cattle can be traced back to the first cattle brought to the new world by Spanish explorers as early as 1493. They're a smaller breed, with cows topping out at about 900 lbs. "The Corriente breed is noted for its gentle disposition and great athleticism. Both my son and I competed in team roping so when Marshal returned from college, we decided we should raise the breed we had become familiar with from our roping experience," Rick says.

Their herd is grass-fed year-round on 250 acres of pasture, divided into four paddocks separated by high-tensile electric fence. The only additional nutrition the herd receives is 1 lb./head/day of dried distillers grain and soybean hulls. Rick says the grain mix is fed primarily as a means of "enticement" to move the cattle where you want to work or move them.

In addition to selling cattle to rodeos, the Schlutzes butcher about 30 head per year and sell the meat as Certified Corriente Beef through the Iowa Food Cooperative and to individuals through their website and word of mouth. "Corriente beef is 92 percent lean and low in cholesterol, on a par



Corriente cattle look somewhat like Longhorns, but are smaller with shorter horns. They produce exceptional meat quality on grass.

with bison meat and much lower than beef or pork in fat and cholesterol," Rick says.

Another benefit the Schlutz family discovered about the Corriente breed is that the best-tasting meat comes from animals that are at least 3 or 4 years old. "It's a common misconception that meat can't be tender in older animals. We've butchered at 17 years old, and the meat from these older grass-fed cattle is still tender and tasty," Rick says.

"If I couldn't have Corriente cows, I wouldn't have cows at all," he adds. "We've calved more than 1,000 calves and never had to pull a calf. The calves are only 25 pounds when they're born and we just don't have a problem with birthing."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Yoke S Ranch, 41610 270th Ave., Russell, Iowa 50238 (ph 641 535-2483; www.yokesranch.com).

Online Business Specializes In Miscellaneous Old Parts

You can sell just about anything online if you have a good picture.

For example, if you need an electrical relay, a crank for a Ford Model A, or maybe you're looking for an antique hay trolley for a collection, NPS Industrial Surplus may have it listed.

Owners Jason and Kimberly Salisbury, Nicollet, Minn., will also help you sell your old stuff. They list items on eBay and sell through online auctions on a commission basis.

"We're pretty much selling anything mechanical. We don't do a lot of the typical household or estate items. We have a following that looks to us for outdated, obsolete parts," says Kimberly Salisbury. "We sell a lot of electrical panels and enclosures - one was over 500 lbs. and took up a whole pallet. We have electrical relays, circuit breakers, and oodles of appliance parts for washers, dryers, microwaves, and refrigerators. Things that help people fix older equipment they don't want to replace. We also have lots of implement and tractor parts manuals and catalogs and some John Deere parts for older tractors."

The freelance graphic artist spends much of her time photographing items for sale. NPS often has more than 3,000 active eBay listings in addition to their online auctions. Typically they store everything in their 3,600 sq. ft. warehouse, but larger items remain at the owner's property until sold, such as a sawmill they recently auctioned.

The couple added the online auction services in April 2019, and have found a big demand.

"Typically we work with retirees who are downsizing or older folks who want to clean up their farm sites or estates. Or with kids cleaning up their parents' estates," Salisbury says.

To tap into a larger market of potential customers, NPS is part of K-Bid, which offers bidding software and exposure to more than



Jason and Kimberly Salisbury sell a wide range of outdated, obsolete parts on eBay and other online auctions.

300,000 bidders.

The couple owns a semi with a 48-ft. trailer to pick up items over a wide area.

Once the photos are taken, an online auction runs for at least 2 weeks. Customers have a few days to arrange for items to be picked up or shipped to them. Typically it takes 6 to 8 weeks from the beginning of the process to when clients receive checks for their sold items. NPS consignment fees average between 8 and 25 percent depending on the value of items being sold.

Salisbury notes that some online auction companies tack on fees for mileage, photos, etc., but the NPS commission covers everything. She invites people with questions to call about NPS's auction and eBay services and to check out their website or Facebook page.

"We like to give people a good deal," Salisbury says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jason and Kimberly Salisbury, NPS Industrial Surplus, 340 Ash St., Nicollet, Minn. 56074 (ph 507 720-8089; www.surplusmn.com; auctions@surplusmn.com; Facebook: NPS industrial).

Pedal Tractor Pulling Expert Says More Operators Needed

When he built his first pedal tractor puller and sled as a favor for a relative for a small town celebration, Bill VanDeCreek had no idea it would lead to building and selling pullers and sleds and putting on many events a year. Thirty-seven years later, pedal pulling is as popular as ever, he says, and many areas - at least in Kansas - need more people to get into the business of staging pulls. It can be a nice sideline business, he says.

Tractor pulling - the full-size version - was VanDeCreek's passion as a young adult. But when his son was ready for college, he sold his hot rod tractor. However, his experience and knowledge set him up perfectly for the less expensive sport of pedal pulling. After building a tractor and sled, he ran a pull at a Hope, Kansas, event. Soon other communities contacted him.

"Six years later we were doing 40 some pulls, and later, with my wife (now deceased), we were up to 65 pulls a year," VanDeCreek says, noting that he put on pulls for two generations, first the parents when they were young and later for their children.

Though he sold his event business in 2014 to Mark and Kathy Whitesell of Bennington, Kansas, he continues to build a couple of tractors a year to sell.

"There's a lot of difference between a plain pedal tractor and a puller," he emphasizes. VanDeCreek builds everything starting with a frame made of 1/4-in. aluminum plate. He mills the pedal arms out of 5/8-in. steel so they won't bend or break.

"I design them so the rear wheels are locked together, and I make them so the front end is heavy. That's what makes them run straight. The child sits in front of the rear axle to keep the front end down," he says.

To make pulling a successful, fun experience for kids he makes 4 sizes of tractors for ages from 4 to 12.

"The one for 10 to 12-year-olds is twice as long. We call those stretch tractors," he says. "Seats are completely adjustable - even for adults." He also uses different gear ratios for the different sizes.

His aluminum sleds are designed to give the young competitors success.

"I like them because they are more versatile. I can put the weight where I want to put it," he says, noting he has weights from 20 to 350 lbs. He also has different pads for the front of the sled that he uses depending on the surface - rubber on concrete, and aluminum on sand, for example.

These days, the retired John Deere service manager is president of both the Kansas and National Pedal Pulling Associations and he



Bill VanDeCreek builds 4 sizes of pedal tractor pullers for kids from 4 to 12 years old. "The one for 10 to 12-year-olds is twice as long," he says.

stages a couple of events each year himself. He also sells his tractors to others who run their own businesses, staging events at fairs and town celebrations.

While he is partial to John Deere, he has made a variety of pedal pullers such as Massey Harris, Oliver and IH. Contact him for more information.

And if you happen to be at a Kansas

pedal pull, it's easy to spot an original VanDeCreek. He places a penny in the center of the steering wheel. The date on the penny is the year he built the tractor.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill VanDeCreek, 115 Westwood Dr., Abilene, Kansas 67410 (ph 785 263-2333; bvd@eaglecom.net).