

# World's Most Expensive Feathers

When it comes to staying warm, people in northern climates often choose goose down. But for folks who want something even warmer, there's nothing better than eiderdown. The feathers from the Eider polar duck are the world's warmest and the most expensive at about \$5,000 for 800 grams on the international market.

The cost is so high because it is labor-intensive to harvest and process. Most of the world's eiderdown comes from Iceland, where the ducks cannot be hunted. Instead, "farmers" protect the nesting birds on the country's 150 islands and harvest the down that the birds shed and use to line their nests.

People go to great lengths to protect their wild flocks that are hidden in grass and rocks or that gather in large groups. They put up fences, flags and things to make noise to keep foxes and other predators away from the nests. Some take small portions of the down when eggs are in the nests, others wait until the chicks have hatched and left. Each nest has about 15 grams of down.

That's just the beginning of the process. The down is baked at 248 degrees for 8 hrs. or more to dry the debris to make it easier to pick out. Then it's washed, pressed and dried, and after it's officially inspected and certified, the eiderdown is ready to be stuffed



Feathers from the Eider polar duck are the warmest in the world.

in pillows, duvets and comforters. Though lightweight, soft and fluffy, the down has small barbs that trap air and it is dense and strong for excellent insulation.

To learn more about eiderdown and the Eider polar duck, check out these YouTube videos: "Why Icelandic Eiderdown is so expensive" and "Icelandic Eiderdown – Quality of Nature".

And, if you have lots of extra money on hand to invest in a high-quality, lifetime heirloom, [www.eiderdowncomforters.com](http://www.eiderdowncomforters.com) is one online store. Baby comforters start at \$950 and a king size once will set you back \$7,250.

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## Artist Sculpts Realistic Livestock Replicas

Carol Herden has transformed a passion for livestock into a thriving sculpture business. Having grown up on a working ranch in Montana, Herden has intimate knowledge of different cattle breeds and a passion for crafting them from clay, bronze, and other mediums.

"As a kid, I collected the Breyer model horses. My mom said she could not afford my habit, so I needed to figure out how to make them myself," Herden says.

"I was always drawing and creating things, so she bought me clay when I was around eight years old. I've been sculpting from that point on."

Today, Herden's artistic services include livestock trophy awards, custom sculpture or 3D color portraits, large or life-sized sculptures, metal fabrication and laser engraving.

Each sculpture is an original piece of art. Using photos submitted by the buyer, Herden sculpts the animal's likeness out of clay. "I start with a wire frame, add clay until I get the size and shape desired, and then start fine-tuning," she shares. This process takes hours, and the buyer's input is always welcome.

"Once I get the sculpture to an almost finished state, I then involve the people by sending them photos. I can't know everything about every breed, so I rely on people to direct me so that I capture the essence of their breed correctly."

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Alternatively, customers can purchase breed color 3D portraits, also known as off-the-shelf sculptures. With these, Herden paints a pre-made sculpture to match your animal's likeness based on pictures you share. Before casting, it's possible to modify minor details of the model to improve the resemblance, such as adding horns or notching ears. This streamlined process makes each sculpture more cost-effective, making the 3D portraits her most popular option for general collectors.

Prices vary for Herden's art, but they start around \$75 for the 3D portraits and \$1,800 for original sculptures. "My biggest market right now is Livestock Awards," she says. "The advertising is mostly word of mouth through the shows or people that I have done work for."

Besides her website, you can find Herden's artwork at her storefront, Chasing Fauna, in Amboy, Minn.

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Made using parts from old cars, tractors and other equipment, "Doodlebugs" like this one built by Forrest Spaulding were everyday work vehicles during WWII and years after.

## "Doodlebug" Built From Spare Parts

New York restoration aficionado Forrest Spaulding says he and others in his area are trying to keep the history and heritage of unique vehicles alive, so that's why he built his own "Doodlebug" from used parts. Doodlebug is the nickname for homemade tractors that were assembled during World War II from miscellaneous auto parts. In upstate N.Y. and New England there are several clubs devoted to building them, and in some areas, running them in pulling events, parades and having special shows.

Spaulding says to build his he used the frame, cowl, rear end, lights and spoked wheels from a 1928 AA Ford truck and the front axles from an early 1930's Ford AA. He cut down the front wheels and mounted 17.5-in. tubeless Chevrolet pickup rims. The engine, grill and radiator are from an Allis Chalmers WD tractor, and the transmission is from an Allis WC. The vehicle's box is from a 1950 Chevy pickup, the seat is from a buckboard wagon and operator controls are from the original Ford truck. Two cream cans with metal tractor seats on top provide passenger seating in the rear.

Spaulding says Doodlebugs got their name from an aftermarket tractor kit made by the David Bradley company. They also went

by other names such as Friday Tractors, Scrambolas, Jitterbugs and Field Crawlers.

Spaulding says assembling the tractor required a fair amount of bending, twisting and lengthening. The hood, which is glazed up with the addition of chrome strips from a 1953 Ford, was re-formed by bending sheet metal around a 3-in. pipe. Old fenders bought at a flea market were formed and bent to cover the rear wheels. The frame was lengthened 10 1/2 in. to accommodate the AC engine.

Spaulding welded a battery case on the frame between the front wheels and changed the charging system from 6 to 12-volts. The extra power required a resistor in the ignition, new bulbs for the headlights and a reinforced cover on the back of the starter. An electric fuel pump, a special elbow to route the exhaust out behind the vehicle rather than under the hood and 750/20 tractor tires rounded out the build.

Spaulding topped his vehicle with a bright blue and orange two-color paint job and named it "Allis Ford". He says it was a fun project using a pile of old parts to build a vehicle that isn't fancy but runs well and is fun to use.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Forrest Spaulding, Upstate New York.

## Horse Trailer Converted To A Sauna

Crister Brunnegard and his wife Maria were watching a TV show about a guy who built a sauna on a small trailer and decided they could do that with their old horse trailer.

The couple, along with their three sons, live in Vargarda, Sweden. They started the project by sketching the sauna they had in mind. They cut off the main structure of the old horse trailer, then built a new floor that didn't interfere with the wheels. New walls and a ceiling followed, along with three windows, a stove and chimney. The inside was finished with interior paneling.

The finished sauna measures 11 1/2 by 7 ft. and can accommodate six people comfortably. Brunnegard says they built over-and-under benches that can also be used as a bed during summer nights. The project was completed over two months and cost about \$3,000 for materials including wood, the stove, a chimney and windows. Brunnegard used his four-wheeler to pull the sauna next to their lakefront home, with the windows overlooking the lake's rocky shoreline.

"I could probably pull the sauna to other locations, but we prefer that friends come here to use it when we're not using it ourselves. It's an ideal location."

Brunnegard says saunas are quite common in Sweden, "especially if you can put them on the shore of a lake or river, or at a scenic spot in the country."



The completed sauna is parked on Brunnegard's property with windows overlooking the lake.

The couple operates Saxentours, a private travel company that specializes in guiding Americans with Swedish roots around Sweden, learning about where their Swedish ancestors once lived in Sweden. They also lead tours to the U.S. for Swedish farmers to learn about U.S. agriculture and for other guests who are curious about where Swedish emigrants settled in the U.S. during the mid-to-late 1800's.

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