



Restored to its original condition, the Case roller is a big attraction at the Alexander Steam Show in western N.Y.

Century-Old Case Steam Roller Restored

When Fran and Brad Vosburg first saw an old, restored steam roller 20 years ago it was “love at first sight”. They later found one that they could restore themselves and dove headlong into the tedious restoration process.

The makeover took 7 years to complete, and Brad says they probably spent more than \$25,000 in the process. They now have it insured for \$50,000.

“Our family has been associated with steam equipment for three generations and

we’ve restored steam and gas engines, threshing machines and water wagons, so we knew the hard work it would take,” Brad says.

The Vosburgs began by checking the health of the machine’s boiler, using ultrasound. They learned the boiler was repairable, so they sent it to Stutzman’s boiler shop in Ohio. The shop repaired the bottom flue sheet, built a new smokebox, and installed a front cylinder bracket.

“The boiler had to be completely re-

plumbed using schedule 80 pipe and high-pressure valves, which was difficult and time-consuming work,” Brad says. They were fortunate to find copies of original blueprints for Case steam engines to guide them along. “Prints for the platform and coal bunkers, for the steering, and canopy were especially helpful,” Brad says.

The original motor was missing, so the Vosburgs searched far and wide and finally located a replacement from another Case roller with a poor boiler. Fran says then it was a matter of removing rusty parts, cleaning them, and labeling everything so they could put it back together.

The most difficult portion of the overhaul was finding parts for the machine’s power steering. “These parts were either broken or missing, so we had to make and cast them,” says Brad. They were able to locate the oil pump, governors and injectors.

With everything back together they painted and detailed the old roller and made plans to display it. For the past two years, it’s been a key attraction at the Alexander Steam Show



Brad and Fran Vosburg on their restored Case roller, which is painted, detailed and even has its original Builder’s Plate.

in western New York.

After their 7-year labor of love, the Vosburgs say they don’t plan to pick up another restoration project anytime soon. They want time to enjoy this one, and Fran says, “We’re not in shape for that kind of work anymore.”

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Livestock Guardian Dogs work to protect sheep from wolves and other predators.

Expert Searches Out Best Livestock Guard Dogs

Janet McNally has worked with livestock guardian dogs (LGD) almost as long as she has worked with sheep, long enough to know breed alone doesn’t matter.

“It’s hard to find a good livestock guardian dog, no matter what breed you’re looking for,” says McNally. “There are working dogs and show dogs. Most of the dogs you find for sale online are bred for show or for pets.”

McNally raises sheep in predator-heavy northeastern Minnesota. Her sheep face coyote and wolf pressure regularly, with an occasional bear. For her, breed experience with wolves is vital. The breed needs to come from areas of the world where wolves are common. However, that’s just a starting point for McNally.

“It only takes a few generations of selecting for purposes other than predator control, and you have traits that don’t work well with sheep,” she says. “Even some breeds that were developed as livestock guardian dogs haven’t seen a wolf in 50 years.”

The tendency of breeding for show dogs to emphasize size and height of LGDs adds to

the complexity. Getting more height usually means straightening out the hindquarters, and that can cause hip problems.

“You have to be picky about the dog’s physical structure,” says McNally.

McNally searches out breeds and bloodlines within those breeds that are true working dogs, crossing them to get an LGD that fits her operation. She likes the Spanish Mastiff, noting that it’s popular in areas in Europe, like Norway and Sweden, where grazing land is shared with the public.

“It’s a breed that’s gentle with livestock and safe around people, but with enough aggression to stand up to wolves,” says McNally. “Other breeds can be more aggressive to the point of being dangerous to the public.”

“The Spanish Mastiff and the Maremma stay tight to the sheep, which I like,” says McNally. “I’ve had some that will go a short distance to face off against a predator.”

“I’ve been trying the Central Asian Shepherd,” she adds. “However, I’ve been having more dog fight problems with them

in the mix. The Spanish Mastiff tends to get along.”

She feels her Spanish Mastiff bloodlines are getting thin but notes that it’s very expensive to import dogs now. At one time, she explains, she could go to an area, buy a few puppies from herders who deal with predators and ship them home. Rules changed to prevent puppy mills from importing dogs by the plane load.

Now the dogs must be at least 5 mos. old to get rabies shots. That means they must have been fostered with a flock of sheep (to bond) in their home country after weaning. All that adds to the cost.

“There are Spanish Mastiffs in the U.S., but most are show dog types bred for excessive height and wrinkled skin,” says McNally. “To go to Spain today and spend several weeks driving around to find good dogs and bring back six pups would likely cost me around \$27,000.”

Over her 30+ years of dealing with predators, she’s seen conditions change dramatically. “In the 1960’s and 1970’s, predator pressure was at an all-time low,” says McNally. “Predator populations began

building in the 1980’s and took off in the 1990’s. Our management had to change with it.”

Since 1999 she’s only lost a few head to coyotes or wolves. Where she once kept a single dog with smaller flocks of sheep, she now keeps as many as four dogs with a single larger flock with two more dogs with ram flocks or hospital groups.

“I always recommend even a small flock have at least two guardian dogs,” says McNally. “In a predator-rich environment, I would suggest at least four and if any number of sheep at all, have six guardian dogs.”

McNally sells pups from her LGDs. The next litter will be available in the fall, and pups will be priced at \$600 each. The nationally known sheep breeder is also known for her LGDs.

“I have a fairly large waiting list already,” she says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tamarack Lamb and Wool, 31077 Co. Hwy. 61, Hincley, Minn. 55037 (ph 320-336-9071; janet@tamaracksheep.com; www.tamaracksheep.com).

Flip-Up Ladder For Flatbed Trailers

“I was a truck driver and invented this ladder for my own use. Once people started seeing it and asking us where to buy one, we realized we had something big and decided to patent and manufacture it,” says Rob Rolson, owner of Rolson Ladders about his nifty flip-up ladder for flatbed trailers.

The aluminum ladder simply fits into existing stake pockets. When you need to climb up, just pull the ladder down and climb up. Once you’re done, a flip of the wrist flips the ladder back up for storage.

It comes in different lengths to fit different height trailers, can be locked in place for security and meets OSHA standards.

Prices start at \$550 plus S&H.
Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rob Rolson, Rolson Ladders, 6555 South County Rd. B, Foxboro, Wis. 54836 (ph 715-399-2576; Robrolson@aol.com; www.truckladders.net).



Trailer ladders made of aluminum fit into existing stake pockets and stay free of trailer sides.