



Mrs. Maramonte and her daughter-in-law demonstrate the relative size of their miniature horses.

**PRICES START AT ABOUT \$2,500**

## Big Demand For Small Horses

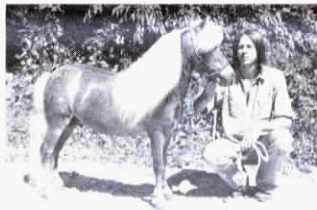
Mike and Dawn Maramonte, of Hubertus, Wis., raise miniature horses so small that they can be carried in the back of their station wagon like a big dog. "When the colts are born they weigh only 15 lbs. You can cuddle them into your arms like a puppy," says Mrs. Maramonte. "We started raising them about 6½ years ago. Our daughter told us about a breeder out west that was raising them, so we went to pay him a visit."

When the family saw their first miniature horses, they fell immediately in love with them and didn't leave for home until they had purchased three bred mares, a filly and a stud colt. One of the mares was a paint color, another a black and the third, a Bay.

One of the biggest breaks for the Maramonte family came 6 years ago when they purchased their stud, Freeman Star, from a horse breeder in North Carolina for \$2,900. "We have since turned down offers of over \$15,000 for him," says Mrs. Maramonte. "He's a beautiful strawberry roan color and stands only 30 in. high. He was shipped to us by air and we picked him up at the local airport."

The little colts resemble toys when they are born. "As they grow older, they still want to crawl up on your lap," explains Mrs. Maramonte. "They're very affectionate and like to be played with."

The mares are bred when they reach three years of age. "We turn the herd out to pasture year round. We want them to get exercise and adjust



Steve Maramonte holds his parent's prize stud, valued at over \$15,000.

to the Wisconsin winters. At night, we bring them in for feeding. They are light eaters, consuming only a small amount of grain and a small amount of hay at a feeding. They're very economical to keep," Mike Maramonte points out. He has learned to shoe the horses himself.

"We're glad we bought the stock when we did," he adds. "Prices have gone out of sight. We paid \$750 for our first little mares and thought that was high. Today, they start at about \$2,000. We have sold only two horses since we got into this business. We're building up our herd for future years."

Although the horses grow faster than regular horses, their gestation period is still 11 months. Mini horses have their own Registry, called the American Miniature Horse Registry, headquartered at Fowler, Ind. There are over 150 breeders registered but some of them have only one or two horses. The association has registered almost 2,000 horses from 14 different countries.

**FARM SHOW**

# Ag World

**"WE'LL TRY ANYTHING ONCE"**

## Look What They're Doing With Llamas

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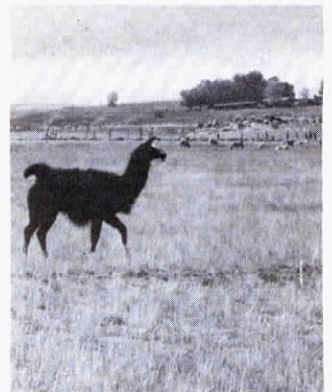
"It's a shot in the dark," says John Lye, sheepman from Pavillion, Wyo., "but we'll try anything to satisfy the government that we're not hung up on 1080 as the only method of predator control."

Putting three llamas in their pasture to protect a flock of sheep is the innovative way that John and Betty Lye are trying to combat their coyote problem. The Lyes have farmed and raised sheep and other livestock for 25 years in the shadow of the Wind River Reservation that borders them on two sides. There is no coyote control on the Indian lands and John feels that, with the steady influx of predators from those areas, the toxic collar using 1080, which is now being tested in Texas, probably wouldn't be very effective on his place.

The llamas use their front hooves to stomp at dogs and predators; they spit and generally are unfriendly but seem to get along alright with Lye's sheep. They don't mingle with the flock but are compatible. Lye's theory is that Gregory, the male llama, is probably protecting the two females.

Llamas are used by Peruvians as pack animals and their wool is used to make rugs. They weigh about 300 lbs. and can pack 90 to 100 lbs.

The Lye's obtained their llamas from Betty Holstein, of Dubois, Wyo., who still owns them. Betty says the wool sells for a high price but she has only sheared Gregory once during the five years she has owned him and the three females. Gestation period is 11 months and most breeders will sell a pair at about six months for around \$3,500. Most llamas live 18 to 20



This llama is one of three that helps protect sheep for the Lye's.

years. The unusual animals have had no disease problems since they were moved to Wyoming from Oregon where Betty Holstein obtained them.

Betty Lye notes that the llamas are not really wild: "We can take pictures and get pretty close to them. The females, who have been bred, carry their young for eleven months. We firmly believe that in a small pasture they could keep all the animals out. We have heard that in Oregon on small farms, they have chased and killed coyotes. Ours have not proven themselves yet, to us anyway, so we don't recommend to anyone to run out and buy an expensive llama. They eat some hay, but like the coarser, drier feeds so they are not expensive to keep. Large outfits probably couldn't use them since they would wander away from the sheep — they don't stay with the sheep directly."