

**SEASONAL BALE CREATURES  
ATTRACTED A LOT OF ATTENTION**

# Bale "Creations" Big Hit For Pennsylvania Farmer

By Carolyn Holland

After seeing a photo in FARM SHOW last summer (Vol. 17, No. 4) about a Virginia farmer who turned a round bale into a man-eating spider, Pennsylvania farmer Thomas Patton decided to set up a similar display along the highway passing by his farm.

All it took were a few pieces of plastic drainage tile, some plywood, and the bottom half of a human dummy. After he set it up in October, word quickly spread and soon people were driving by from all around to get a look.

"We had a lot of reaction from both young and old. Both our local newspapers ran stories and pictures," says Patton.

As Halloween passed, Patton hated to see the pet spider leave. Since Thanksgiving was coming up, he decided to come up with a new creation for that holiday - a giant turkey.

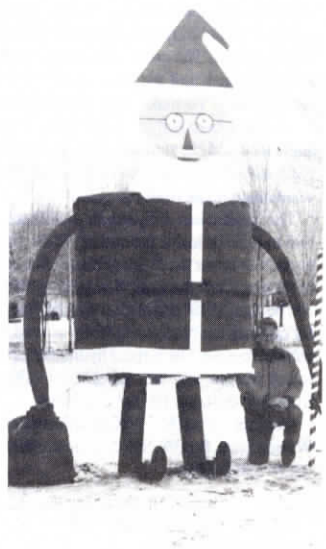
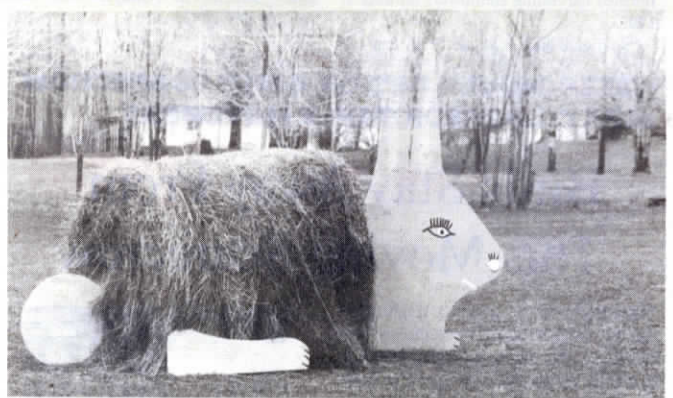
After the stir that bird attracted - with its colorful fan tail and neck made out of PVC

pipe - it was only natural that he come up with something for Christmas. The result was a giant big bale Santa. He placed a big bale on end, covered it with red fabric and put it up on a pair of sturdy legs. A bag of toys and a candy cane completed the picture.

When he started getting appreciative notes in the mail from people who said they enjoyed his efforts, Patton decided he'd keep on going right into January. He set up what looked like a disastrous snowmobile collision, complete with dummy stuffed head first into bale.

What's up next? If you're ever in Pennsylvania, drive by his place on Under Road near Jamestown and find out.

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## Farm Woman Spins Straw Into "Gold"

By Dianne L. Beetler

Like Rumpelstiltskin, the fairy-tale character who could spin straw into gold, Pat Burnell of Varna, Ill., also spins straw and ends up with something valuable - jewelry, hats, and other decorative items.

Burnell uses a tabletop spinner made in England. There are no straw spinners on the market in the U.S., she says.

First, she soaks straw in water to make it flexible. "You can use any kind of hollow-stemmed grain. I find wheat to be the best."

Using a tool called a splitter, she splits the straw into 2 to 9 pieces lengthwise, depending on what size splitter she's using. Then she uses a pair of scissors to scrape away the

inner fiber.

Next, she attaches two lengths of straw to the spinner and turns a hand crank that twists the two straws together. "It's like making rope," she says. "It's really strong."

Spinning straw takes time and lots of patience, she notes. In 2 hrs., she can spin 100 lengths of spun straw, each about 8 to 10 in. long. Finally, she ties a knot in both ends of the spun straw and lets the straw dry. When she's ready to make something from the straw, she cuts away the knots and uses a weaver's knot to connect the plaits, or lengths of spun straw, to one another.



Wearing a straw hat that she decorated herself, Burnell uses her tabletop spinning machine to spin straw.