



Built of ash and maple logs, Alberti's semi is somewhat larger than a real one. The trailer alone is 50 ft. long.

"CONTAINS MORE THAN 300 TONS OF WOOD" Semi Truck Built Out Of Cordwood

About eight years ago, Alec Alberti decided to make a log cabin out of stacked firewood to draw attention to his firewood business. His first effort was so popular with customers that every year since then he has built something new.

Last year he built a semi truck that contains about 300 tons of wood. It's slightly bigger than a real semi truck - the trailer alone is 50 ft. long.

"It's kind of fun to see what you can think of next," says Alberti. "I live on a highway not far from the ski resort so a lot of tourists see it. It took about 12 weeks to construct and looks like an antique semi truck. I borrowed ideas from the different semi trucks that drive by my place so it's got a little bit of every brand in it."

He used ash and maple logs to build the

tractor's frame and slabs of stained and varnished wood, with the bark peeled off, to make the cab. The doors on both sides of the cab are real doors from a small pickup with varnished wood screwed onto them. The door windows can be rolled down just like on the pickup. The steering wheel is off a real semi truck. There's even a shift stick lever and a sleeper at the back of the cab.

He used 150-year-old maple trees to make a pair of fuel tanks and to make the truck's 18 wheels.

Over the years he has also made a locomotive pulling several cars (208 ft. long) and a World War II biplane.

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Seidel's camels recently netted \$170 per head, compared with steers that netted \$53 per head.

He's Raising Camels For Meat

Low cattle prices, extended drought conditions, and an abundance of wild camels have prompted cattle producers in Australia's outback to take a long, hard look at raising the drought-tolerant animals for market.

Six months ago Australian cattle producer Peter Seidel trucked a mixed load of cattle and camels to market. The steers netted just \$53 a head while the camels netted \$170 a head.

Wild camels have always been regarded as more of a pest than anything else in Australia. There are currently more than 250,000 running free. Recently, however, an association of camel producers was formed and at least 12 producers - each with between 100 and 400 head of breeding camels - have started running camels with their cattle.

The advantage of running camels alongside cattle is that scientists have discovered that the rumen bacteria which enables goats and camels to digest all kinds of scrub brush in rough country will work the same way in cattle if camels and cattle are run together so that cattle pick up the

bacteria at watering points.

Peter Seidel, chairperson of the Central Australian Camel Industry Association, says about 1,400 camels will be butchered for human consumption this year. Most of the meat is marketed in the tourist areas of northern Australia, although some is being sold through Woolworths and other stores.

"Camel meat is very similar to beef but the fat is pure white," says Seidel, noting that the animals are rich in by-products. The hump yields as much as 110 lbs. of solid white fat and the leather can be turned into distinctive boots, hats, jackets, etc.

"We're developing a camel oil sunscreen, soaps, cosmetics and a cooking oil which is claimed to have significantly less cholesterol than other animal fats," Seidel says.

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FARM SHOW



The income from Grahl's custom baling and milking business is helping her get started in farming full-time.

"A GOOD WAY TO GET STARTED FARMING"

Wisconsin Woman Does Custom Baling, Milking

Few women are as deeply involved in farming as Julie Grahl of Eden, Wis., who for the past three years has been doing custom hay baling and wrapping in summer and full-time relief milking in winter. She also works part time at a large dairy farm where she raises calves. And she plans to buy a no-till drill so that she can do custom grass seeding.

"I want to be farming full-time in five years. The income from custom work is helping me get started," says the 29-year-old Grahl. "Also, I learn a lot because I get to talk to a lot of different farmers and see how they do things."

Grahl bought a used White 2-105 2-WD tractor for \$15,000 and leases a new Welger baler and a Corry wrapper. She travels up to 40 miles away although she tries to stay within a 20-mile radius. On long hauls, she hires a cousin to transport the baler on a semi trailer while she drives the pickup (loaded with plastic, twine, toolboxes, grease guns, etc.) and pulls the wrapper. She charges \$7 per bale and another \$7 per bale to wrap, offering discounts when more than 250 bales are wrapped.

Grahl grew up on a dairy farm and has been milking cows and driving tractors since she was a little girl. "I saw a future in custom round bale silage in 1993 when it was

so wet that it was virtually impossible to get quality hay. No one else was doing it around here," she says. "However, I've found that it's hard to make enough profit to pay for the baling equipment. I make my living off milking other people's cows and work for about 40 different dairy farmers. I charge a per hour rate and will do any job that needs to be done."

Grahl says she hasn't encountered any strange responses when people discover that a woman is doing custom farming. "But I do think there are people who don't call me because I'm a woman. It's tough being a woman in a man's world, but you do the best quality work you can do and people can't fault you for that."

Grahl is a graduate of a local technical college's dairy herd management program and the University of Wisconsin Farm and Industry Short Course. She plans to get a degree from the University of Wisconsin in animal science. This winter she will attend the National Holstein Association's Young Dairy Leader's Institute, which emphasizes leadership skills.

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