



Johnnie Cox of Virginia, Ill., enjoys putting on shows with his trick horse "Flash". Flash is shown sitting down with his front legs outstretched, as fascinated kids watch.

## "Trick Horse" Attracts Crowds By Doing Math

Kids and older people alike are absolutely fascinated by Johnnie Cox's trick horse.

Cox, 82, of Virginia, Ill., enjoys putting on shows and also operates a horse service center where horses are shod and trained.

FARM SHOW caught up with his act at a tractor show in Jacksonville, Ill. Performing in a makeshift arena, Johnnie had a ring of kids fascinated with his smart horse.

"Flash" is his name.

Upon orders, Flash adds and subtracts numbers using his front hoof to paw out the answers. He can also smile, sit down with his front legs outstretched, roll a barrel with his nose, wave an American flag, and lie down and pull a cover over himself.

What particularly impressed the kids was the way Flash could do math. A kid would call out something like "4 plus 2" and Flash would paw six times with a front foot. When we talked to Johnnie he wouldn't admit to any signaling, but he wouldn't deny it either.

His answer: "I'm going to write a book about all of this if I live long enough. Maybe, I will tell how I do it in there," was his answer.

Flash, 10 years old, is the fourth trick horse Johnnie has owned. He's very trainable but Cox says he also tends to be a bit ornery.

Yet, Cox is very gentle with the horse. He wouldn't describe himself as a "horse whisperer", but he will tell you that horses



Flash loves to say "cheese" for the camera.

definitely react best to gentle talk and treatment.

"Flash will do just about anything I ask him to do," Cox says.

Johnnie came from a farm family of 12, and his dad had 22 horses. Johnnie started running a horse-drawn riding plow when he was only six years old.

Today, Johnnie keeps himself busy full-time training and shoeing horses. He does a lot of traveling.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Johnnie Cox, 21795 Garner Rd., Virginia, Ill. (ph 217 452-3509).

## Straw Coffin Is New "Way To Go"

Here's something for the farmer who has everything - a coffin that's made from 99 percent straw.

"Some people are buying these coffins before they even need one for storage or as a window seat, coffee table, wine rack, bookshelf, etc.," says the manufacturer, BioFab.

The straw coffin measures 79 1/2 in. from head to foot inside, 25 in. from side to side, and 15 3/4 in. top to bottom. The strawboard is 2 1/2 in. thick and is covered by gray linerboard paper. The joints are pegged and glued, and the raw edges are taped with brown butcher's tape.

The coffin can be fitted with eight galvanized steel handles and four hinges on the lid (optional). If desired, the handles and hinges can be easily removed before burial. Twenty pegs are used to secure the lid.

The unfinished basic straw coffin sells for \$375 plus S&H. The optional hardware sells for \$72.

The coffin is also available as a kit with cut-out blanks, allowing you to assemble and



Coffin made from 2 1/2-in. thick strawboard can be fitted with hinges and handles.

decorate the casket yourself. The "CasKit" comes with pegs or 4-in. metal screws for assembly. Sells for \$325 plus S&H.

Custom colors and other options are also available, priced on a per-coffin basis.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, BioFab, LLC, Box 990556, Redding, Calif. 96099 (E-mail: plans@ricestraw.com; Website: www.strawboard.com).

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On "Tractor Day" every year during FFA Week, vo-ag students at Atlantic High School, Atlantic, Iowa, roll into the school parking lot on tractors.

## Two Rural Schools Celebrate "Tractor Day"

On one day every year during FFA Week, vo-ag students at Atlantic High School, Atlantic, Iowa, roll into the school parking lot on an array of tractors. A similar event takes place at Worth County High School, Grant City, Missouri, about 80 miles southeast of Atlantic.

Atlantic vo-ag teacher and FFA advisor Bruce Johnk says "Drive Your Tractor To School Day", as it's known in Atlantic, began in 1969. Its purpose is to call attention to the role of agriculture in the community.

Doyle Bounds, Worth County vo-ag teacher, says he doesn't remember where the

idea came from, but Tractor Day started in the late 1970's or early '80's. FFA members wanted a way to help boost morale in the small, mostly agricultural community.

In both schools, a portion of the high school parking lot is reserved so tractors can be prominently displayed for the day. This year, Atlantic students brought in 22 tractors, ranging from a JD 3010 to a JD 9200. Worth County students brought in 15 tractors, from a 1940s vintage JD B to a 1998 JD 7210.

Thanks to Amy Garrett, Worth County, and Brian Michael Fager, Atlantic, for providing photos and information.



Students also celebrate Tractor Day at Worth County High School, Grant City, Mo. The purpose is to call attention to the role of agriculture in the community.