

# Bitten By The Bullriding Bug

(Continued from Page A37)

good results, so we thought this might be a good idea," he said.

"Now I put one good bull in with a farmer's cows, then we buy the bull calves when they're six months to a year old."

One of the area farmers has also kept some of the heifer calves and raised them. "Now he has some cows that have some bucking bloodline and bucking background, and with that we have about an 80 percent success rate. If I buy 10 calves off them, eight of them will buck right away and the other two will buck if you work with them," said Martin.

## Training

A bull's training includes their first experience with a rider when they are one year old. "We put on a dummy and buck them when they're a year old. We let the dummy ride them for six seconds, then hit a button on a remote, and it has a quick release.

"We start our bulls usually at around 2½ years old," Martin said, however "a lot of rodeo contractors don't start them until they are at least four years old.

"They can't be used too much because you can take the edge off them. Too much can ruin them that they won't buck, they'll just come out and walk around.

"Once in a while you'll get one that will lay down in the chute when a guy gets on him, but a lot of times maturity will cure that."

Besides letting the animals gain maturity, Martin knows a few other training techniques.

"There are two different kinds of bucking chutes — some left-hand and some right-hand delivery. Some animals buck a lot better out of one way, so I try them both ways," he said.

"Another thing is when they go straight — which is easy to ride — we buck them in a smaller arena, and get them to where they turn back in a spin, then just gradually make the arena bigger. The bulls that spin are usually the hardest to ride because the centrifugal force is what throws the guys off."

When Martin's bulls are 2½ to three years old, he'll take them to one or two rodeos a month. Later they will head out to rodeos almost every weekend, "but now I keep a lot of bulls, so they usually go about every other weekend," Martin said.

"We usually take bulls to a lot of county fairs in Pennsylvania and six surrounding states, which is probably 80 percent of our business," he said.

Besides producing rodeos, Martin's company also produces "Bullride Mania," an event that is "predominantly bullriding, not traditional rodeo events such as steer wrestling or calf roping," he said.

Rodeo bulls, estimates Martin, "cost me about \$1500 apiece by the time they are 2½ years old."

However "when you get a good one, you can sell that bull for anywhere from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

"The bulls that we raise usually sell in the \$2,500-\$3,500 range when they are three and four years old," he said.

The bulls are sold to other rodeo companies, the lesser-bucking bulls to companies that need bulls for practice sessions.

Martin sells bulls "anywhere from a practice pen to PBR, the pro bullriders show on TV." Martin sold "Barracuda" and "Jack the Ripper" to the televised PBR circuit.

In addition, "we're working on a deal now that we're sending bulls to Europe," said Martin. The 30 bulls will not only work at a large carnival, but also provide entertainment as part of a tour for overseas American servicemen and women.

Martin is concerned about "the fad with people raising bucking bulls as a hobby and for profit. My concern is if they flood the market, such as happened in the past with the ostrich and American bison market, to where an average bull won't be worth as much as they are now."

On the farm, the bulls are kept in groups, from "really young (1-1½ years old) to young, more mature bulls, and seven years or older bulls.

The older bulls may check in at 1,600 pounds to one ton.

"They're really territorial animals. Every time we mix them they fight, but after they spend a couple of days fighting, they get along.

"However "they will tear fence down if there is not enough room," said Martin.

## Beginnings

When he was four years old, Martin's parents took him to see a rodeo at the Pennsylvania Farm Show, which began a lifelong passion.

When he was sixteen, Dave



Calves from bucking breed stock were born recently on Martin's farm.

began a 10-year career as a rodeo contestant, competing in bareback bronc riding, saddle bronc riding, and steer wrestling, as well as his favorite event, bullriding.

In 1971, Martin started a business of leasing bulls to rodeos on the eastern seaboard. This business expanded until Dave finally produced his first sanctioned rodeo in 1975, in Hanover.

This year, Dave Martin's Championship Rodeos produced more than 50 rodeos plus a dozen or more Bullride Manias in six different states.

Martin is joined by his son Casey in Gettysburg.

Casey competes in rodeo as a

steer wrestler and attends the Savannah, Ga., College of Arts and Design. Martin's late son Jesse was ranked among the top 20 bull riders in the nation during his senior year of high school.

When not on the rodeo road, Dave works as a car auctioneer in several northeastern states.

Dave hopes to build a comprehensive indoor and outdoor facility dedicated to the conservation, breeding, and study of rodeo livestock, specializing in bucking bulls, and also a training ground for 4-H, FFA, and high school rodeo youth from the northeastern U.S.

## Weaver Insurance Agency

'We're Here To Serve'

## FARMERS



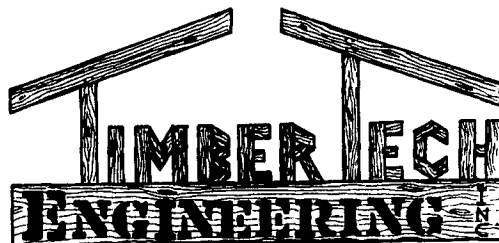
Tired of Paying High Insurance Rates On Trucks You Seldom Use? We Offer Competitive Prices On Trucks from Pickups to Tractor Trailers. We Offer All Types Of Farm and Agribusiness Insurance

Please Call For Quotations or Information

Lisa Sprout • Roger Slusher • Bob Lee • Sarah Roman  
• Cindy Beyer • Julie Lee • Terry Wingert

27 East State Street, Quarryville, PA 17566  
(717) 786-1711 (800) 882-1415

## "Let Us Assist You In The Design Of Your Next Building Project."



BUILDING & FACILITIES PLANNING

## Timber Tech Engineering, Inc.

CONSULTANT ENGINEERS

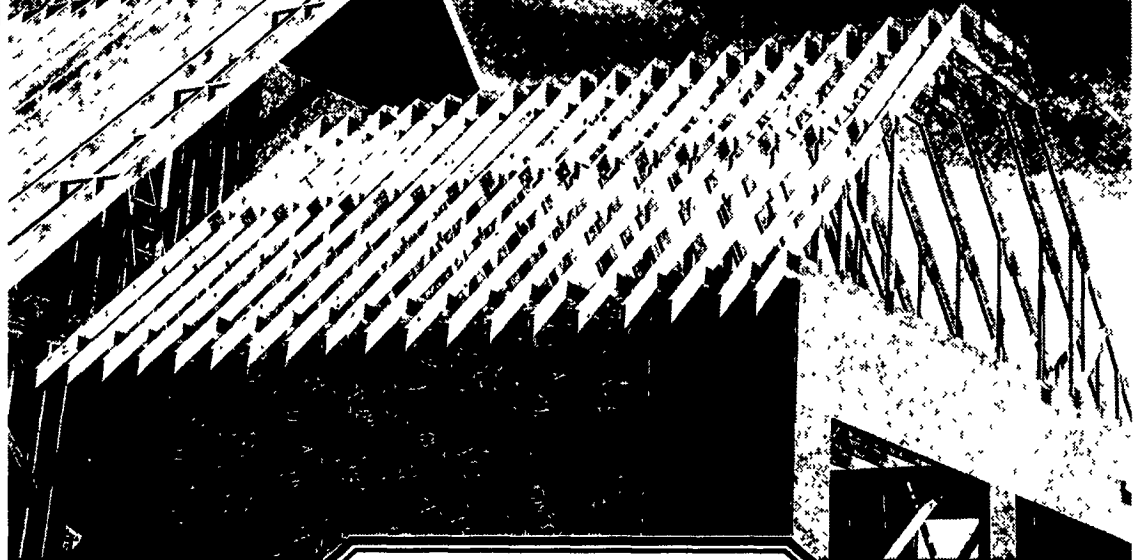
254 W. Franklin Street  
Womelsdorf, PA 19567

(610) 589-4589

(610) 589-5384 FAX



## SAVINGS ANYONE Wood LIKE



NEW HOLLAND, PA  
200 Dittmer Ave.  
New Holland, PA  
17357

(717) 354-4321  
Fax (717) 355-4401

FOR ALL YOUR BUILDING NEEDS

www.musselmanlumber.com

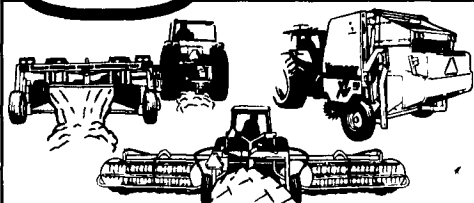
NEW HOLLAND, PA  
200 Dittmer Ave.  
New Holland, PA  
17352

(717) 735-2241  
Fax (717) 735-8970

# 0% LOW APR FINANCING OR CASH BACK

Offer valid on all Vermeer Round Balers, DiscPro Mower Conditioners, plus R-23A and R-24A Twinrakes until Jan. 31, 2003. Plus ... FREE 2-YEAR EXTENDED WARRANTY on selected products.

See your local dealer for details, terms and conditions.



## Vermeer



Vermeer Manufacturing Co.  
Pella, Iowa 50219  
800-370-3659 • Fax. 641-621-7881

www.vermeerag.com

Subject to credit approval by Agrcredit Acceptance LLC. Vermeer Credit reserves the right to change, modify or cancel these programs at any time without notice or obligation.