
190 Duration

Grain Fed

Give us this day our daily bread ...

Choose either Matthew 6:9-13 or Luke 11:2-4, both have about the same request. Grain has been with us since antiquity, although with 7 billion people at the dinner table today, the order is getting harder to fill.

By 1900, millions of acres of the arid grasslands in the Great Plains region of the U.S. were being plowed up to plant the new gold ..wheat. Encouraged by the federal government's Homestead Act and the foolish slogan that "rain follows the plow," the area had become a top producing region in the world. Then the drought years of the 30's hit. The wheat withered, and top soil that had taken nature a thousand years to build up was blown away, no longer being anchored by the natural grassland. William Murray, the governor of Oklahoma, said just pump up the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the world's largest underground water sources, stretching out under eight states.

Today, many believe that again poor grain management is being encouraged with what one major bread company executive says is "our government's love affair with ethanol." Through mandates and subsidies, last year 5 billion bushels of corn were converted to fuel, which the critics call "unsustainable subsidized food burning." But, we are self- admittedly addicted to oil, so like all junkies would rather inject our drug than eat dinner.

The Ogallala Aquifer that was filled from melting glaciers 15,000 years ago? We finally put our pumps on that and, in providing 30% of the nation's irrigation, are suckling it down like a drunk at happy hour. The estimates are it will run dry in 25 years.

And this the little piggy had none. And this little piggy went "wee wee wee" all the way home.

Until next issue,

Tom Hull

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Grain makes vodka, vodka makes martini, martini elevates spirits, here at a Vera Wang stainless steel ratio of 1 to 8.

Success Story

John Bonham



Where's Waldo? Umm, I mean John Bonham, hidden among enough of the gentler gender to nearly start a basketball team. He walked out of my high school class 24 years ago and joined the Army infantry. Despite what he describes as a "dumb-ass attitude" in high school, he thrived in the military, served in the 101st Airborne in Iraq and later graduated from the coveted Army Ranger program. Most who attempt that goal never achieve it.

John spent 8 years in the Army and probably would have retired there, but while serving as ski instructor in cold weather training in Alaska, he broke his arm and elbow. Later, in Germany, two Turks with knives almost killed him at night waiting for a train. The end result was a medical discharge.

John always enjoyed the outdoors, hunting, fishing, boating, and so thought to look into the civil engineering program at Umpqua Community College. Despite his questionable grades in high school and self-proclaimed, less-than-serious attitude, he decided to up the bet and enroll in the engineering program at Oregon Institute of Technology (OIT). To his mild surprise, he excelled in an academic program that included calculus. Hard work pays off.

Working for the last 10 years as an engineer for the city of Eugene, he says that his best claim for accomplishments is not himself but his kids and family. His daughters are "smart, respectful and, no kidding, near-perfect" and he credits his wife as being "the best mother I have ever seen."

Last year my students at Marshfield built John a collapsible bow-shooting platform for his competitive fishing boat. I got a chance to know John as an adult and meet his family. The journey from childhood to adulthood is like watching a plant go from seed to flower. You never tire of seeing it.

Here's How: Tips from the Field

Grounding the MIG

Look at the ground clamp of your wire feed welder and I guarantee that it will show signs of arcing due to an occasional poor ground connection. A bad ground on the MIG is especially irritating because it is the dumbest welder in the crowd as it keeps feeding wire out even after losing the arc. Here is an easy, fast, and permanent fix for the problem.

The Fix, Step One



Get a short piece of 1/0 flex welding cable and strip the center part bare. This "whip cable" is often used in the last 10 feet of a welding lead at the stinger end, and it has about twice as many wires as normal, making it very flexible. If you don't already use a whip, try it out. You'll like it.

The theory for using a short piece as a grounding supplement is that the multiple fine wires flatten out and mold themselves between the ground and the clamp so that no arcing occurs. It works. Be sure to leave a few inches of insulation at both ends so it doesn't come unravelled.

The Fix In Use



Shown above is the positive ground "TIP" in use. Our main welding table in the Pirate Shop is one-inch plate steel 18 feet long and 5 feet wide with a ground line buried beneath the floor to this location. We can hit the set-up table with either an overhead wire feed machine, a plasma cutter or our stalwart stick welder, the classic Lincoln Electric Company's motor driven generator known as a "torpedo welder." Thus the three clamps.