
THE ISCOWP NEWS

The Quarterly Newsletter of THE INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR COW PROTECTION

Fall

1991

Not only do we travel with our oxen to spread the message of cow protection and vegetarianism, we also offer information on the practical application of protecting the cow. The distribution of this knowledge is necessary in order for cow protection to spread throughout our society.

To present this practical knowledge, this and subsequent issues will continue to present Vraja and Gita's training lessons and begin to give you information on how to develop your basic equipment for working with your ox.

With permission from our friend Ben Jenkins (Parmananda das) we are reprinting his master articles: "How to Make a Yoke", "Making The Irons", and "How To Make An Ox-Bow". These articles appeared in the 1984 ISKCON farm newsletter published and written by Ben. Pages 3-5 of this issue are devoted to the first installment of "How To Make A Yoke".

These articles expertly explain how to construct your most essential and important piece of equipment, the yoke. If you seriously want to take up training an ox or plan to do so in the future, the summer issue, this issue, and the following issues will prove invaluable. So, save these issues!

The photos on this page visually present the command "Haw", to turn left. The first picture shows Vraja and Gita going into the turn, and the second picture shows them after its completion.

THE COMMAND "HAW"



The foundation of your self-sufficient small farm is well-trained teams of oxen.

SECOND LESSON-THE COMMANDS "GEE" AND "HAW"

At the completion of the first lesson, Vraja and Gita learned the commands "Whoa", to stop, and "Get-up" to go forward or come. Next they learned the command "Gee", to turn right, and "Haw", to turn left. In order to be taught these commands Vraja and Gita had to know how to walk together. If you remember they were taught individually in the ring, not together.

Since I had not yet completed the yoke, I connected their halters together with a light chain. Using a lead rope and a lash I proceeded to walk up and down the road with them reviewing the first lesson's commands. I was surprised at their prowess. Vraja took the lead and seemed to enjoy the accomplishment of a successful performance. Gita, who was less cooperative than Vraja in the ring, followed Vraja's example.



Vraja and Gita successfully completing a "Haw" command with graceful symmetry

I did this for about a week before beginning the commands "Gee" and "Haw". The command "Gee" is considered the most difficult because the team must move away from the teamster who is always on the left. We therefore started with the command "Haw", to turn left. Since the teamster stands on the left side of the team and the left turn is toward the teamster this is generally taught more easily.

If you look at the pictures on the front page of this newsletter you will see in the top picture Vraja and Gita 3/4 through the "Haw" command, and the bottom picture shows them successfully completing that command in beautiful symmetry. The picture on this page shows Vraja and Gita several weeks later in L.A. wearing their yoke. They are 1/2 way through the successful completion of the "Haw" command. Notice their beautiful symmetry and the amazed audience.

The "Haw" command was taught by tapping Gita, who was always the "off" ox, (the ox furthest from the teamster), on the outside right shoulder and tapping Vraja, who was always the "neigh" ox, (the ox closest to the teamster), on the knees while firmly giving the command. I continued to do this for about a week with half hour lessons twice a day. Lots of hugs, compliments, and peanut butter cookies were given as rewards. At the beginning of the second week I held back from giving taps as much as possible. The goal was to accomplish this turn with the team by voice command only. By the second week they had this turn down quite well without much tapping. Occasionally I would give Gita a tap on the behind.

I then began to teach the "Gee" command. I walked in front and to the right of Vraja and Gita and had them follow me through the turn as I gave the command. This should be done only early on in the training of this command. The goal is that

the teamster should be able to give the command to turn right, from the left side of the oxen, by voice command. The reason for this is that often the teamster cannot walk ahead of his team through the turn and if not trained to turn by voice, they expect to follow the teamster through all the turns.

I moved onto the next stage of teaching this command as soon as I thought Vraja and Gita got the general idea. The next stage in teaching this command was to remain on the left side of them, giving the command and tapping Vraja, the "neigh ox" on his outside left shoulder. I concentrated on teaching this command for about a week, occasionally reviewing the "Haw" command. In the middle of the second week I dropped the tapping as much as I could while still allowing a successful turn to be completed.

In the weeks that followed I practiced all the commands by interchanging them. The more practice they had the less they needed to be reminded by tapping. As much as I could I used affection, compliments, and peanut butter cookies as motivators instead of tapping them with the lash. Gradually they didn't need the peanut butter cookies. It took about 2-3 weeks to teach them the commands. I spent the next month, practicing with them. During this month we traveled across the country resulting in sporadic practicing. However, they seemed to grasp the commands very well.

I completed the yoke in the middle of the month's travels. I was very happy it took only a few lessons for them to get use to it. But did you know they grew out of this yoke a few weeks after our return from traveling? Before this happened we started training them to pull, and this will be the subject of the next training article.

HOW TO MAKE A YOKE

Reprinted with permission from the author (Ben Jenkins), Parmananda das

The yoke is the most basic piece of equipment you have for working an ox. It is considered to be one of the great advantages of working oxen rather than horses. With a horse a somewhat complicated harness is needed to work the animal which requires a certain supply of rivets, leather, buckles and rings for maintenance and repair.

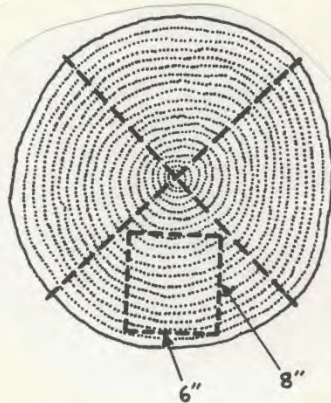
An ox yoke should be well made and very strong. The oxen are going to be completely dependent on this piece of equipment throughout their work. If it breaks, it could endanger the people with the oxen and the oxen themselves. The yoke will be under great stress when the oxen are full grown, weighing a ton each, and are pulling with all their strength on it. So it is definitely worth the trouble to make it in the best possible way.

There are many different styles of ox yokes. The yokes that I use fit over the necks of the two oxen. I've seen head yokes that are simply snapped onto the horns of the oxen and don't sit on the necks at all. The oxen pull with their heads. I've also seen, in New England, what they call a sliding yoke. It is actually adjustable for different purposes. Different types of work may require the oxen to be different distances apart. For instance, when plowing, we want the oxen to be quite close together. The yoke that is used in some Asian countries like India, with oxen that have a big hump on their back, can hardly be called a yoke. It is just a straight stick that leans up against the hump on the oxen's back.

Our yoke has to fit over their necks because they don't have a hump of any substantial size (Ben was working Brown Swiss cows) and it is held on by what are called bows. A bow is made from hickory wood or some kind of wood that will bend. It is actually carved into a rod and then bent into a "U" shape after being steamed and fits

under the neck of the ox.

The first thing in making a yoke is to get a log with good straight grain, without a lot of knots, and big enough to make the yoke out of one quarter of it.



Making a yoke from 1 / 4 of the log

The yoke could be made out of half or even the whole tree but it would be weaker. So we don't want to waste our time making an inferior piece of equipment. Even if good wood is not available in your locality, you can usually purchase it from some where else. If there are any sawmills near you, they usually travel some distance to get logs, and therefore have a greater selection than you might find on your own property.

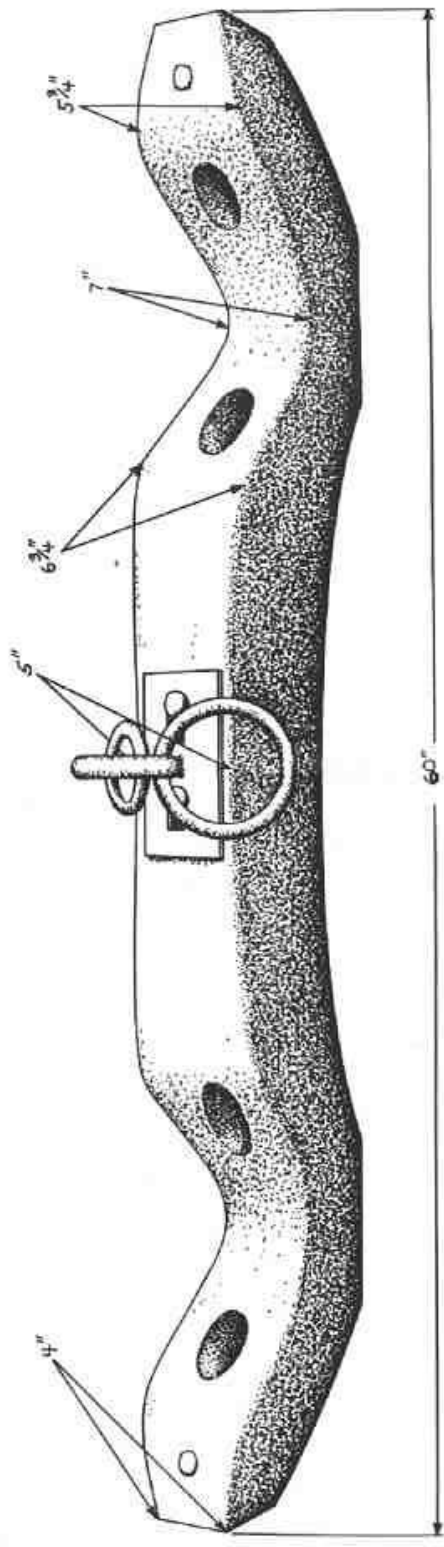
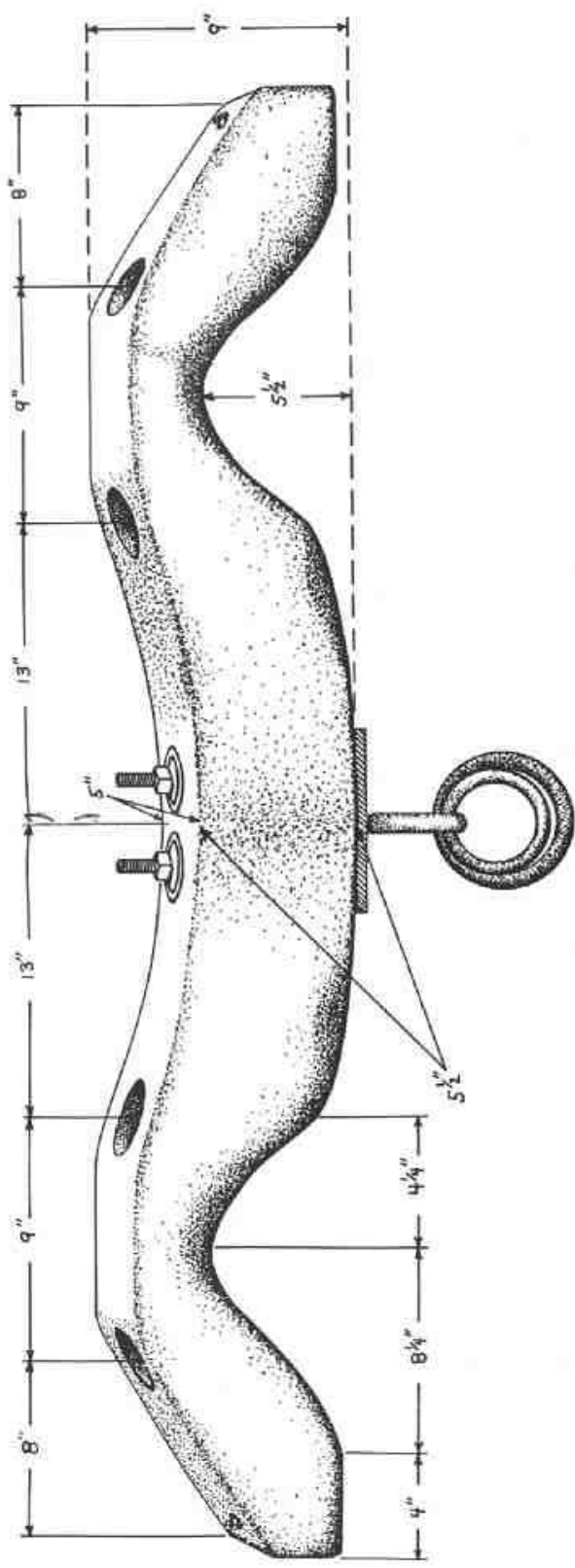
An ox yoke should be made out of wood that is strong and doesn't split easily. Very coarse-grained wood such as oak is strong but splits too easily. Also oak is a very dense and heavy wood which is not so ideal for an ox yoke, although a heavy wood can be used. The ideal wood for a yoke is light and strong. The particular variety of tree that meets these specifications will differ all over the world. In the northeastern U.S., basswood is very light and strong when it is dry. There is a tree called cucumber that is supposed

to be quite ideal for ox yokes. Some varieties of popular are good for a yoke, being quite light and tough when dry, although I have tried popular that cracked severely when dried. Where I live in Pennsylvania, the elm tree has proven to be the best for yokes. Although it is quite heavy, it has a very twisted grain and its consistency is gummy, not brittle at all. Those two qualities together make it almost impossible to split or brake, and it makes virtually an eternal yoke, enough it is very dense and heavy. But it doesn't seem to bother our oxen. They have tremendous strength in their necks and can hold up a heavy yoke if necessary.

The type of wood that will be shown in the pictures of the following installments of this article is sycamore. I was satisfied with the grain of this piece of wood but after it was done, I wasn't so satisfied with the checking. It checked-in other words, it cracked, during the drying process more than I would have liked. But the yokes have since held up. They are in regular use, seem quite strong, and they have stopped cracking.

If you use wood that is already dry there is less cracking, but it is much harder to work the wood. When you use a green piece of wood, it is soft and easy to work with even though it may be hardwood. The traditional method of drying out a yoke is to dry it out in a haystack so that it dries out very slowly. When wood dries out too quickly it tends to crack more. So the yoke would be buried in the hay and taken out the next year. It would be all dried out without any cracks. But I don't do that. I just oil it. I completely saturate the yoke with linseed oil. I find that prevents the cracking to a great degree during the time the yoke is drying out, and it can be used in the meantime.

to be continued in next issue



ISKCON
FARM
NEWSLETTER

MASTER
DRAWING
OX YOKE
(Artist: Sadhana-sidhi das)

LAND DEVELOPMENT NETWORK NEWS

To seriously develop a networking program we are presently working in cooperation and consultation with the leaders of ISKCON (International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness) and their farm communities. At a recent GBC (Governing Body Commission of ISKCON) meeting it was resolved that ISCOWP should take up the task of organizing a world-wide network program whose goal is to accumulate and distribute knowledge of alternative agricultural practices based on cow protection.

Cow protection is an essential part of ISKCON's philosophy and is practiced to different degrees of development at its various farm communities. At present there are several ISKCON farms in Russia and Poland where the concept of ox power is greeted with enthusiasm because of the huge expense of tractors and petroleum in these countries, the lack of sufficient foodstuffs, and the inherent life-styles of the people there.

We are looking forward in future issues to reporting on the progress, knowledge, problems, and needs of ISKCON's farm communities and those of our members and friends. We were pleased with the response to our first installment of the "Network News" and will be reporting on it in this issue.

It is a major goal of the networking program to publish a directory of persons who are practicing lifetime cow protection. This way you will be able to contact those nearest to you for sharing practical and theoretical knowledge. You will also be able to conveniently purchase organic vegetables, grains, and cruelty-free dairy products from lifetime protected cows. Please contact us if you are operating such a farm or know anyone who is.

Virginia

Nina Scozzari, "Peaceable Kingdom" A few weeks ago Nina, an ISCOWP member, called us up with a very generous offer. Several years ago she bought nearly 25 acres in a rural area of Virginia not far from Roanoke, Virginia and, as it turns out, only a few hours away from our location here in North Carolina. The long term goal for purchasing this land was to eventually establish an animal sanctuary. With this in mind Nina named her land "Peaceable Kingdom". Since she is presently located in N.J., securely employed, she has not been able and will not be able in the near future to develop her land as she desires. She therefore wants us to utilize it for our cow protection purposes. This way her reason for buying it would be fulfilled. We are very appreciative of Nina's offer. We wanted to jump right in and start using the land but we had to face the practical limitations of our present situation. At present we could not practically extend ourselves beyond our newly purchased property here in North Carolina. So, a solution would be if some of our members or friends would like to live on this land developing it as a cow protection farm and chapter of ISCOWP. If anyone of our members and friends are at all interested in this idea please contact us with your inquiries. We will be visiting this land soon and in the next issue we will be presenting a more fully developed report. From what Nina has told us, the land is suitable for protecting cows, and has a stream running through it. Nina is a serious animal lover who presently helps the cause of animals by caring for any stray or injured animal she finds and breeding species that are threatened by extinction. We feel privileged to be working with her for the cause of cow protection.

Alaska

Lori Ebbs and Joe Cudnik (bhaktin and bhakta) of 812 Fritz Cove Road in Jungay, Alaska recently wrote us a letter. They are interested in land in the Northwest between Vancouver and Seattle or northern Idaho. According to Lori's letter they are not "farmers" in a literal sense but they are interested

in forest protection, growing herbs, organic farming, and self sufficiency of home energy. They are interested in living near a cow protection farm and supporting it. If there is anyone of like interest please get in touch with them. Why not move to Virginia Lori and Joe?

North Carolina

James Newson, (Jagadisvara das) our next door neighbor here at ISCOWP's newly purchased land in Efland, North Carolina, has donated the use of his 2.5 acres adjoining our land. The proposed use of the land would be for this spring's cultivating and planting of organic vegetables and grains for home use and the market. This would bring us to a total of 5 acres of land which can be tilled and planted by our ox team. We told James this spring and summer we would provide he and his family with all they could eat. This shouldn't be hard at all since out of a little garden plot they had last year we shared more zucchini and tomatoes than either family could eat.

Roy Christopher, (Ram das) our neighbor on the other side of us owns 9 acres on which he has successfully grown organic vegetables and herbs for home use and sale at the local markets. He is very much looking forward to having Vraja and Gita plow, cultivate, and seed his land this spring and summer so that he can not only offer organic vegetables and spices to the markets but ox-tilled organic vegetables and spices.

This brings us to a total of 13 acres for Vraja and Gita to till, cultivate, and seed. Roy has already found that he can easily sell his organic foodstuffs, and we are looking to expanding that market with ox-tilled organic foodstuffs. Right now Vraja and Gita have outgrown their yoke and bow and we are eagerly waiting for their new ones to be finished. As soon as that occurs we will be keeping them in shape during the winter months by hauling logs so as soon as the spring comes we will be ready.



Preparing "Okra in Tomato Sauce". This dish is from "Great Vegetarian Dishes" by Kurma.

LAKSMI'S KITCHEN

The first step in cow protection is vegetarianism. Often we meet people who sincerely love the cow but continue to eat meat. They find it very difficult to take up vegetarianism due to old habits, lack of knowledge on how to change those habits, and the fact they are living in a society where meat is readily available and its consumption is a way of life. Sometimes we meet people who were vegetarian for awhile but discontinued because they lacked knowledge of how to prepare a variety of dishes. Their diet was limited and did not compete with their previous meat-based diet.

To help those who wish to make the transition from a meat based diet to vegetarianism, we are offering a new column, "Laksmi's Kitchen". This column will present a variety of simple recipes that will make the transition to a vegetarian diet an easy and positive experience. Our daughter Laksmi, age 15, is the cook in our house. She has prepared and we have tasted all the dishes presented in this column. And they are good! If she can do it so can you!

Okra in Tomato Sauce

Okra releases glutinous sap when cut, and sweats when salted, so dry it thoroughly before cooking is completed. Okra is a summer vegetable. When selecting okra look for small pods. If the pointed end snaps off, it is fresh. Serve this dish, which originates in Trinidad, as an entree or side dish. (We have it as our main vegetable dish).

PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes

COOKING TIME: 20 to 30 minutes

YIELD: enough for 6 persons

500 g (a little over 1 pound) young okra pods

3 tablespoons (60 ml) olive oil

1/4 teaspoon (1 ml) yellow asafoetida powder *

1 small green pepper, seeded and chopped into small cubes

1 medium hot green chili, seeded and chopped

3 medium tomatoes, peeled and chopped

1/2 teaspoon (2 ml) brown sugar

1 teaspoon (5 ml) salt

1. Wash the okra, dry them with paper towels, and cut off the stem ends. Heat

the oil in a heavy pan and saute the okra until lightly browned all over, (about 10 minutes). Lift out the okra with a slotted spoon, and transfer to a saucepan.

2. Saute the asafoetida in the oil remaining in the pan, add the peppers and chili, and stir-fry until they become soft.

3. Add the tomatoes and sugar and simmer for 4 to 5 minutes or until the tomatoes break down.

4. Pour the tomato mixture over the okra, stir to mix, and cook covered until the okra is tender (about 5 minutes). Sprinkle in the salt and serve hot. * Also known as hing, can be bought at Indian or Oriental grocers

ISCOWP

The International Society For Cow Protection

The International Society for Cow Protection (ISCOWP) is primarily concerned with presenting alternatives to present agricultural practices that support and depend upon the meat industry. A lacto-vegetarian diet, cruelty-free lifetime protection of the cow, ox training, alternative energies offered by the cow and ox, and a sound ecological, agrarian lifestyle are the practices that ISCOWP would like to make available to everyone. Through educational literature, seminars, and hands-on educational experiences in living classroom settings, children and adults can be offered a look through the window of an alternative way of life.

Our Goals:

1. To provide a natural and permanent alternative to petroleum-dependent tractors by training bull calves as working teams of oxen
2. To utilize ISCOWP's alternative agricultural practices as hands-on experience in living classroom settings.
3. To demonstrate the usefulness of the natural by-products of the cow by encouraging the production of methane bio-gas from cow manure as a valuable alternative energy source.
4. To present the benefits of a lacto-vegetarian diet through educational literature, nutritional cooking classes, organic gardening instruction, and the production of cruelty-free dairy products from lifetime protected cows.
5. To establish small farm sanctuaries world-wide modeled after the historic Vedic example of agrarian harmony based on lifetime cow protection.

6. To educate society about the practical benefits of lifetime cow protection by the distribution of the quarterly "ISCOWP NEWS" for adults, the "Junior NEWS" for children, related books and literature for adults and children, seminars, hands-on educational experiences in living classroom settings, and direct contact with the oxen through our "Cow Protection Outreach Program".

Our Cow Protection Outreach Program:

Our ox traveling program has been a tremendous tool in achieving the goal of awakening the hearts of everyone who eats meat to the connection between the gentle cow and the hamburger, veal, or steak on their plate. Through direct contact with the oxen and our educational literature, thousands of people who eat meat have received the seed of the vegetarian ideal. As these seeds mature, the slaughter of the gentle cow will diminish.

From 1987-1990 we traveled throughout the country with two oxen weighing a ton each. This summer we traveled coast to coast with two young calves recently saved from the slaughterhouse. Our purpose is to show how U.S. farming practices can be altered so the ox is not the soup bone of the American farm but the backbone.

The International Society for Cow Protection was incorporated in the state of Pennsylvania, March 1990, as a non-profit charitable organization. Its first chapter was begun in Efland, North Carolina, February 1991. William and Irene Dove (Balabhadra das and Chaya devi dasi) are its managing directors. They are disciples of Srila Prabhupada the Founder Acharya of the International Society of Krsna Consciousness. It is through their spiritual master's teachings they have imbibed the practices and benefits, both spiritual and material, of lifetime cow protection.

The tenets of cow protection and ox power are universal and non-sectarian, available to all regardless of race, creed, or nationality.

All donations are tax deductible. ISCOWP's tax# is 23-2604082. For more information write to ISCOWP Box 4607 Timberwood Trail, Efland, North Carolina, 27243.

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