

Horses cut and bale their own hay

By **HEATHER SMITH THOMAS**
For the Capital Press

Mike Sardinia has a mobile veterinary service he operates from his farm near Clayton, Wash., 30 miles north of Spokane, but his passion is draft horses.

He and his wife, Teri, have 60 acres and 13 draft horses.

"We breed and raise a few, but also have several retired rescue horses, living out their lives at our place," said Sardinia.

"We mostly raise Clydesdales but we have an old Shire mare who has been with us since she was a baby," he said. "We adopted a Clydesdale from the vet school, then we bought this Shire filly, and they made our first team."

At first glance they seemed mismatched — the huge tall Budweiser Clydesdale and the small Shire mare, but they worked well together.

"The little mare had a very long stride for her size, and the big Clydesdale gelding didn't. Their way of going was amazingly well-matched; they just didn't look right," he said. "But looks aren't everything when trying to get the work done."

Sardinia has made videos of working with horses — and a movie.

"We go to the Western Regional Clydesdale Show every year to show our horses, and also show that movie to let people know what farming with horses looks like," he said. "We enjoy the horses, including the retired ones, but we have to feed them. We raise our own hay and put up about 80 ton per year."

The farm has 25 acres in hay — enough to feed the horses and sell a little.

"This helps pay for keeping the horses, since we have so many retired horses," Sardinia said. "The working horses do all the work to produce plenty of hay for themselves and a lot more."



Mike Sardinia operates a horse-drawn hay baler with a wagon attached.



Mike Sardinia's wife, Teri, mows hay with a team of mares.

They use two mowers at the same time.

"Teri and I enjoy the horses and do everything together. With the two of us mowing it goes faster. When we give the horses a break we just sit and

talk," Sardinia said.

"The nice thing about when you stop for a break with the horses, everything is quiet," he said. "It's a lot nicer than with tractors."

He and Teri both grew up farming with tractors.

"We enjoy doing our haying with horses because it's less noisy," he said. "You can hear the birds and enjoy peaceful surroundings. It's almost like going back in time, doing the haying and farming without monster machines with cabs and lights."

They have two balers, also pulled by the horses. They make 50-pound bales.

"It only takes two horses to pull the motorized baler," he said. "We put four horses on the wheel-drive baler if we don't put a wagon behind it. We use five or six horses if we have the wagon behind the baler, and we prefer to do that, so we don't have to go back and pick up bales off the ground."



Mike Sardinia's niece, Claire Devereaux, with a young Clydesdale foal that wasn't yet named.

They used to do haying for their neighbors, but they've expanded their place to the point that they've got their hands full.

"Teri and I both have other jobs," he said. Teri teaches high school and he has his mobile veterinary service.

He plows with horses and says that if you have a good furrow horse everything goes great.

"If I don't have a good fur-

row horse, then it's up to me, and I'm not as good at going straight," he said.

Horses are smart, and creatures of habit. If you can get them doing the right thing, they continue doing it, he said.

"We don't own a tractor, so this saves on fuel costs, machinery repairs, maintenance and frustration when things don't start," he said.

And tractors can't reproduce.

FENCE INSTALLATION



FIELD & RAIL Statewide Fence Company

503-859-2804 CCB#93256

statewidenfence.net • Lyons, OR

- ✓ Tons of Accessories
- ✓ Easy Financing
- ✓ Full Service Dealership
- ✓ Complete Line of Honda ATV's

2016 PIONEER 1000 EPS
MSRP \$15,199^{00*} **Sale \$14,599**



Stk #02560

- ◆ 4x4
- ◆ 3-Seater
- ◆ 6 Spd. Paddle Shift
- ◆ Auto Trans.
- ◆ Liquid Cooled
- ◆ Fuel Injection
- ◆ 12 Month Warranty

Serving Farms
& Ranches
for 51 Years
1964-2015

TAYLOR honda sports
Your Authorized Full Service Dealer

2140 N. Pacific Hwy. 99E • Woodburn, OR • Open 8-6 Tues-Sat.
(503) 981-1813 • 800-981-1813 • www.taylormotorcycles.com



honda.com PIONEER IS ONLY FOR DRIVERS 16 YEARS AND OLDER. MULTI-PURPOSE UTILITY VEHICLES CAN BE HAZARDOUS TO OPERATE. FOR YOUR SAFETY, BE RESPONSIBLE. ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, EYE PROTECTION AND APPROPRIATE CLOTHING. ALWAYS WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT, AND KEEP THE SIDE NETS AND DOORS CLOSED. AVOID EXCESSIVE SPEEDS AND BE CAREFUL ON DIFFICULT TERRAIN. ALL MUV DRIVERS SHOULD WATCH THE SAFETY VIDEO "MULTIPURPOSE UTILITY VEHICLES: A GUIDE TO SAFE OPERATION" AND READ THE OWNER'S MANUAL BEFORE OPERATING THE VEHICLE. NEVER DRIVE UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL. ON PUBLIC ROADS OR WITH MORE THAN ONE PASSENGER, DRIVER AND PASSENGER MUST BE TALL ENOUGH FOR SEAT BELT TO FIT PROPERLY AND TO BRACE THEMSELVES WITH BOTH FEET FIRMLY ON THE FLOOR. PASSENGER MUST BE ABLE TO GRASP THE HAND HOLD WITH THE SEAT BELT ON AND BOTH FEET ON THE FLOOR. RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT WHEN DRIVING. PIONEER® is a registered trademark of Honda Motor Co., Ltd. 12/16 *MSRP does not include \$750 in destination charges. Visit powersports.honda.com to view applicable destination charge amount.