

## SUNDAY BREAKFAST

The decision to hook the horses to a brimming full manure spreader on that cold, and fateful day in January was not one that Bob made without due consideration. Bob, the engineer, thought through all tasks with resolute care. There were times during which just changing his shoes took time consuming deliberation. However, on this particular day, Bob found himself in the predicament of miscalculation.

The horses, it turns out, had not held to the estimated amount of manure Bob had intended to muck from their stalls that week. Perhaps it was that extra flake of hay one evening or it could have been as simple as too many carrots; the fact remained that the manure runneth over.

Bob could not ignore this as his coworkers had started commenting on the specific odor of his clothing and joking, "Hey Bob, do you live in a barn?" The fact was that Bob did live in his barn along with four quite large Percheron horses. It was a temporary situation made necessary by one of the few impulsive acts of his otherwise well ordered life. Upon receiving his final divorce papers, Bob bought a motorcycle and headed West. When he got to Indiana, he discovered the Topeka Draft Horse and Livestock Auction. Bob, a horse neophyte, was so enamored by what he saw, he sold the motorcycle, bought a truck and trailer, and sat down to bid on a pair of black Percherons. They were almost last in the sale order and Bob, the engineer, started to worry about being outbid, and have no horses at all. That was when he bought the two greys. And of course, the pair of blacks.

By the time Bob purchased some harness and a forecart, he had just enough funds to drive to Pennsylvania. Living in the barn with his horses allowed him to have enough money to buy a car and eat until he recovered financially. It was a quite cozy, tack room with Dutch doors that allowed two of the horses to stick their heads in while Bob made dinner. Bob kept the barn meticulously clean until a particularly cold and nasty week of weather necessitated keeping the horses in their stalls all day and all night.

The horse manure was carted from the stalls and dumped into an old, but very functional, horse drawn manure spreader. Bob, the engineer, saw no need for a tractor when he had four horsepower of horses. Once a week Bob would hitch up two horses to the spreader and empty it over a five-acre hay field. The miscalculation became obvious by Thursday evening and little could be done to convince the horses that they were headed towards maximum capacity in the stalls. They blithely produced more manure.

Bob, the engineer, calculated that, by Saturday morning, he would reach terminal mass and planned to spread that day. But Mother Nature could not help but add to the situation by dropping freezing rain. By Sunday morning, Bob revisited the situation and, appreciative of the possible complications, hitched Daisy and Dan, the blacks, to the manure spreader. Bob thought he had covered all of the possible scenarios and was prepared, as all engineers were, to adjust his plan accordingly.

The first adjustment came with the horses. Having been stalled most of the week, they had a bit more enthusiasm for the job than usual. Bob was thinking that the weight of the overloaded manure spreader would settle them down, so he took them far out into the field, out by the new houses, before engaging the gears of the spreader.

The manure was moved by two chains, which slid the load to spinning blades that threw the manure out of the spreader. The apparatus was driven by gears that were connected to the moving wheels. The horsepower was provided, naturally, by the horses. So, when the gears were engaged, more horsepower

would be needed. On this particular cold winter day, the manure was frozen into one massive bulk. The horse power required to break that loose caused Daisy and Dan to lunge into the harness, and give it their all. Bob, the engineer, still failed to see the flaw in his plan.

Once the manure spreader became operational, the horses picked up speed. The faster they went, the more manure was thrown, the lighter the load, the faster they went, and the further the manure was thrown. Frozen solid, hard as a rock, missiles of manure bombarded the aluminum siding of the new houses. The machine gun like effect roused numerous families from their breakfast to peer flabbergasted out of their windows. Flying by was Bob, Daisy and Dan, galloping on a circular course around the field.

Bob, the engineer, remained calm, as he knew there was no such thing as a perpetual motion machine; eventually they would stop. He was calculating his speed and computing the lessening load of the spreader in order to arrive at that point. Had he consulted Daisy and Dan, he would have realized that he had forgotten to calculate in the fun factor. At each pass, the houses were bombarded; the breakfasters surely under their kitchen tables huddled in fear that one of the missiles would crash through a window. Bob thought about saying, “Oh, #\*@!,” but that would have been redundant as #\*@! was flying everywhere.