

CARE FOR COWS IN VRINDAVAN

NEWSLETTER

November, 2003

Abandoned Calves Capture Engineer

Richard Basel, 40, a Swiss mechanical engineer, felt his spiritual life was at a stand still and decided to do something about it. He struggled with his boss and got permission to take a ten-week leave of absence to serve and study in Vrindavan, the land of Krsna. He arranged by email for several teachers there to tutor him in philosophy and *mridanga* and he was off.

His daily classes and *mridanga* practice took up only about 5 hours a day, so he decided to give *go seva* a try. He bought a used bicycle and began going to Care for Cows from 5:00-7:30 a.m. every morning where he enrolled in Go Seva 101 (Feeding & Grooming). Detecting his good potential to become a *go sevak*, the cows offered Richard so much encouragement that he decided to take the course in tick removal (Go Seva 102) taught from 4:30-6:00 p.m. in the evening. Tight schedule.

After Richard had completed the beginning courses we got two emergency calls, the first reporting a calf lying immobile on the side of the road, the other reporting a young bull hobbling with a maggot-infested hoof. Both were admitted to the infirmary. The calf had apparently been struck by a car and was

almost fully paralyzed, still in that condition she taught Richard how to feed milk to a convalescent calf and retard the development of bed sores by rotating the body on alternate sides. From the young bull Richard learned how to remove maggots deeply buried in the flesh without gagging.

Then came the heaviest monsoon in one hundred years to teach Richard how to navigate flooded pot-holed roads at dawn with wet glasses. He even took a spill and suffered a nasty bump on his face. Nevertheless, he made sure the cows were fed on time, kept clean and soon it was apparent to all that they had won his heart.

Next came his biggest test: an abandoned three-year-old 450-kilo bull, while lying innocently on the side of the road, was struck by his worst enemy, a reckless tractor. With his spine severed and several wounds on his hindquarter, he was loaded on an ox cart and in the dead-of-night dumped at the Care for Cows gate. It took six of us to move him to the infirmary. He was not an easy patient.

Understanding Richard's expertise in mechanical engineering, the bull inspired him to modify and improve our hoist so we could more effectively attend to his wounds. He accepted Richard's service for three weeks and during his last days inspired him to make the infirmary fly-proof to retard maggot infestation.

One day, while grooming the cows, Richard mentioned that Swiss dairies have discovered that cows like to hear pleasing music and that increased milk-production is one of the effects. The cows persuaded Richard to install a sound system in the cowshed and remember him fondly while hearing bhajans and flute/ tabla in morning *ragas*.

Ten weeks passed quickly and Richard's former life beckoned him. Reluctantly he returned, but much wiser and inspired. He writes: "The atmosphere in the cowshed is *sattvik* and while

serving there I got many realizations about the Modes of Nature which was the subject on one of my classes. Just by brushing a cow...

"It is said, that if you brush a cow under the neck it softens your heart. It's very touching when the calves rest their heads on your lap and their big eyes ask you to brush them. You can't resist and now I understand why Krishna likes the cows even more than the *brahmanas*.



Richard captured by Nitai & Tulsi

"The more you put yourself into serving the cows, the more comes back to you... from the cows and from Krishna. You can really feel it."

And his words are not empty. Richard is now establishing a Trust in Switzerland for raising funds to get the more than 300 abandoned cows off the streets of Vrindavana.

View photos of:

- Govardhana Puja festival
- Cows & People
- Care for Cows facility
- Our Calves
- Krsna, the Padayatra Bull
- Vrindavan Cows

gallery.careforcows.org



Nirmal, new-born calf
& Gauri

A Prayer Answered

Nirmal dasa has joined the Vrindavan Food for Life staff and is managing the Care for Cows *go sadan* and the vegetable garden. His dedication, expertise, and Vaisnava integrity promise to boost the present programs and allow us to expand into the production of insect repellents, medicines, incense, and other household goods made from the urine and dung of the cows.

Ox-Powered School Bus



Rupa Raghunata, Chief Executive of Vrindavan Food for Life, has founded the Sandipani Muni School for underprivileged children. Fifty of the students live in a village three kilometers from the school so he had an ox-powered school bus built to transport the students to and from school daily. Here you see the children happily engaging in *kirtan* on the way to school.

Electric Oxen



Braja and Bharata are the first oxen to generate electricity in the Vraja area. They walk in a counter-clockwise fashion at their own pace pulling a 15-foot lever which cranks several gears and outputs 1,800 rpm to power an alternator which charges two heavy-duty 12-volt batteries in 1.5 hours. The electricity is then sent through an inverter and converted into 220 volts and can produce 2 kilowatts of energy for four hours. Our plan is to use the energy for pumping water, chopping fodder and grinding grains for the cows.

Can Singaporeans become Go Sevaks? Can, can lah...

Sudarshana dasa, Singapore, spent five months in Vrindavana attending the Bhakti Sastri course. In the mornings and evenings he regularly came to groom the residents of Care for Cows who, being pleased with his service, plotted how to engage more Singaporeans in *go seva*.

Knowing that Pradeep was preparing to come to New Delhi on business, they inspired Sudarshana to request several friends to send some gifts with him. Pradeep arrived in Vrindavan elated with generous offerings from fifteen aspiring Singaporean cowherd men and women.

The cows then sent their representative to Singapore where the red carpet was laid out for him. Chardrasekar Acharya sponsored Pooja; Amutha and her husband sponsored Nityananda;

Devakinandana, Bala Krishna, Kishan and family, Beng, and many others offered generous donations. Jai Simman offered to become the Care for Cows rep in Singapore. Undoubtedly, this is a biggest step toward boosting the economy of Singapore.

How I came to the Care for Cows Movement

by Yashoda

As far as I know I have always lived in the streets so I take it I was born there. I was only a few months old when I was separated from my mother and began wandering aimlessly. Like that two long years passed. One summer the heat dried whatever little greenery remained and being weak, I could not compete with the stronger cows to get a share of the garbage. I had been beaten with a stick by so many vegetable vendors that I had lost confidence in the human race. In this frame of mind I sat in the scant shade of a tree and prepared to fast until death. But a pious lady noticed me and began to bring me food and water daily. I remember her shaking her head and saying, "My, my... you are just skin and bones."

She called Care for Cows and asked them to take me in... that I would surely die if they didn't. They agreed but as I had never experienced being cared for, I was not the least bit interested in going. Two cowherd men appeared planning to walk me to the *goshalla* but I flatly refused to go. Despite my resistance they loaded me on a bullock cart and carried me off.

Just see how I looked upon arrival. I was so skinny I couldn't poop. It's not easy to break into a new herd, especially if you're sickly. The first days were really hard as the other cows bullied me and called me Boney Butt... and later B.B. for short. It was humiliating. But the cowherd men gave me special food and as I



Yashoda May, 2002

regained my health and morale, gradually the cows accepted me and I felt at home.

I have a great appetite and I think that is what turned the tide for me. Gradually I became strong and no one could push me around anymore. My self esteem was fully restored when several of the handsome resident bulls competed to win my hand. I was no longer called B.B. and you can see why.



Yashoda September, 2003

Almost everyday visitors offer us sweets, vegetable cuttings, or fruit. Some of them become inspired and sponsor all of our food for a day. Others offer to sponsor the maintenance of one of us for a month or longer. Though I had been at Care for Cows for more than a year, no one had yet chosen to sponsor me. But one day an especially exuberant man named Nitin visited and offered us bananas. He told the cowherd man that he wanted to sponsor a cow for his sister who was pregnant and wanted to know which cows needed sponsors. One of the

cowherd men walked up to me and as he scratched my belly telling the visitor that I was also pregnant, my eyes met Nitin's and we really connected. It was love at first sight. Just see what a happy couple we are... and he's not even my sponsor!



Yashoda & Nitin Kapoor, U.K.

I can't imagine how wonderful his sister must be.

Nitin stayed a few days and returned to U.K. with many pictures for his sister. He left wondering who would be the first to deliver, his sister or me. I'm happy to announce that my calf was born on November 15, 2003.

Shortly after giving birth, a solemn thought struck me: "What will be the fate



of my calf? I pray that she will not have to wander the streets like I had to." Just then a young woman appeared in the barnyard wearing a sari and, gracefully smiling like a *gopi*, asked the cowherd men, "For many years I have wanted to sponsor a cow in Vrindavan. Are there any available?"

They gave her a quick tour and many of the cows who used to call me B.B. came up to show their best side. But she was not taken in by them. Then she saw my calf who was not more than 10 hours old. My heart started thumping... and when she said, "I'll sponsor this one.", I experienced the happiest moment of my life. My prayer had been answered. Later that mysterious young lady named my calf **Jai Radhe** and I took it as an indication of who must be her Mistress.



Jai Radhe & Kirti Keshur, U.K.

So, that's my story. I am one of the proofs that Care for Cows is living up to their name.



I have just been admitted to Care for Cows. Is anyone willing to sponsor me?



Care for Cows in Vrindavan (India) is the branch of Vrindavan Food for Life that maintains abandoned cows, bulls, retired oxen, and orphaned calves. We are international volunteers who offer our talents and resources to tend to the neglected cows living in Krishna's holy land. We provide stray cows hay, flour, fresh grass, medical attention and a place where they can recuperate from injuries. At present we host a herd of seventy.

There are approximately three to four hundred abandoned cows in Vrindavan requiring accommodation. Unless they are protected they are destined to subsist on refuse and become plagued by various debilitating and often terminal diseases, suffer injury from careless motorists, or worse, be abducted and transported in very inhumane ways to the growing number of modern slaughterhouses in India. Thus there is an urgent need to act.

You can participate by helping:

- acquire more land
- build new facilities
- sponsor the maintenance of your chosen cow.

Please address inquiries to
Kurma Rupa dasa, giriseva@pamho.net
Visit us at www.careforcows.org



Sandipami Muni students playing with the calves after school