

Lithuanian Yak Farming

As requested by the Lady Katerina on the twenty third night of March in bequest of Baron Von Munchausen to one Baron Celsius du Barrow. Being transcripts of some merit.

I've heard tell of your adventures with the Lithuanian Yak farmers and there's rumours it had ramifications for the English economy, perhaps you could expound on that a little further?

It's hard for me to talk about it. It was a rough time. My fiancée had flown away and all I had to remember her by was a small lard ring.

Lord Peter: I've always been rather curious as to why it involved eradicating the entire species known as "rabbit"?

I'm fond of rabbits as you understand. They're small, cute, delicate, enthusiastic and intelligent beasts.

Baronet Clive: So what you're saying is that they were a comfort food in your down time?

Not for me, although a good rabbit stew or a rabbit and sweet potato briosh was almost as good as sponge cake. It wasn't for me though, you understand, but for the yaks. The main diet of the yak is sweet potato. Unusually they aren't fussed about the colour. Most beasts will prefer white, purple, red, or the extremely rare orange sweet potato. But the yak is indiscriminate. So indiscriminate and enthusiastic that Lithuania has a sweet potato problem. In that there aren't any.

The Lithuanian Yak is an appealing beast. It's much larger than a rabbit and therefore a comfort in trying times. Rabbits are comforting, as mentioned by the stable boy, but they are very small. Imagine how much comfort can be gained from a much larger animal.

Captain Sir Robert: It has been noted in fact, that from the Lithuanian Yak, that we get the phrase "breeding like yaks".

"Breeding like yaks" refers to breeding very, very slowly. Don't get me wrong, they're enthusiastic, but their gestation period... Sorry, there are ladies present...

Lady Floria: It's because they are so fond of cuddling, is it not?

I don't want to get into the details of yak husbandry, but I am told that a yak, given it's choice, will prefer to cuddle as apposed to any thing else - except eating sweet potatoes.

As the Baronet has told us, with sweet potatoes - rabbits have a kinship with white sweet potatoes and this is why they eliminated the purple ones in preference. The yaks being indiscriminate and affectionate beasts that they are, can't tell the difference between a white sweet potato and a white rabbit. The thing is, and it was my fault - I had travelled to Lithuania with my team of white racing rabbits, which breed very quickly (hence the phrase "breeding like sweet potatoes"). The rabbits bred like sweet potatoes, the yaks like yaks and this being the time of the Great Lithuanian Sweet Potato Famine.

Lady Floria: Aren't rabbits entirely poisonous to yaks?

No, not entirely, there is an allergy...

Lady Floria: I thought it was instant death for a yak to so much as nibble on a rabbit?

Lord Peter: Was it then that you discovered that they could in fact eat yellow rabbits?

The allergy they had with the white rabbit was to swell to prodigious size, and die.

Captain Sir Robert: The main problem with eating the yellow rabbit is that technically, most of them are still married to the Sultan.

It became a matter of some urgency to train the yaks, and indeed to get in trouble with the Sultan. You have not lived until you've seen a duel between a yak and a Sultanet.

Lady Katerina: But where did the squid come into that?

As far as I know it was still in a nunnery in Africa. It was interesting to see a duel between an oversized yak and a Sultanet. If the Sultanet is too slow with his sword, the yak will seek to cuddle him. Which is a very comforting experience, but not when the yak is four times its normal size and it can leave one feeling much as if one were suffering from a cold.

It became a matter of sum urgency to train the yaks for some colour discretion.

It's heart breaking to train yak. Because to train a yak you must beat it across the nose and they are very appealing beasts.

Lord Peter: Perhaps it helped when they all caught the common cold?

Indeed. The yak is a hearty beast.

Hon. Hyacinth: If you had finished your training with a spatula then none of this would have been an issue.

I spent some time communing with the body of a dead monk, but eventually I realised that I had been communing with the wrong monk. I had reached a deep and mystical understanding of the skillet.

Lady Katerina: What of OCD?

The Office of Country Development did have a scheme for me which was going to help. The OCD, while not a very reliable department at the best of times, had come up with scheme involving racing vultures, racing rabbits, orange sweet potatoes and yaks. The details of it escape as the only thing I was interested in was that there were orange sweet potatoes. I had never heard of orange sweet potatoes before, they were extremely rare. White and purple ones were as common as dirt in Scandinavia and can be harvested while making clay bricks. Red sweet potato, while it has obvious defensive attributes is extremely tasty.

The yaks that hadn't eaten rabbits, had eaten vast amounts of sweet potato and also grown to larger than normal size. It was very difficult to tell the difference between a yak that's eaten rabbit and a yak that's eaten large amounts of sweet potato until they explode. This was hell on the elephants were using to cure the yaks of their common colds. They would trample an oversized yak - it is a little known fact that they are quite hardy, and elephant resistant creatures - unless they have eaten a white rabbit, in which case they will explode messily.

The problem for the rabbits, which travel in flocks as you heard previously.

to be continued

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Last update: **2008/04/01 02:36**

