

Shoot and release



I'm always thinking up great ways to make money, but I'm too busy making a living to get rich. But my latest idea is so good I simply must share it with you.

I admit that a lot of my friends are hunters, and if that makes my light shine less brightly amongst the PETA crowd, then so be it. My camouflaged buddies tell me that, No. 1 it's getting harder and harder to find places to hunt and, No. 2 even if they are lucky enough to find a place to hunt, there are fewer and fewer things to shoot at. But that was before my really big idea: using livestock as game animals.

I know what you're thinking: it's hard enough trying to keep your cowherd together with wolves, animal rightists, the government and enviros declaring them open game, without hunters shooting at them too. But what I'm proposing are two seasons for hunting livestock, dart season and paintball season, neither one of which should result in the death of your stock. Think of it as shoot-and-release hunting.

I've seen ads for a company that sells rifles, crossbows, pistols and darts as a way to vaccinate your cattle from long range. This is great for people like me who aren't USTRC or PRCA ropers, are too cheap to hire any help and are too lazy to saddle the horse and fetch the stock. Hunters could use these darts to hunt cows.

Under my plan, both dart and paintball season would last five months each, with a month in between to give your cattle a chance to calm down before shipping and branding. (Now all we need is a way to brand our cattle from long distance!)

Some might suggest that livestock are not wild enough to be good game animals, but after being shot by sharp darts and splashes of color, your cows and horses should be wild enough to qualify as rodeo stock. They'll be harder to sneak up than a Chicago hit man.

Believe me, deer hunting will not be able to compete with the thrill and difficulty of going for a South Dakota Grand Slam that would include a Brahma bull, Duroc hog, Southdown sheep and a Lipizzaner stallion. And you'll still get a chance for a traditional photo op if you act quickly and get the picture of you and your one ton range bull before the tranquilizer from the dart starts to wear off. Act too slow though and you may need some help letting your animal loose!

Ranchers, just imagine, you'll get your cattle vaccinated and have the additional income from hunters and rodeo contractors. Anyone who wants the full hunting experience, camping out, freezing to death, getting bit by red ants and being shot at, ought to be willing to pay at least \$1,500 for a horse, \$1,000 for a cow and \$500 for a sheep and/or pig. A quickie hunt from the front seat of your pickup while you're checking your cows could be half price.

From the hunter's perspective, there are many advantages to my plan: you don't have to drag a deer carcass for three miles over rough terrain, there are currently no license or tag fees (I'm sure that will change), and you don't have to go on safari to Africa. You'll still get to dress up in camo and go hunting at Cabela's for decoys, ammo and artillery that you probably don't currently have in your arsenal.

The best part is you don't have to dress out any game because you'll be given a complimentary pound of hamburger when the hunt is over. And who wouldn't rather eat beef than venison?

If you think livestock are much too valuable to use as game, I suppose we could substitute Hollywood celebrities and Washington politicians. Sportsmen are already shooting paintballs at each other, why not darts?

A Hollywood Grand Slam might include a vegan chef (they're all over the place in tinsel town), a PETA member, an American Idol judge and one of the Baldwin brothers. Even though there would be no head to hang on the wall, which is very sad in the case of the Baldwin brothers, wouldn't you just love to put a dart in the rump of Simon Cowell, Piers Morgan or Andrea Mitchell?

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It's the Pitts

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