

Immediate Release

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What: Ox Driving Seminar

When October 8th from 9am-3pm

Who: Garfield Farm Museum

Where: for GPS only: 3N016 Garfield Road Campton Hills, IL 60175

Donation: \$60 (includes lunch)

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Work to the Old Time Rhythms with Oxen

CAMPTON HILLS, IL- Leave the hustle and worries of the 21st century behind and step into the rhythm of life in the 1800s. Join instructors Chuck Bauer and Bob McCann on Saturday, October 8th, at Garfield Farm Museum for an Ox Driving Workshop, 9:00am - 3:00pm.

Oxen were the driving force behind farming from the beginning of animal power until the mechanization of agriculture. The ox team was absolutely essential for the Illinois prairie farmer. Breaking new fields required a lot of power. Heavy draft horses were not being imported yet and riding horses did not have the strength to pull a plow through the heavy prairie grass roots. Oxen, mature cows or steers that have been trained to work, were readily available, easy to equip and cheap. A well-conditioned ox team could be expected to plow about an acre a day and could pull 2/3 of their own weight. Because working the prairie was so hard, it often took 2 to 3 or more teams working together to pull the plow. There were teamsters that made their living going from farm to farm breaking new fields.

By the 1850s, most of the prairie had been planted and new machines needed speed rather than strength to make them work. Horses were taking over the fieldwork. But many of the old farmers kept their ox teams on the farm up into the 1860s. It is hard to beat the steady pace and the calm disposition of an ox. To this day in other parts of the world, oxen are still vital for small scale farming. Selective small scale loggers in New England use oxen to lessen the environmental impact, that machinery can cause.

The workshop will teach participants how to groom, yoke and drive both teams and single oxen. Instruction will also be given on the selection, feeding, and training of calves. The cost of the full day workshop is \$60. Lunch is included. Garfield Farm Museum is located 5 miles west of Geneva, IL, off of Illinois Rt. 38 on Garfield Road. Garfield Farm is a former historically intact 1840s prairie farmstead and teamster inn that is being restored as a working 1840s farm. To reserve contact (630) 584-8485 or email at [info@garfieldfarm.org](mailto:info@garfieldfarm.org).

Spaces are limited, please respond promptly.