

# Men, dogs head for world hunting championships

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Upland Dog Haven, a business he runs at his home west of Goodland.

Crow has help from his wife Julie, who also works for Lobo Productions, a small natural gas company, and his 3-year-old son, Manten, who he says is already like a partner in the business. Their other son, Jarek, is 1.

For Melvin Crow, the competitions are about building a pedigree. The trophies are a record, he said, that this dog can do this. People know you're not selling them something that's not true, he said.

Most breeders guarantee their dogs 100 percent, he said, but it helps to have proof of your dogs' abilities before they buy. Genetics, training and proper care, Crow said, all make a difference in the quality of a dog.

"Some think we charge too much," Crow said, "but they haven't had the chance to hunt with a trained dog. They obey commands."

As long as you keep a dog's attention, he said, they'll do what you want. Crow said he has four older dogs that he no longer uses training collars on; one is Duke.

"I wish I had three Dukes," Crow said, "or 20. It wouldn't bother me a bit."

And he has younger dogs that don't need the collar, but he uses one just in case.

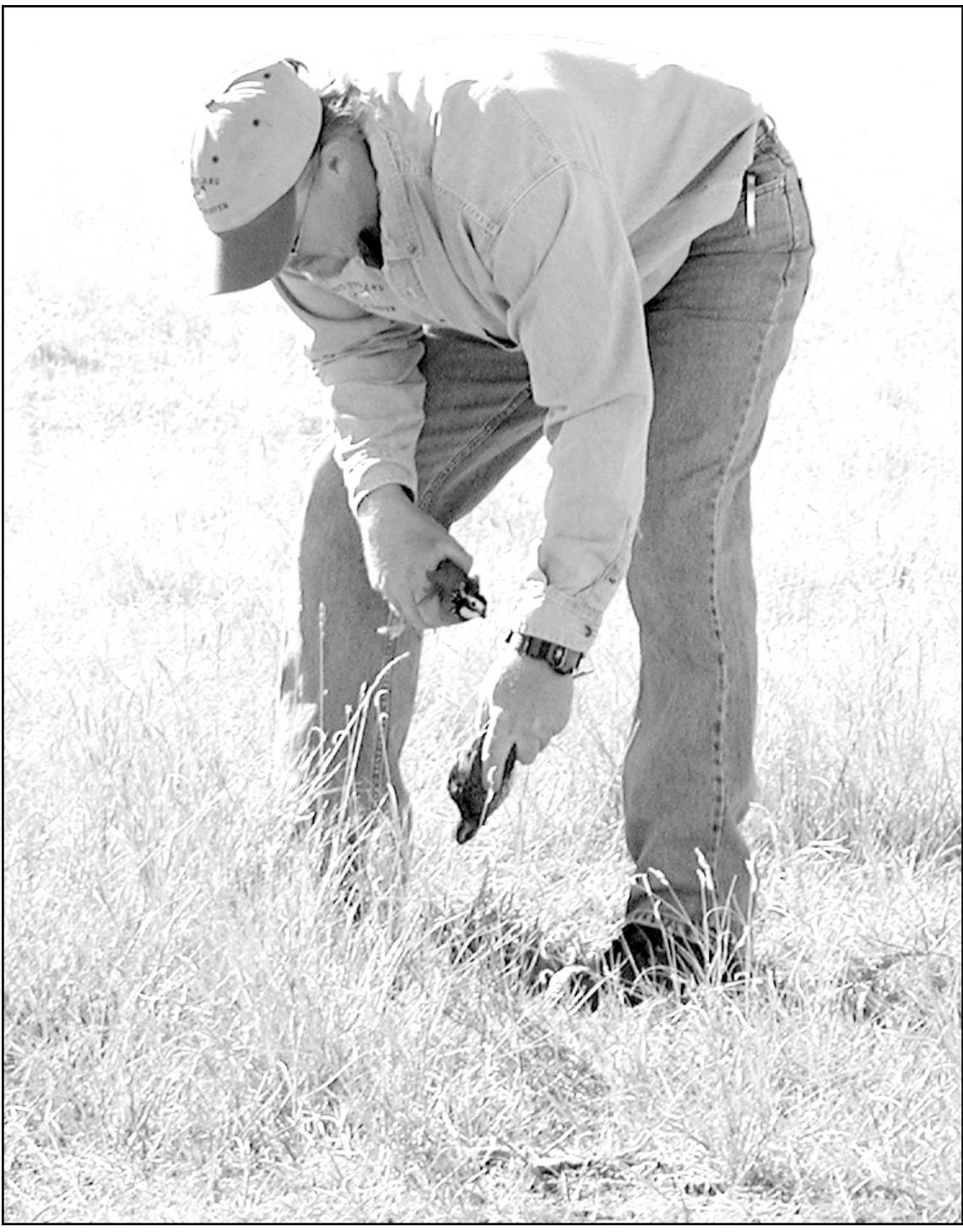
If they see a deer or a rabbit, he said, they may not be able to resist running after it. He said one of his dogs has a taste for skunks and can't resist bringing him black-and-white gifts.

And Crow inadvertently gives his neighbors gifts. As he puts birds out for the dogs to hunt, he said, some of them fly away. He said all his neighbors have birds, and they know where they come from; one neighbor called him and described a chuckar on his roof and asked what it was.

The competitions aren't just about selling dogs, though. Crow loves hunting and loves his job.

"It's fun," he said. "I enjoy every minute of it. Not everyone gets to go out and hunt with dogs every day; I do. I'll do it until I can't walk anymore."

"It's enjoyable to see them tran-



Melvin Crow planted quail in his training area for hunting dogs, across the road from his home.  
Photo by Sharon Corcoran/The Goodland Star-News

sition from a pain in the rear to a good dog."

Tournament hunting is getting bigger and bigger, Crow said, as the public is becoming more aware of the sport.

Every year, he said, two or three more guys around here get involved in dog trials.

They are tough competitions, he

said, with so many good dog handlers; you don't know until the tournament is over who is going to win.

The tournaments, Crow said, give him a chance to see how others train, what they do different, and give him perspective on his own ability as a trainer. And he gets to spend time with friends.

"We're all dog people," he said,

"so we all get along. We're all friends. That's what makes it fun."

He said he's looking forward to the World Championship and is going to give it his best shot.

"I've got just as good a chance as anyone else," Crow said. "We're gonna go up there and give 'em hell, and hopefully come home with a big trophy."

## Goodland man on service academy selection board

A Goodland business owner has been appointed to serve on the 1st District Service Academy Selection Board.

As part of the 16-member board, Ron Lucas, owner of Goodland Greenline, will help review applications and interview candidates who are applying for admission to U.S. Service Academies.

These include the U.S. Military Academy, U.S. Naval Academy, U.S. Air Force Academy and U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

The Board will interview candidates on Saturday, at the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library in Abilene. Following interviews, the board will make recommendations to Congressman Jerry Moran for his

final decision.

"With his military experience," Moran said, "Ron understands the skills necessary to succeed in a service academy. His leadership is important to this board, and I look forward to working with him this year."

Lucas served in the Army from 1971 to 1973. He owns and man-

ages Goodland Greenline Inc., where he has worked for 22 years. Lucas is president of the Goodland Rotary Club, president of the Topside Tipoff Tournament and is a member of the American Legion.

He and his wife, Debbie, have two children, Kari Lucas and Marti Butt, both of Overland Park.

## County approves property tax rebate program

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per project. The application period goes back to projects since January. The rebate program was put off because of the school finance problems between the state and the courts, said Timm.

The tax rebate will be based on the increase in assessed value fol-

lowing the first full year of completion and might not be dollar for dollar of the money invested, Timm said. Tax rebates would transfer with the purchase of property.

The program still needs to be approved by the city commissioner and the Goodland School Board.

County Appraiser Terry Ballard told commissioners the rebate is in

the software from Infintec his office uses. Ballard said they would need training on how to use it. The program could increase the workload in the office by a half person, he warned.

Ballard said he wanted the commissioners to review the approved rebates, because he didn't want to decide on his own who gets one and who does not.

## There is a difference: field trials vs. hunting

While some people use the terms interchangeably, dog people say there is a difference between field trials and hunting competitions.

Rex Murray, a professional dog trainer and host of a hunting competition, said they are definitely not the same thing. Field trials have been around about 50 years, he said, while hunting competitions have only been around for about 20.

The biggest difference, he said, is that field trials are judged, while competitions are scored.

You have to score points to win, he said, which makes it more about how you did. In judged events, he said, the judges can choose who they like better as the winner.

Another difference, Murray said, is that field trials are strictly about how the dog does, while in competitions shooting is half of your score. Field trials would be like a quarterback just seeing how far he can throw the ball, Murray said, while competitions, like football games, take the whole team.

## Annual state contests held near Goodland

Hunters and dogs from across Kansas come to Goodland to compete for the state title in pheasant hunting.

The host for the event launched the first hunting competition ever in the state and has become renowned for his work with dogs. He has even been asked to help with filming a black-powder event for television.

The Kansas State Pheasant Championship is held at Ringneck Country, Rex Murray's hunting preserve along K-27 at the Sherman/Cheyenne County line 16 miles north of Goodland. Murray holds three events per year at the preserve, the state championships in February and National Uplands Classic qualifying events in October and December. He will have a competition Saturday and Sunday, Dec. 3 and 4.

People are welcome to come watch the competitions, Murray said, and there is no admission charge.

The state event is one of the biggest hunting competitions in the country, Murray said. There are about 400 entries each year, about 250 people with some in more than one event. In order to keep the size of the tournament under control, Murray has turned people away each year. He turned away 40 entries the first year and said the tournament is usually full by December.

He had about 100 at the competition Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 22 and 23, and expects 120 in December.

Murray said he was contacted about 10 years ago by a group that started a national organization for hunting competitions, and they asked him if he would get involved. He has been holding competitions ever since.

Murray said he started the state event himself in 2002 and came up with the rules. He has held it each year since and is planning a fifth anniversary celebration next year.

He has been on the board of two

national organizations and is the regional director for the National Upland Classic Series. Murray competes all over the country and is on hand at many contests as regional director to help with rules issues.

The hunting season doesn't go all year, Murray said, but as national director, his part keeps him busy about 70 percent of the year's week-ends.

The "One Shot Challenge — Black Powder" for the Sportsman's Channel was filmed at his preserve, Murray said, on Sunday, Oct. 16. It will be on television in the early part of December, he said.

Murray was contacted to help with the event because his reputation precedes him.

"Just because of what I've accomplished with the dogs," said Murray, "people have recommended me. They called.

"I provided the dogs and guided black powder."

A woman from Michigan, a man from Kentucky and a man from Utah did the shooting, he said. It was different, Murray said. He figures the network will do a lot of editing from what they shot that day. In a 30-minute program, he said, they say there is about 22 minutes of action. They have several hours of film, he said; the shoot took all day.

Murray isn't new to televised events, however; he has judged two, and his first state championship was filmed for television.

He has worked with dogs for 20 years, training them professionally for 18. He has help with the hunting competitions from his wife Sandi and his son Ryan Murray, 25, and daughter, Kristin Murray, 22, both of Sherman County.

Murray is a farmer and rancher, but he is finding that his hunting preserve and dog training are taking over his time. He trains 75 dogs a year for other people.

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## Pins on sale!



Special color souvenir pins featuring the giant Vincent van Gogh sunflower painting on the big easel in Goodland are now on sale.

The pins are \$3<sup>49</sup> each and are available at The Goodland Star-News office, 1205 Main. They can be purchased wholesale through the Sherman County Convention and Visitors Bureau office at 890-3515 or 888-824-4222.

Pins are on sale at both Sinclair stations, Knott Just Books, Goodland Regional Medical Center Hospital Auxiliary gift shop, KOA Kampground, Bowmans Heating and Air Conditioning and at The Total Look beauty shop.

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