

# FOOD FIELD REPORTER

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## Ferguson's Homer-Hitting Hen Is Star At CM&SA Exhibition

### Casey Is Feature Of Cannery Show

Ferguson Firm's Hen  
Hits Homers For Feed

CHICAGO—"Casey," a home-run-hitting hen, probably won more friends and influenced more canners than a score of glib-talking salesmen and smiling vice-presidents behind the exhibits of the Canning Machinery and Supplies Association, here.

Undoubtedly the most popular attraction in the Conrad Hilton Hotel, "Casey"—exhibited by the J. L. Ferguson Co., Joliet, Ill. performed continuously, and drew the same audiences back two to five times. Donald Ferguson, vice president of the company which makes 'Packomatic' packaging machinery, realized he would be unable to display some of his heavy equipment and settled on the feathered substitute. From all accounts, it was a wise selection.

"Casey" — actually there were four "Caseys" rotating after an hour and a half's performance—had been trained to stick her neck through her pen, peck a small rubber loop which activated a solenoid to strike a miniature baseball bat against a small rubber ball. If the ball escaped the corps of fielders and struck the back of the baseball diamond, the back of the contraption would light up. Simultaneously, a few grains of feed dropped from a hopper in "Casey's" adjacent coop.

The food was available only as long as the light remained burning—usually two or three seconds—and "Casey" returned to the loop again, and pecked it, repeating the same cycle several hundred times during the 90-minute performance.

### Casey At The Bat



"Casey," the educated hen, occupying the booth of J. L. Ferguson Co., Joliet, Ill., was perhaps the most popular CM&SA exhibit in Chicago last week. Bird pecks the rubber band, which activates the bat, which hits the ball, which (if the fielders don't impede it) strikes the back of the apparatus, which lights the back board and trips a hopper in "Casey's" coop, which provides the baseball bird with grains of food. It's a complex process just to get a few pellets. R. E. Paul, Ferguson sales engineer, is with "Casey."

These faithful fowls were raised and trained on the Breland Animal Research and Training Farm, near Hot Springs, Ark., by graduate psychologists Keller Breland and his wife, Marion. Members of the American Humane Association, the Brelands assure the spectators that these birds are never punished, are carefully bred and cared for, are healthier than their country cousins and actually live longer than other chickens. Devoted to a scientific study of animals, they have trained more than 5,000 chickens, rabbits, pigs, goats, and cats to perform "interesting and educational acts."

Ninety-nine and nine-tenths percent of all spectators at the CM&SA exhibition saw one or more of the "Caseys" in action, Joseph Knight of the Ferguson Co. told FOOD FIELD REPORTER. He said the birds are fed a special diet and are carefully attended while both "on" and "off duty."



CASEY (at bat) is no foul ball when it comes to sales for Gumout.

## He's Not "Chicken" About Using Stunts

Maybe it doesn't work for other exhibitors, but Pennsylvania Refining Co. finds trained fowl really help to sell. Performing chickens bring the crowds; salesmen do the rest.

Let them say what they will about exhibit booth stunts, Robert W. Lackner, sales manager, Gumout Division, Pennsylvania Refining Co., Cleveland, is sold on extraneous attractions. They sell for him!

When you can equal 30% of your total sales last year, at just three trade shows this year, you can concede a point to Lackner. At one show, says Lackner, Gumout (carburetor cleaner) sales were 20 times sales at a previous show without a booth stunt. On the basis of seven shows for automotive jobbers this year, Gumout total sales should double last year's, Lackner estimates.

Gumout's attraction is a trained chicken (actually four of them) that plays baseball.

The birds are taught to peck at a rubber loop which operates an electric switch. This switch swings a small baseball bat that wacks a small rubber ball through what looks like a pinball machine. If the ball bounces around the rubber baseball figures and hits the fence at the

back of the field, it creates another electrical contact. This causes lights to go on, a buzzer to sound, and a few grains of chicken feed to drop in a cup at the end of a runway.

As soon as the ball hits the home-run contact, the chicken knows that it will receive food and rushes down the runway to get it. It then comes back to pluck at the rubber loop again. If the ball does not reach the back fence, there is no home run and the chicken knows it. If the lights do not go on and the buzzer does not sound, the chicken knows there will be food, and so pulls on the loop again to try for a homer.

This attraction makes the Gumout booth the most active in any show in which it has appeared, says Lackner. When the crowds pour in, his salesmen move in to pick off prospects—order books in hand. He has between four and six men in the booth at all times. They rotate from a complete roster of 10.

## "We Point with Pride"

Mr. Lackner's enthusiasm for "CASEY—The Homer-Hitting Hen" is based on SALES RESULTS, and is shared by the near-100 other users of Breland Live Animal Features from coast-to-coast and in Canada.

**Breland Features are  
unique because . . .**

- THEY NEED VERY LITTLE SPACE.
- ANYONE CAN HANDLE THEM EASILY.
- THEY ARE TERRIFIC STOPPERS.

Available for business and trade shows, sales meetings, store promotions, fairs, etc. we now have, in addition to Casey . . .

- "BIRD BRAIN" • "SAMMY AMORE"
- "DOWN BEAT" • "JOE BAZOOKA"
- . . . with others to come.

We assume all responsibility for the performers and furnish complete easy instructions, feed, etc. For complete information, and promotion helps; write or phone, giving show name and dates, to . . .

**Keller Breland Associates, Inc.**

Mail: Box 324 Phone: UN 4-6301

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

There are many advantages to the trained chicken attraction, reports Lackner. He has no difficulty in getting newspaper and TV publicity. His "team" has appeared on national TV as well as on local programs.

What all this publicity means, says Lackner, is that a jobber is impressed with our company. "Anything promoted that well ought to sell—is the way jobbers react," Lackner explains.

"We know these chickens are doing a lot for our sales," says Lackner. "General Mills uses about 50 of them from the same farm for such things as store openings and county fairs. We'll probably keep using this booth attraction for a long time. People don't seem to tire of it. Exhibitors who have seen it at previous shows come over to watch the chickens perform, and so we expect visitors to do the same although they may have seen the chickens before."

The End

# "Casey—the Homer-Hitting Hen"

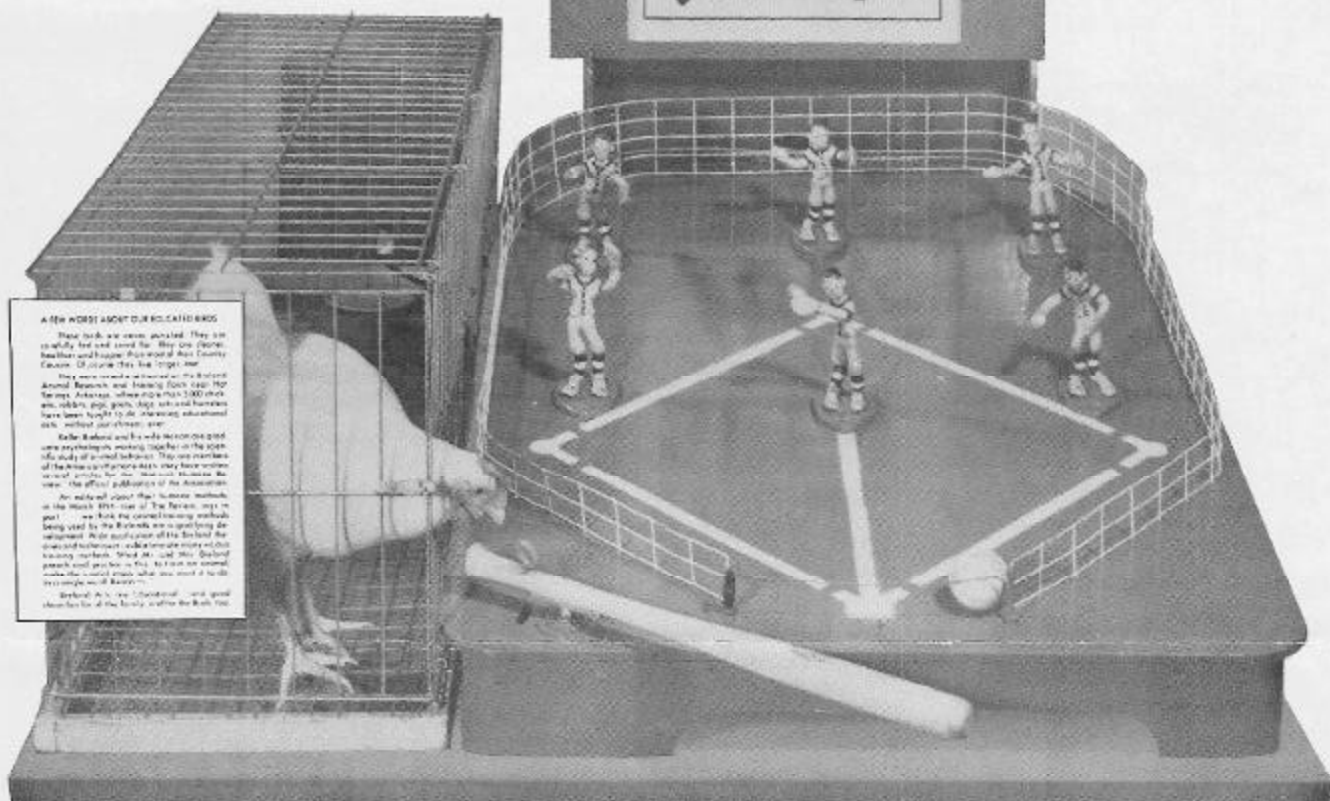
A Keller Breland  
BARNYARD PERFORMER

## THE PAYOFF

In four movements—1000 laughs

1. Casey pecks the "worm"—
2. Bat hits Ball—
3. IF ball hits Back Fence—
4. It's a homerun for Casey—  
to the Feedbox

The  
**HIGH-  
SPOT**  
FOR  
*YOU!*



### A FEW WORDS ABOUT OUR EDUCATED BIRDS

These birds are never punished. They are carefully fed and cared for. They are clean, healthy and happy. They are of pure Country Cousin. Of course they like to get out.

They are never released. At the National Animal Research and Training School, Top Ten, we train birds, dogs, goats, dogs, and even horses. We have been taught to do interesting educational acts without punishment.

Keller Breland and his wife have a good way of teaching, making together in the past the study of animal behavior. They are members of the American Psychological Association, the official publisher of the Association.

An animal sign that is never punished in the world. It is the result of the research in psychology. We have the correct training methods being used by the Brelands in a great many departments. After their years of the Breland training methods, they are now the most successful and profitable in the world. They are the most successful and profitable in the world.

Breland is a very successful and good character for the family, and the best of all.

CASEY plays superlative ball on a 4 x 5-foot table top. She slams out homers with abandon for food and fun and lays an occasional egg right there, while performing. Easy to handle, by anyone . . . a tremendous crowd-puller . . . and the subject of conversation and laughs for months after. Available at reasonable rentals, exclusively from . . .

## KELLER BRELAND ASSOCIATES, INC.

P. O. BOX 324

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

UNiversity 4-6301

## "And We Quote"

—from some of Casey's many friends...

"Casey certainly stole the Home Show for us"—*Swanson's, St. Paul*

"Casey batted over 1000 for us—was on all TV stations"—*Shillito's, Cincinnati*

"We thank Casey for many sales and contacts"—*Penn. Refining Co. (10 shows)*

"Casey was wonderful at our opening"—*Industrial Savings Bank, Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.*

"Your Girls played great ball for us"—*Hale's, San Jose, Cal.*

"A great drawing card and sales booster"—*Milliken's, Traverse City, Mich.*

"Your Chickens are Terrific"—*Socony-Vacuum Oil Co., New York (10 shows)*

(Originals on file—with many many more)

## Answers to Your Questions

Casey uses little space—a 4 by 5 foot table top is all. She gives a continuous show. Four birds play about 1½ hours each, and repeat for 12 hours if desired. They get normal food and exercise while performing.

Casey has the very greatest appeal. Regardless of age, kind, size or shape, EVERYONE wants to see Casey hit homers for food and fun.

Casey is shipped to you by express in two pieces, a cage of four birds and a small crate of props. Total weight under 200 pounds. The birds are fed enroute by the expressman. Anyone can set up and have a show going in 30 minutes. No previous experience, with baseball or birds, is necessary. Some of Casey's best friends are city fellers who never saw a live chicken before Casey.

The Flasher Sign behind the diamond lights up for seven seconds every time Casey hits a homer. It takes a card 18 x 29 inches horizontal or vertical. This is a very high attention spot as all eyes are fixed on that back fence when the ball hits it.

Casey is very educational. The birds lay eggs—sometimes while performing. This amazes city folks.

## About the Brelands

Keller and Marian Breland are graduate psychologists (University of Minnesota) doing serious research in animal behavior. (See TIME Magazine, Feb. 20, 1955, also LIFE, April 4, 1955.) Casey and other Breland Performers are demonstrations of their work.

The Brelands are members of the American Humane Assn. and have written on animal psychology for the official publication, "The National Review." Their methods are unique in that no punishment is used, and the performances are entirely within the natural capacities of the animals.

Keller Breland Associates, Inc. is a Minnesota corporation set up to handle rentals of Breland Performers. Headquarters are in Evanston, Ill. (Chicago suburb). For prompt handling all inquiries should be addressed to:

**KELLER BRELAND ASSOCIATES, INC. • EVANSTON, ILLINOIS**

Mail: Box 324 • Wire: 1112 Grove Street • Phone: UNiversity 4-6301

(Inquiries to Hot Springs are delayed by forwarding to Evanston)

## Farm Media



GENERAL MILLS' PROMOTER

*Then there's the rabbit that shoots baskets*

## Baseball-playing hens help General Mills sell Larro feeds

General Mills has 100 trained animal acts luring crowds into feed dealers' stores from coast to coast.

Seven years ago George Barnes, advertising manager of General Mills' Larro feeds, watched a hen do a tap dance while a rooster played the piano. Ever since Barnes has successfully used trained farmyard animal acts to promote Larro feeds. Currently, some 100 traveling shows are on the road, and GM figures that at least 1,000,000 people have seen them at one time or another at feed stores, county fairs, conventions, meetings of agricultural groups and the like.

The shows, explains Barnes, are used basically as "crowd pullers." They

serve dealers "who are key men to any manufacturer of formula feeds" by creating traffic in stores, by building goodwill among customers and prospective customers and by stimulating publicity. Adds Barnes: dealers can call on people who sign registration slips at the shows or build mailing lists from the names. "Ultimately, these acts sell feeds."

General Mills, which also uses local radio-TV programs and cooperative newspaper advertising for Larro feeds (via Zimmer-Keller-Calvert, Detroit), has animal acts that border on the incredible. Some of them: hens that hit baseballs, then run for first base (see cut); baby chicks that ride a merry-go-round; hens that select disks marked "Larro Feed" and ignore plain ones as they roll down an incline; rabbits that trip a lever and throw small basketballs

into baskets; hens that answer questions by pecking at either "yes" or "no" buttons; sows that sit on chairs, eat at tables, run vacuum cleaners; turkeys that win at pinball.

"FULLY AUTOMATIC": The trained animal acts are the brainstorm of Keller Breland and his wife, Marian, who are animal "psychologists." After getting a master's degree in psychology in 1940, Breland did research until the war when he trained pigeons for the government—a job that brought him into contact with General Mills. Later, he sold General Mills on the idea of using trained animals as sales tools, since then has trained an estimated 4,000 animals and birds exclusively for GM.

Breland's acts are valuable for two reasons. First, by basing training completely on food rewards, Breland can train any number of animals to do the same act. Actually, there are 125 hens that hit baseballs, nearly as many hens that select Larro feed disks; nine chair-sitting sows. Thus, GM can have duplicate acts playing all over the country. Second, most of Breland's acts are "fully automatic," that is, once a dealer sets up the props and learns how to care for the animals, the animals go through their acts without any handling or prompting. Breland guarantees that the acts will work; Larro salesmen often leave them with dealers, come back at the end of a week or two to pick them up. Salesmen, themselves, get manuals covering each act, which tell them how to "sell" dealers on the programs.

Breland lives on a 260 acre farm in Hot Springs (Ark.), which he calls RS Ranch (for "reinforcing stimulus"—his term for rewarding birds and animals with food). His wife specializes in the actual training while he dreams up new acts and builds props. GM's Barnes credits Breland's imagination in thinking up gadgets that will work regardless of the animal's skill as a major factor in making the acts successful. Some of Breland's latest schemes: sheep that round up sheep dogs; roosters that follow salesmen down the street; pigs that jump from towers into pools of water.

—TIDE, Sept. 11, 1954

*Now for You, Too...* Breland Acts Have COME TO TOWN . . .

Now available on an EXCLUSIVE basis, for Business and Trade Shows, Conventions,  
. . . easy to handle . . . use small space . . . educational . . . highly entertaining . . .  
wide range of special applications . . . REMEMBERED FOREVER . . .

Protected audience . . . no duplication . . . reasonable rentals . . . direct from . . .

### **KELLER BRELAND ASSOCIATES, INC.**

1112 Grove St.

EVANSTON, ILL.

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Animal Behavior Research and Training Farm—Route 6, Hot Springs, Ark.