



Diamond Shelters

WHERE QUALITY, SERVICE, AND PRICE MEET

BY MARGARET EVANS

ABOVE: Dueck's Mechanical Inc. offers structures in a wide variety of sizes, custom-made for the needs of clients.

Their product line includes shelters for warehousing, storage, manufacturing, sports training, livestock, greenhouses, and riding arenas.

RIGHT: This riding arena has a fabric cover which provides natural light and warmth from the sun, and accelerates thawing in the spring.

LaVern Dueck loved building things as a kid. He grew up on his parents' farm near Whitemouth in eastern Manitoba where they raised grain, hogs, poultry, and cattle. But he was under the influence of a dad who knew the economic value of being mechanical and fixing his own equipment. He also had a pretty talented grandfather who was ahead of the curve remodeling carburetors for greater fuel efficiency during his own

growing years, and developing an early form of infrared heaters before they were on the commercial market.

Building things was clearly in Dueck's DNA.

"I worked with wood as a kid and then turned to steel as I got older," he says. "I was 20 when I started my own business. A lot of people told me it's never going to work. You are way too young. My answer was that I'm young enough. If it doesn't work, I'll do something else."



Turns out, he didn't need to follow Plan B.

He started out like so many young entrepreneurs with a simple repair shop. Then a feed salesman asked him to bid on a shelter for a customer's hog farm. He won the contract, designed his first structure and never looked back.

Since 1989, Dueck's Mechanical Inc. has been designing, developing, and manufacturing fabric covered steel structures under the brand name of Diamond Shelters. When more space was needed, Dueck moved the plant into Whitemouth, and expanded it several times as the need arose. In 2016, he expects to expand the plant again with a 12,000 square foot addition to manufacture their fabric covers rather than outsourcing them.

As president of the company, he maintains oversight of every division, but admits his first love is still research and development.

"The greatest challenge is to stay on top of everyone working in the company and stay ahead of the competition," he says. "But one of the best achievements is to see the whole thing working together."

The company has 15 employees and their products include shelters for warehousing, manufacturing, storage, sports training, vehicle and RV storage, workshops, hay and grain storage, municipal storage of salt and sand, livestock facilities, greenhouses, and riding arenas.

The structures come in a wide variety of sizes custom-made to fit a client's needs. The biggest thing, he says, is for the structures to be free span yet cost effective. Horse owners like a lot of width. Clear spans range from 15 feet wide to 160 feet wide and a length to suit. Both the single hoop and the welded truss shelters have pony wall, freestanding, and high profile models designed with North American produced steel, with yield and tensile strengths that allow them to withstand heavy stress loads for the given climate.

Dueck's Mechanical Inc. is certified by the Canadian Welding Bureau and is CSA A660 certified, which is a requirement in order to meet the National Building Code of Canada. Diamond Shelter covers are North American made, high quality fabric, with a long life expectancy.

Depending on design complexity, the shelters are cost effective, erected in a relatively short period of time compared to conventional construction, and can be dismantled and relocated. They come with a standard 10-year or optional 15-year warranty. There are even Diamond Shelters on wheels that allow for large-scale construction of a piece of equipment that will need to be crane-loaded onto a flat deck. The shelter can be wheeled away to allow the necessary access to facilitate transportation.

For the equestrian community, it is the actual fabric that offers a special appeal.

"Our fabric covers offer a lot of natural light and heat from the sun. It's much warmer inside the building," says Dueck.

In regions where temperature extremes freeze the ground, this added warmth will accelerate thawing in the spring as opposed to some metal-clad structures that block sunlight and perpetuate cold temperatures and hard riding surfaces, even into summer. A warmer environment and a footing with the right texture nurture a safer, stress-free riding experience.

Three qualities have guided Dueck during his years in business.

"Honesty," he says candidly. "If you mess up an order or parts are late, you have to tell the customer. The truth always comes out, so be up front. The second is to produce top quality products. Build the best and keep it that way."

The third is his "pie" philosophy. His sales staff guides customers with the aid of a simple graph to understand the pie which is divided into thirds: Price, quality, and service. But you can only pick two of the three sections. If you want price and quality, you don't always get service. If you want price and service, you may sacrifice quality. If you take service and quality you will pay a reasonable price but be closer to your goal.

The future is bright for Dueck and Diamond Shelters. For over a quarter of a century he has been dedicated to designing a top quality product, providing second-to-none service, and ensuring customer satisfaction. Not bad for a kid who started by playing with wood on the farm, then built an enterprise based on meeting the needs of clients by providing quality and service at a reasonable price.



LEFT: A single hoop horse barn with a pony wall.

BELOW: Horse owners like lots of width and need free span structures that are cost effective. Diamond Shelters offers clear spans up to 160 feet wide.

