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# The world's first goat golf caddies

By [Zahid Mahmood](#), CNN | May 14, 2018



(CNN) Tucked away in the highlands of east Oregon, United States is Silvies Valley Ranch.

Built on working cattle and livestock, the ranch also has a luxury resort where customers can unwind at a day spa, horseback ride across the great outdoors or play on a seven-hole golf course.

But everything is not what it seems.

Behind the scenes, the ranch has been developing the world's first professionally trained goat golf caddy. No kidding.

From July, guests at the ranch will be able to rent a goat to follow them around the McVeigh golf course, just like a human caddy.

It's a job that pays peanuts, literally, as the goat wears a custom-made "goat-golf bag" -- designed by Oregon-based company Seamus Golf -- to carry clubs, beverage cans and their favorite treats.

The ranch's "goat training program" has schooled just four, with plans to double that number next season. The program's most successful graduate is four-year-old Bruce LeGoat, the caddy master.

"For years the goats were heading into the restaurant, looking for career development," jested Colby Marshall vice president of Silvies Valley Ranch to CNN. "Being the responsible managers we are, we listened to their ideas and now we have an unprecedented goat caddy program.

"Its got a lot of career opportunities and a lot more longevity for them."

Unsurprisingly, Seamus Golf had no experience designing golf accessories for goats.

But, according to the company's co-founder Akbar Chisti, it's an opportunity it was not going to turn down.

"I was like this is the coolest thing I could possibly do I'm never gonna get this chance again, so we took it up," he said.



Designing the bag for a four-legged companion was not without its challenge, though.

The first prototype took nearly 30 hours and was trialled by Chisti's large goldendoodle dog.

But after applying it to a "250-pound goat," according to Chisti, they had clearly underestimated the dimensions of the animal, and their excretion habits, which quickly sent them back to the drawing board.

"It was way too small. We know the way the human body moves, we know how it needs to balance, but for the goat it was different," he said. "The clubs couldn't be pointing into its neck and the bottom had to be shaped outwards to keep it hitting from its side when it walks."

"Goats are notorious for dropping their waste. And when you're trying to put on the grass it can be a challenging obstruction.

"So we had to re-tilt the bag to accommodate that," he added.



With the equipment inside, the bag weighs just 10 pounds -- a third of the total weight a goat can take. However, the most important feature of the bag is the peanut holder, which became a core component in training the goats.

"The whole process was hilarious, in the beginning Bruce wasn't following me around," Chisti said. "So I started giving him peanuts and before we knew it, he was like my best bud -- so we realized we had to make a peanut pouch to keep bribing him."

Marshall explained to CNN that goats are intelligent and sociable animals that want to be next to you. With the added bonus of tasty peanuts, they do all the things you want a caddy to do -- without lying down on the job.



Animal welfare activists, however, question whether the goats should be used in this way, arguing that they should be free to enjoy life as they please.

"Silvies' goat caddy gimmick is anything but cute," Fleur Dawes, communications director at In Defense of Animals said to CNN. "Goats are thinking, feeling individuals with their own wants and needs. Their frames were never made to carry golf bags."

Marshall responds by insisting the goats are treated to good food, clean water and 20 to 30-minute breaks between rounds.

He explains that they also have a veterinarian on site who gives them regular check ups.

"We are saving the goats by giving them paying jobs," said Chisti. "They work for peanuts!"