

## New Ways To Make Money On The Farm

### Ferocious Dog Breed Devotes Itself To Flock

There are only a few hundred Sharplaninec (pronounced shar-pla-nee-natz) dogs in North America, but this ancient breed of guard dog is renowned for its extraordinary bravery, strength, intelligence and large teeth.

They are native to the mountains of Macedonia but have been bred in the U.S. since the mid '70s. Historians believe this breed may have served as Alexander the Great's palace dogs more than 2,000 years ago.

Named after the Sar Planina Mountains, they are slightly smaller than other livestock guarding breeds, but easily make up for that in their devotion, fearlessness and quickness to react to danger. Males aver-

age 150 lbs. and females generally range from 100 to 120 lbs.. They come in all shades of gray and may have small white leg "stockings" and/or a star on the chest.

According to the Sharplaninec Club International, two dogs can protect a flock of 15,000 sheep, and one can fight several wolves and emerge victorious. Bears are another common predator in the mountains of their native land, and these dogs are known for their heroics.

Sharplaninecs are calm, steady and loyal to family members, but wary of strangers. They are a guarding dog and not a herding dog, according to club secretary Lisa Mackey of North Carolina.

"They are wonderful - I would never have

any other breed," Mackey says. "I once had a Sharplaninec that nursed 10 puppies and four lambs over several weeks. I could go on for a long time telling about the many great experiences I've had owning this breed."

There are currently about 2,000 of them worldwide. They are sometimes called Shar Planinec, Shara, Sarplaninec, Le Charplaninat and Sharplaninat, depending on the country they are found in.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Sharplaninec Club International, 275 Brooks Cove Rd., Candler, N.C. 28715 (ph 828 667-0089; email: mackeysacres@charter.net; website: www.geocities.com/Heartland/Bluffs/8220).



The Sharplaninec is an ancient breed of guard dog renowned for its bravery, strength, intelligence, and large teeth.

### Truck Parts Business Booms For Alberta Farm Family

A sideline business that started out as a hobby is now a major income contributor for Gordon and Vida Van Sickle, Oyen, Alberta.

Their on-farm auto-wrecking and parts business compliments the 8,000-acre grain and cow-calf operation that Gordon and his two brothers and dad have together.

Van Sickle got into the business 15 years ago by using his spare time to make a little extra money repairing "written off" trucks. Instead of chasing down individual parts that he needed, he bought several wrecked GMC trucks and stripped everything off himself. He sold the parts he didn't need to friends and neighbors.

By 1991, Van Sickle had three employees during the winter and installed many of the parts they sold. They later began concentrating only on stripping and selling parts because of changes on the farm that limited the time they had available. He now has two employees, one full time parts person/bookkeeper, and one part time parts dismantler.

The business specializes in parts for 1973 and newer Chevy and GMC pickups - half-tons to one-tons.

"We rebuild Chevy steering columns, transfer cases, and do some exhaust repairs on all makes and models, but we sell only GMC and Chevy truck parts because they are mostly interchangeable," Van Sickle says. "We keep both new and used parts in stock."

"We spend the most time stripping vehicles in winter, when the farm isn't as busy. We label our inventory of parts according to year and model, and store them as neatly as possible in various storage facilities on the farm, including a weatherproof sea container that I picked up at an auction," Van Sickle explains. "We've gone through more than 500 trucks since we began, but there's no big, ugly boneyard to look at. A crusher comes in regularly to deal with the stripped shells, and we sell the scrap metal for up to \$55 a ton to a recycler who uses it to make rebar."

The company has brisk sales year-round, except it slows briefly during harvest. Customers include farmers, garages, body shops



It started out as a hobby, but now an on-farm auto-wrecking and parts business is a thriving sideline business for Gordon and Vida Van Sickle of Oyen, Alberta.

and restoration buffs. By advertising in farm papers and setting up a website, VS Truck Works Inc., has customers across Western Canada and the U.S., including California, Wisconsin, and Kentucky.

"We ship parts orders by mail, freight truck and courier, and even make personal deliveries whenever we can," Van Sickle says. "Business is good, and we're grateful for that,

especially since drought and BSE have taken a huge bite out of farming profitability."

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### He Sells Tools On The Internet

Ken Scharabok of Waverly, Tenn., recently emailed FARM SHOW to tell us about the shop tools he sells on the internet.

"I have a small business on eBay.com that specializes in making and selling what I call 'poor boy' blacksmithing tools. These tools are made out of mild steel, or they're tools that I converted for use in blacksmithing. They're intended as a cheaper alternative for beginning or part-time blacksmiths," says Scharabok.

According to Scharabok, eBay offers a great model for doing business. "It lets you sell to anyone in the world who also has internet access. Once you are registered, you list an item or items using a standardized, fill-in-the-blanks type form, which remembers some of your individual settings. Listings can run three, five, seven, or ten days. Most buyers find items through key word searches, which can be the auction title only or both the item and description. If anyone is interested in your merchandise they then bid up to the level they want, just as if they were at a regular auction. The highest bidder wins and pays shipping charges.

"Probably the biggest factors influencing sales are a well-worded title and description using appropriate key words, good photographs, a reasonable opening bid

price, and a good performance record.

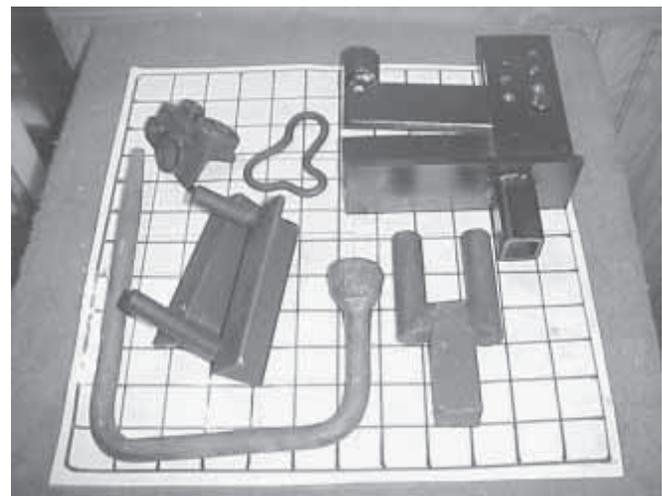
"To collect payment, I use PayPal, which is an on-line payment service owned by eBay. A buyer who registers with them simply tells them to take money out of an account, such as a credit card or checking account, and deposit it in the seller's account.

"eBay charges about 7 percent of the sales value and PayPal takes another 3 percent, so figure a total of about 10 percent. However, I don't think that's bad considering you're paying for a worldwide sales outlet without the paper work, catalogs and outdated information, etc., of a mail-order business. In effect, it's an electronic mail order opportunity.

"If your state has a state sales tax, you have to charge it to buyers who live within your state. These funds then have to be turned over to the state.

"I've sold more than 1,500 items on eBay with only a handful of non-paying bidders. I list what I want to, when I want to. For example, if I have a vacation planned, I simply don't have any auction close just prior to or during that period. On occasion, I've dropped some items out of my offerings because they didn't sell high enough to justify the cost and effort involved with them.

"Overall, I'm well pleased with the services offered by both eBay and PayPal and con-



Some of the welding tools Scharabok sells on eBay include, from top left going clockwise: Jig for bending two sizes of ornamental S-hooks - \$5.99; tongs reins clamp/ring - \$2.99; hardy chop fuller for necking down stock - \$14.49; hardy bending/turning fork - \$9.99; lug wrench turned into an anvil holdfast - \$9.99; adjustable bending forks for vise - \$4.99.

sider the fees to be extremely reasonable, considering the exposure and ease of buyer payment offered."

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Rd., Waverly, Tenn. 37185 (ph 931 296-3793; email: scharabo@aol.com; website: www.ebay.com and do a seller search on scharabo).