

Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income

If you're looking for new ways to add to your bottom line, take a look at the money-making ideas featured here and on the next page.

If you've found or heard about a new income-boosting idea, we'd like to hear about it. Send details to: FARM SHOW Magazine, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 (ph 800 834-9665) or email us at: Editor@farmshow.com.



Robert Quaedvlieg uses a "drop trap" to capture large groups of pest birds. After they're caught, he sets non-pest birds free and uses carbon monoxide to humanely kill the rest.

Pest Bird Trapper Helps Save Crops

A group of fruit growers in British Columbia has achieved great success in bringing their pest bird population under control, thanks to some inventive trapping methods developed by a professional trapper. These birds had previously been wreaking havoc by damaging millions of dollars worth of fruit and berry crops.

When scare tactics like falcons and noise cannons failed to solve the problem, the group chose a new approach. In 2003, they hired Robert Quaedvlieg to develop a bird control program, which ultimately has been responsible for the capture of over 83,000 starlings.

Quaedvlieg and a small crew of trappers set up an intensive network of two kinds of traps. The 22 conventional traps they employed are 6 by 8 by 6-ft. upright hutches covered with hardware wire, except for a slot at the top where birds enter to access fruit left on the ground inside as bait. Once inside, they can't fly back out. Each one of the traps can catch up to 200 birds per day.

The bird trappers also used five "drop traps", which are large 12 by 24-ft. frames, made from 2 by 6-in. lumber, with nylon netting fastened over the top. According to Quaedvlieg, one side of the frame is propped up about 3 ft. high with a remote controlled trigger system (made from a modified remote control door lock system) so the trap can be dropped from as far away as 1,000 ft.

"Just last week, we had one trap that caught 1,023 birds in one afternoon," he says. "We dropped it seven times to catch that many birds."

The drop trap has caught as many as 327 birds in one drop.

Quaedvlieg says the traps are emptied by herding the birds into a flat wooden box with

a wire cover. Non-pest birds are released before they cover the box with plastic and pump in carbon dioxide which humanely kills them within 15 seconds.

"We freeze their carcasses and sell them to a falconer for 10 cents each. He uses them as feed for his birds," he explains.

Quaedvlieg says he's learned some important lessons that have increased his trapping success. First, trapping starlings in late winter and early spring is key to major population reduction.

Secondly, trap placement is critical. He says trapping in the orchards themselves is relatively unsuccessful since the birds have abundant fruit everywhere to feed on. He has much more success at nearby cattle feedlots, where the birds congregate to feed on grain and insects.

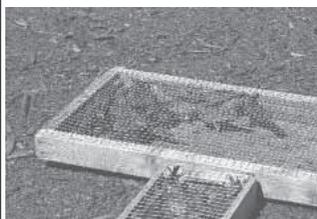
Feedlot operators are equally eager to have the birds removed.

Quaedvlieg uses fruit in the feed lots because it's different than what they're already eating and they like it better. He places the traps around the perimeter of the feedlot or in the alleys.

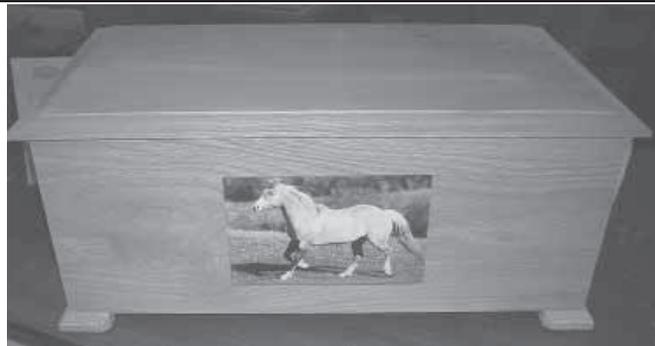
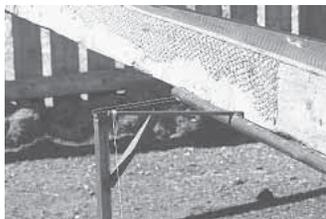
Lastly, Quaedvlieg says setting traps to catch the birds during the morning feeding time has proven to be most effective.

"Sometimes we leave a few live birds in the traps with food and water to serve as an attractor to flocks that come along and see them eating," he explains. "In Washington State, there is a 40 cent bounty on starlings, magpies and house sparrows to encourage people to control these populations. If you caught enough of them there, it could be a real money-making proposition."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Quaedvlieg, Site 35, C10, Keremeos, B.C., Canada VOX 1N0 (ph 250 499-7033).



Quaedvlieg and his crews have caught more than 83,000 starlings in traps. Trigger on drop trap, above right, is tripped by remote control.



Bob Redalen's pet urn business keeps him busy 70 to 80 hours a week. Horse urns sell for \$200. Spring-loaded mounting plate holds a photo of deceased.

Pet Urn Business Run From Hog Barn

People in the U.S. spend more than \$30 billion a year on pets. So it's probably not surprising that Bob Redalen has found a good market making urns for cremated ashes.

His wood urns range from tiny boxes for small pets that sell for \$8 up to 18 by 12 by 12-in. urns for horses that sell for \$200. Redalen recently shipped off an order for 25 horse urns made from old lumber picked up at farm auctions.

It's a business he got into by accident, but one that at times keeps him busy 70 to 80 hours a week.

Although he started out making urns for human ashes, soon he found himself making them for dogs, cats and horses. These days he also offers imitation marble and some metal urns, but wooden urns are his mainstay.

"For a lot of people, especially those without kids, their pets are family, and when the pet dies, they want something nice to hold its ashes," says Redalen.

His business, Hilltop Woodworking, is run out of an old hog barn. He sells urns throughout the U.S. Fashioned from oak, walnut, cherry and maple, they can be as simple as a small straight-sided box. They can also be very sophisticated with base molding, curved sides and elaborate top molding. A plate on the bottom secured by screws is removed, and ashes are inserted. The urns can also be customized in a number of ways from mounted photos to laser engraved images and memorials.

"I make some with clocks on the side," says Redalen. "People can set them on a shelf, and no one even knows it's also an urn."

Laser engraving allows him to create memorials using photos or other artwork. Redalen designed and patented a special mounting plate for the sides of his urns. The



Redalen laser engraves artwork or adds a photo to each urn. "I make some with clocks on the side. People can set them on a shelf and no one needs to know it's an urn," he says.

spring loaded mount can hold an engraved plate or a photo of the deceased person or pet. To change photos or plates, all the owner has to do is press a piece of scotch tape to the glass or plate and pull it away.

Marketing the hardwood urns is an ongoing challenge. His wife Marcia helps him prepare catalogs and brochures. The two work directly with funeral home operators as well as veterinarians and businesses that specialize in pet cremation.

Another challenge is trying to read the market. The busiest season seems to be the winter months. However, working ahead during the slow time can be tricky. Tastes in the type of wood can change.

"For a while, maple was very popular," says Redalen. "Now it's walnut, but that could change again."

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Some of the best new ideas we hear about are "made it myself" inventions born in farmers' workshops. If you've got a new idea or favorite gadget you're proud of, we'd like to hear about it. Send along a photo or two, and a description of what it is and how it works. Is it being manufactured commercially? If so where can interested farmers buy it? Are you looking for manufacturers, dealers or distributors? Send to FARM SHOW, P.O. Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044 or call toll-free 800 834-9665. Or you can submit an idea at our Website at www.farmshow.com.

Mark Newhall, Editor

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