

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.



Craig "Buster" Bartels makes custom boots and saddles in a renovated granary on his Staples, Minn., farm.

Former Cowboy Makes Custom Boots

Years of working as a cowboy gave Craig "Buster" Bartels firsthand experience of the importance of a good fitting saddle and comfortable boots. After years of working from ranch to ranch, he found success making custom boots and saddles in a renovated granary on his Staples, Minn. farm.

Customers come from all over the U.S. and as far as Japan to be measured for boots that Bartels guarantees will be comfortable. He has shelves filled with more than 200 lasts - shoe forms that he customizes with bits of leather for every bunion, hammer-toe or other foot irregularity. Other shelves are filled with leather and exotic hides such as elephant, ostrich, kangaroo, shark and alligator for customers to choose from.

Bartels' priorities are: fit, function and cosmetics. He's particularly fussy about fit; customers must have their feet and calves measured in the morning, after a good night's rest, wearing regular socks.

"I just want my feet to feel good," customers tell him, and Bartels says, "Once they have custom boots, they never go back."

He also wants the boots to look good and has taken on challenges such as making a pair of turquoise kangaroo boots to match a bride's dress.

Bartels began making boots in the mid 1990's after studying with master boot maker Jack Reed in Texas. Bartels uses old-fashioned equipment to make his boots and saddles. He calls his tall, shapely cast iron sewing machines "the old girls."

Prices start at \$650 for non-exotic leather boots. Saddles start at \$1,800. Bartels has a seven-month backlog.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Buster & Company, Custom Boots and Saddles, Craig Bartels, 8285 68th St. S.W., Staples, Minn. 56479 (ph 218 397-2401; www.dimlights.com; bacboots@hotmail.com).



Rotating root washer is made from wood slats held together by steel bands, with gaps that allow water, soil and debris to run out.

Washer Tumbles Root Veggies Clean

Dick DeGraff needed a way to wash large amounts of root crops faster and with less labor. The owner of Grindstone Farm in Pulaski, N.Y., which grows organic fruits and vegetables, looked at washers available on the market, then decided to make his own.

Fifteen years later, he has built more than 100 root washers for small-scale market farmers.

"I've tried to keep the design simple," DeGraff says. The base and motor mount are made of aluminum, which is lightweight and won't rust. Board slats (1 by 4 pine) are held together by steel bands, with gaps to allow water, soil and debris to run out.

"The drive motor is on top," DeGraff says. "That keeps water away from it."

The motor mount also supports a 3/4-in. copper tube with 1/16-in. holes that run along the inside of the barrel. The tube attaches to a garden hose and stays stationary as the barrel turns and the vegetables tumble.

"It's the action of the crop rolling and tumbling with the water that cleans them," DeGraff says. "It takes less than two minutes to clean fresh-picked produce."

Vegetables are placed in the end of the barrel where the hose is connected. The other end is raised slightly higher. Adding more

vegetables pushes the clean vegetables out the higher end, DeGraff says. A video on the Grindstone Farm website shows how the washer works.

Customers set up the root washer to fit their operation. Some hang it from winches in a building and can raise it out of the way when they don't need it. Many do as DeGraff does, placing it on sawhorses and moving it where it's handiest - under a shade tree in the summer, next to a pickup waiting to be loaded, or inside on a slanted concrete slab.

DeGraff offers washers with a fixed speed 1/4 hp motor with gear reducer and direct chain drive, and also a variable speed 1/3 hp motor that can be used for tender vegetables, such as peppers. To save shipping costs he also sells the washers as kits. Prices range from \$1,900 for a fixed speed kit to \$2,700 for a variable speed assembled washer.

DeGraff only builds the washers in the wintertime.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Grindstone Farm, 780 County Route 28, Tinker Tavern Road, Pulaski, N.Y. 13142 (ph 315 298-4139; www.grindstonefarm.com).

"Kill Your Own Meat" Business Thrives

Being 82 doesn't stop Tom Prince of Clayton, Ind., from providing an unusual service that's in high demand. As he has for the past 25 years, he offers a place for ethnic groups to do their own slaughtering of lambs, sheep and goats - which are a regular part of their diet.

Prince does a booming business, thanks to a growing international community of people who, for personal and religious reasons, want "kill-it-yourself meat."

"I get a lot of people of Pakistani, Nigerian and Mexican heritage, to name a few," he explains. "There are Jews and Muslims whose religions require that the animals be slaughtered in a particular way."

In most cases, Prince buys the live animals from nearby sheep and goat farmers, and then has them available on his property for when his customers arrive. His business is open from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays only, so on those mornings the place is a lively hodgepodge of cultures and languages, as his clients make

use of his self-serve slaughterhouse.

"They do the killing and the skinning, and we cut the meat up for them," he says. "We usually sell about 40 goats, lambs and sheep altogether, each weekend. In the weeks before religious holidays, our sales often double."

Prince employs five neighbors part-time in his operation, and has had a growing business based only on word of mouth. He incorporates the charge for use of his facilities right into the price of the live animals, which he sells for \$1.40 per lb. For example, goats generally bring \$70 to \$98 each, including the "kill-your-own" experience.

Prince built his slaughterhouse in 1999 to comply with government standards, but prior to that he had been allowing customers to slaughter animals in an old corn crib next to his barn. However, a government inspector put a stop to that.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Tom Prince, 10303 South County Rd. O, Clayton, Ind. 46118 (ph 317 539-2702).



Tom Prince does a booming business offering a place for ethnic groups to do their own slaughtering of lambs, sheep and goats.