

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.

Students get hands-on learning at the Minnesota School of Horseshoeing.



Horseshoe School Creates Careers For Students

Regardless of the economy, horses need shoeing. In 10 weeks and for \$6,250 you can learn how to be a farrier and get most of the tools needed to start your own business.

Richard Duggan opened his licensed Minnesota School of Horseshoeing in Ramsey, Minn., in 1977, and annually teaches four sessions with up to 10 students in each group.

"It's a forge-based program with an emphasis on balancing horses — or corrective shoeing and therapeutic shoeing," Duggan says. Farriers can't fix every hoof deformity, he notes, but he focuses on teaching practical skills that really work. His program is 20 percent lecture and 80 percent hands-on skills development.

Sessions include Monday and Tuesday morning classroom time, followed by afternoons at the forge learning the art of making horseshoes. Wednesday through Friday are spent at area stables trimming and shoeing horses.

"Students get out and do the real thing, and they do it without getting hurt because they aren't working with crazy horses," Duggan says.

While his school attracts students pri-

marily from the five-state area, he has students from Australia, Europe, Canada and other countries.

Graduates apply their skills to a variety of equine specialties: gaited, show, pleasure, Western, etc. Whatever they do, Duggan emphasizes a professional attitude of continuous learning. Many of his students have gone on to become leaders of professional associations.

The \$6,250 cost covers tuition and the tools — everything needed except for a gas forge and anvil. Students can bring campers to live in during their 10-week session, or Duggan has a list of boarding options with people in the area.

He also recommends that students volunteer to work with a farrier as an intern before venturing out on their own.

Finally, Duggan offers a \$2,225, two-week horse owners' course that teaches hoof care maintenance and horseshoe basics. Horse owners attend the first two weeks of classes with farrier students.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Minnesota School of Horseshoeing, Richard T. Duggan, 6250 Riverdale Drive N.W., Ramsey, Minn. 55303 (ph 800 257-5850; www.mnschoolofhorseshoeing.com).



Peel back the bark on a buckthorn tree and you'll find beautiful texture and color, says Cliff Johnson, who found a use for the nuisance tree.

He Finds Beauty In Hated Buckthorn

"I used to cut them down and burn them," says Cliff Johnson, who lives on country acreage near Chaska, Minn., "but that was before my daughter told me about some beautiful wood utensils she had seen hand-carved out of buckthorn.

"It was like a light went on in my brain," says Johnson. Within a few hours he had peeled back the bark on a buckthorn log and then split it in half. He used a belt sander to polish the wood and rubbed some tung oil on it.

"It had some of the most beautiful texture and color that I had ever seen. From that point on I was hooked," says Johnson. That was five years ago, and now Johnson has a thriving woodworking hobby making cribbage boards, serving spoons, ladles, salad forks, letter openers and other objects.

Because of the beautiful texture, color and knot structure of the buckthorn, no two finished items are alike. Spoons, forks and ladles often have beautiful and intricate designs that are really imperfections in the wood. Cribbage boards show dark, medium and light grain swirls with unusual colors.

Johnson started out with a few chisels and a small jig saw. "I didn't know any better at first," Johnson says with a laugh, "and those first items took a long time." Over the years he has added a commercial bandsaw, a rotary tool with more than 30 bits, several drills with beveled sanding wheels, and specialized chisels.

His designs have also evolved. "Initially I would split the wood and cut or sand a flat surface," says Johnson. "Now I'm able to



Johnson turns buckthorn into cribbage boards, serving spoons, ladles, salad forks, letter openers and other objects.

visualize unique items in the unusual shapes, sizes and colors of the original wood." That eye for design now produces cribbage boards that look like the head of a seagull, the cambered back of an animal, or a four-fingered hand. He sells most of his handcrafted pieces at shows and at presentations where he gives talks on woodworking and gardening.

His woodshed is now packed with drying wood that has to cure 4 to 5 years before he starts working on it.

"It's a great hobby," says Johnson. "Very rewarding for a farm kid who used to just cut this stuff down year after year to keep it from overtaking our pastures."

Contact FARM SHOW followup, Cliff Johnson, 12820 Laurie Lane, Chaska, Minn. 55318 (ph 952 466-2288; cliffjohnson1@mac.com; www.puttingdownroots.net).

New Goat Breed Catching On Fast

Here's an unusual new breed for you. Miniature Silky Fainting Goats are less than 25 in. high at the withers (23 1/2 in. for a doe) and have long silky hair.

The breed is the result of a selection program developed by Renee Orr. Orr developed the breed from Nigerian Dwarf does, some of which were fainting goats. She selected for long hair and other characteristics that have become trademarks of the breed.

"The goal is to have a consistently long, straight, flowing coat that drapes freely over the entire body," says Orr. "The body hair should include profuse bangs, muffs and beard, blending into the chest and body coat to produce a Silky Terrier-like appearance."

The breed website lists 70 breeders, nearly all in the United States. Ada Austin, Harmony, Minn. is a long time sheep and Angora goat breeder who fell in love with the new breed and now has 9 head of breeding stock, including a show champion buck.

"When I first saw them, they looked so awesome I decided to raise them myself," says Austin. "They are just beautiful and very gentle from the minute they are born."

Though she raises Angora goats for their fiber, the Silkies are different. The fiber they produce is coarse and silky, unsuited for spinning or weaving.

"They're just eye candy," says Austin, who also raises Old English Babydoll Southdown sheep. "They dress up the pasture."

When beauty is all that matters, it also determines the value. Austin paid \$1,250 for her buck, which seemed expensive at the time. This past winter it looked like a particularly attractive doe bred to that buck was going to pay Austin back for most of that investment.

"One woman said she would pay me \$1,000 if the kid was a doe and looked like her mother," recalls Austin. "Another woman said she would match that offer. When the kid was born, it was male and didn't have



Miniature Silky Fainting Goats are small and have long silky hair.



the looks of either parent. It wasn't worth 50 cents."

At the time this story was written, a three-month-old doe kid was listed for sale at \$1,200. Of course it met all the attributes of the breed. Austin says it's often a gamble with a new breed to see if the animals will breed true. It's a chance she's more than willing to take.

"Visit a show or a breeder near you to see these little goats in person," she advises. "But

be forewarned; once you see them, you will fall in love too."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Miniature Silky Fainting Goat Association & Registry, 22105 Countryside Lane, Lignum, Va. 22726 (ph 540 423-9193; www.msfgaregistry.com); or Ada Austin, 14484 331st Ave. SE, Harmony, Minn. 55939 (ph 507 886-6731; mohair@harmonytel.net; www.austinsmohair.com).