

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.

Farmer's Wife Started Wheat Weaving Business

A week or two before the combines hit the fields to begin winter wheat harvest, Peg Nelson does a little preharvest of her own near Potter, Neb. She cuts the long stems with a battery-powered hedge trimmer and secures the stalks in bundles with baler twine. Working a few early morning hours for 3 or 4 days yields about 200 5-in. dia. bundles that she transforms into hearts, crosses and other pieces of art. Recently she added wheat replicas of rancher's brands to her repertoire.

Nelson's first exposure to wheat weaving was 40 years ago when she married a farmer and moved to Cheyenne County, Nebraska's largest wheat-producing county. Her husband was a member of the Nebraska Wheat Growers Association, so she joined the women's auxiliary group called "Wheat Hearts." The women wove wheat into gifts for members, and Nelson liked the art form.

"I'm still amazed with the idea that you can take something like wheat out of a field and make something," Nelson says.

She read books and taught herself to use various techniques - weaving, spiral

weaving, flat braids, round braids, etc.

"I do a lot of hearts. I take a pattern and tweak it to try to make it my own," she says. As part of her business, High Plains Wheat Weaver, customers have asked her to create brands, a turkey, and custom designs for weddings, crosses and wreaths. She has also made a 3D cowboy, a Victorian doll, cornucopias, and has woven wheat into straw wreaths for cemetery wreaths.

Most weavings have all parts of the wheat stalk from stem to heads. Nelson prefers long slender stems that require less splicing, and she likes varieties that aren't as coarse, such as Good Streak.

For weaving, the wheat must be cut when the heads are upright and in the dough stage - not milky, but soft. Nelson stores her bundles in a Quonset building. The wheat is soaked in water as she uses it. Some, like a black-bearded wheat variety she purchases from North Dakota, is coarser and requires a hot water soaking. Though it is harder on her hands and more difficult to work with, Nelson appreciates the color and texture it adds.



Peg Nelson transforms wheat stalks into hearts, crosses and other pieces of art. She cuts each stalk by hand using a battery-powered hedge trimmer.

From Christmas ornaments (\$4) and crosses on magnets to personalized brands and wedding bouquets and boutonnières, Nelson has taken on a variety of commissioned orders. Hearts and crosses are typically 10 to 12 in., but some pieces such as the Bride of Corn is almost 30 in., including the black beards.

She accepts orders through Facebook and sells items at craft shows and other events in Nebraska.

Wheat weavings last for decades, Nelson says, if they are kept out of the sun and in places they won't be bumped.

"It's fun to watch people look at them when we're at shows. Some have never seen them.

Husbands are interested," she says.

Their interest is something she tries to keep in mind as she does her least favorite part - harvesting the wheat by hand. She's tried hedge trimmers and other cutters, but cutting each stem by hand seems to work the best.

"I've heard a binder would work great," she concludes. But so far she hasn't been able to find a vintage machine that works.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Peg Nelson, Box 383, Potter, Neb. 69156 (ph 308 249-5615; highplainswhtwvr@gmail.com; Facebook: High Plains Wheat Weaving).

Farmstead "Deconstruction" Done Right

Doug Crosby and his sons take down old farmsteads - reclaiming wood, cleaning up trash and even digging out foundations, if requested. Crosby warns that not every company that takes down farm buildings will do the same.

"We get calls to come and see a building that needs to be taken down, and all the lumber worth reclaiming is already gone," he says. "Someone will have agreed to take it down, but after the good stuff is taken, they disappear. All that's left is a mess that has to be cleaned up and taken to a landfill."

Crosby notes there are many reasons to take down an old building. It can reduce property taxes, limit liability to family and friends, and reduce property/casualty insurance.

With decades of experience under his belt, Crosby has seen it all. His Minnesota-based Last Chance Ranch takes down buildings of all kinds in the upper Midwest. They include not just barns, but silos, grain bins and elevators. Wood and rusty steel roofing are resold or made into furniture, doors and more. Unlike some that hire labor by the hour for a job, Crosby has a full-time, year-round professional crew.

"They know what they are doing, and that's important when you are taking down a building or silo next to one you want to save," says Crosby.

Stories of old barn wood being worth a fortune are rural legends, according to Crosby. While the value of recovered materials may cover deconstruction costs, it is as likely that tearing down an old building will cost the owner.

A big problem to avoid for most rural landowners is the idea of burning or burying demolition material on site. Should that be



Doug Crosby takes down all kinds of buildings including barns, silos, grain bins and elevators. Photo below shows repurposed barn wood and metal.



suggested by a contractor, landowners need to know it is illegal in all 50 states, warns Crosby. It can lead to big penalties for the landowner.

Detail what work will be done and ask for an agreement listing items and expectations. This is especially important if the owner has plans for the site, even if simply to plant it to a crop.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Last Chance Ranch, 47225 269th Ave., Laporte, Minn. 56461 (ph 218 444-0865 or 218 407-0124; www.lcrarena.com).



Rachel Kelsey operates a sideline business cleaning horse barns. Photos above show "before" and "after".

"Barn Maid" Specializes In Cleaning Horse Barns

At 20, Rachel Kelsey already has three years' experience as a "barn maid", a business she started as a teen. She specializes in cleaning horse barns though she is open to taking on other jobs.

The Milwaukee, Wis., resident got the idea when she and a friend cleaned another friend's barn. She began by offering her services for free to get before and after photos to promote her business, Refreshed Farm. Positive reviews, especially from one very happy client on the business' Facebook page, helped attract new customers.

Kelsey has a full-time job at a sporting goods business during the week and schedules barn cleaning work on Saturdays and Sundays. Usually she works within a 20-mile radius of Milwaukee, but she has traveled up to 2 1/2 hrs. away and charges for mileage after 20 miles.

She takes cleaning supplies, brooms, a step stool and ladder and hard bristle brushes. A big part of her job is washing down walls and cleaning out dust and cobwebs. But she also does the hard work of scraping and shoveling

manure.

Kelsey has been around horses since she was 4. Later she competed in western events and had lessons in dressage. Her last horse, a Quarter Horse had to be put down a couple years ago.

With her equine experience and strong work ethic, she knows what needs to be done to clean stables and organize tack rooms. She also offers a service to deep clean and deodorize areas.

Based on photos of a facility provided by the owner, Kelsey provides a cost estimate, and clients receive a checklist of services and a receipt. Pricing varies greatly depending on the size of the project and the weather.

Videos and information can be found on her Facebook page.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Rachel Kelsey, Milwaukee, Wis. 53219 (ph 307 757-0996; www.refreshedfarm.weebly.com; Facebook: Refreshed Farm Cleaning Services).