

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](mailto:editor@farmshow.com).

## Hybrid Rye Earns A Premium

Hybrid winter rye is earning A&L Peterson Farms a premium in yield and markets. Ryan Peterson is excited about the demand for his crop.

"Our irrigated winter rye averaged 85 bushels per acre, and we are still learning," says Peterson. "With 4-ft. tall plants, there is a lot of straw to push through the combine. We had to adjust settings and cut only 20-ft. swaths with our 30-ft. header. We are happy with the 85 bushel average, but we definitely have the potential to do better."

The Petersons have planted rye on dry land in the past with yields of 30 bushels or less. They hesitated to put it on irrigated acres or push much nitrogen to it, due to its tendency to get too tall and lodge. But with the Bono Hybrid Winter Rye variety, that wasn't a problem.

"We gave it about 80 to 85 lbs. of nitrogen per acre," says Peterson. "Some was side dressed and some delivered through the pivot closer to the end, before it matured. It had great standability and didn't lodge."

Before they even sold the rye, they harvested a side benefit of 5 big round bales of straw per acre.

Marketing began with a malting company contract for 50 bushels per acre. The remainder of the yield this year will go to other food or distillery users.

The family farming enterprise is a diverse operation, feeding out Holstein steers and raising corn and soybeans, as well as seed corn and kidney beans. In fact, the rye was an experiment resulting from cover crops failing behind kidney beans.

Although drilled in September, the cold fall slowed growth. However, it came back strong in the spring. Peterson is satisfied enough that he plans to double his acreage from 100 to 200 this fall. University of Minnesota yield trials have shown average yields across multiple sites of as high as 125 bushels per acre and 3-year averages of 104 bushels per acre.

According to Albert Lea Seed House,



Ryan Peterson likes the potential for hybrid winter rye, which he grows under irrigation. His 10-year-old son Hunter is shown standing in a field of rye.

Peterson's supplier, the hybrid rye produces 8 to 20 tillers per plant in the fall, with each tiller potentially producing a head (www.alseed.com; ph 800 352-5247).

Fall-tillered rye sets heads and pollinates earlier than spring rye, reducing potential ergot infestation. In fact, the hybrid rye sheds pollen so quickly that the company says a dust cloud of pollen can be seen. This is important, as once pollinated, the rye flower closes and is no longer susceptible to ergot spores.

Although Peterson grew his under irrigation, the hybrid rye is also promoted as high yielding under dryland conditions. The only real downside is that seed can't be saved for replanting. However, that trade-off is worth it for Peterson.

"We are always looking for more rotation crops, especially non soybean cyst nematode host crops," says Peterson.

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My Sweet Green microgreen crops are grown under controlled light, temperature, and moisture conditions throughout the year.

## Microgreen Business Taps Into Growing Market

Small town entrepreneurs Dean and Jayne Bredlau have turned their joy of growing fresh and healthy microgreens into a quickly expanding business that's now producing more than 150 lbs. of tasty products a month. They operate in an indoor dedicated growing space where Dean maintains temperature and light control throughout the calendar year, even during frigid Minnesota winters.

"Microgreens are ideal for this kind of operation because they grow in an inch of potting soil and are ready to harvest in just 8 days, so we decided to go that route," says Jayne.

The Bredlaus package their microgreens in 2-oz. plastic clamshells and sell them at farmers markets, grocery stores and in bulk to restaurants. They grow 14 different kinds of microgreens, including sweet pea and sunflower shoots, radish, arugula, mustard greens, broccoli, kale and cabbage that customers use in sandwiches, soups, stir fry dishes and salads. They also offer custom blends including Classy Classic, Zesty Mix, Chef's Fancy Mix and combination units that contain a mixture of several greens, sometimes coordinating with a microgreen recipe.

While their business has ratcheted steadily forward, it hasn't been without glitches. Early in 2019 the Bredlaus received a letter from a large New York law firm ordering them to 'cease and desist' using their company name, My Sweet Greens.

"We absolutely couldn't believe that happened," says Jayne, "especially because our farm business is small and certainly not a threat to a large, multi-state company."



Dean and Jayne Bredlau grow and package their microgreens in 2-oz. plastic clamshells.

They hired a lawyer who studied their case and subsequently arranged a settlement that allows them to re-brand their company over the next 18 months.

"We spent a lot of money for our logo, packaging, labels, website and other visual materials needed to start our business," Jayne says, "and now that all has to change. We did a name search initially and didn't find competitive issues, but the entity that forced us to change is a big company with a lot of muscle."

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## Specialty Vinegars Produced In Historic Ohio Barn

Justin Dean and Richard Stewart make vinegars from just about any food product, including past-their-prime beers and wines, mashed up outdated vegetables, and fresh produce like sweet corn and apples. Their many flavorful vinegars are produced in an historic Ohio barn.

"We take a lot of high quality products that would otherwise go to waste and make them into some of the tastiest vinegars you'll ever find," says Dean, who has a degree in food and beverage management. Stewart has managed the historic Carriage House Farm in southern Ohio for the past 16 years. Together they started MadHouse Vinegar in 2015 when they realized a lot of waste food products could be used to make vinegars.

They started small with 5-gal. batches. After acquiring larger equipment and receiving Ohio Ag Department certification

as a bottler, they're now able to produce 300-gal. batches. Dean says it took him 8 years to perfect the art of vinegar tasting because there's really no way to learn it other than trial and error. Large-scale producers use tried and true recipes, but MadHouse has specialized recipes with a plethora of raw ingredients that provide unique taste and seasoning qualities.

"It's very important to carefully manage the fermenting process to achieve the most unique flavors," says Stewart, who manages the production, paperwork, packaging and shipping.

Dean says they've made vinegar from bananas, tomatoes, carrots, spinach, radishes, wild ramps and many other products. The only requirement is having alcohol present, adding a sugar base, and creating secondary fermentation. Their main-line products are red wine, white wine, apple cider, dark malt,



"There's no end to the flavors we can produce," says Justin Dean about the vinegars he and Richard Stewart make from waste food products.

light malt and rose vinegar. Small batch products are made from peppermint, sweet corn, coffee, bogbeast, spicebush and ramp.

"There's really no end to flavors and tastes we can produce," says Dean. "The food industry expects demand for specialty and artisan vinegars to grow by 20 percent a year,



so we're hoping to ramp our production up to 1,200 gallons a month to meet demand."

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