

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.

"World's Most Valuable Crop" Grown In North Carolina

By Dee George, Contributing Editor

North Carolina's Burwell Farms harvested 200 lbs. of Bianchetto truffles from 2 acres of loblolly pine trees earlier this year. Since truffles sell for about \$50 an ounce, that's a gross of around \$80,000/acre.

The new truffle-growing effort was so successful that they are selling truffle-inoculated loblolly seedlings and wondering if they can handle the truffle production if it doubles next year, says Richard Franks, Burwell Farms Chief Scientific Officer.

He credits Mycorrhiza Biotech (www.mycorrhizabiotech.com) for developing the technology to inoculate the seedling roots with truffle spores. The Loblolly pine has proven to be an effective partner, and is native from Maryland to Texas, with forests in other states as well.

"Inoculation takes 9 to 12 months in greenhouse conditions," Franks says of the White Spring truffle, Bianchetto (*Tuber borchii*). The Bianchetto truffle is native to parts of Spain, France, and Italy where it grows in soils with high limestone content, a high pH condition.

"We raise the pH level in our orchard to between 7.3 and 7.5," Franks says. "Native fungi, which compete with *Tuber borchii*,

cannot tolerate the high pH conditions. Keeping the pH level high allows for the truffle to establish a symbiotic relationship with the loblolly pine trees with little competition from native fungi." As the orchard matures, the loblolly tree roots grow together forming a bed of inoculated roots allowing truffles to be produced anywhere in the two acres.

Burwell Farms owner, Thomas E. Powell III, had 1,100 inoculated loblolly pines planted in June 2014. The first truffle was found mid-December 2016 and a few were harvested in early 2017. The harvest grew slightly over the next couple of years. "The 2020 harvest surpassed anything anyone thought it would be," Franks says, noting they didn't anticipate a harvest this good until another couple of years. As the tree roots grow together, the truffles are growing everywhere in the orchard.

The crown of some truffles appears above the ground, but truffles can be 6 to 8-in. down and are dug out with special truffle-digging knives. The important thing is to only harvest mature truffles - when the inside is a chocolate brown with light-colored veins. For that, Burwell Farms relied on a well-trained



Earlier this year Burwell Farms in North Carolina harvested 200 lbs. of Bianchetto truffles from 2 acres of loblolly pine trees. They grossed about \$80,000 per acre.



They rely on a well-trained dog to make sure they harvest only mature truffles.

dog followed up by a human with a keen sense of smell.

The key is that the dog puts its nose right on the mature truffle. If the area is full of truffles, it can become difficult to pinpoint the mature ones. Experts say that the harvest may double each year for several years, so Franks wonders if that will impact the dog's ability to pinpoint mature truffles.

Mature truffles can weigh anywhere from 1/4 oz. to 10 oz. Burwell Farms' harvest of mature truffles is from late-January into March.

Burwell also has frozen truffles. Chefs

from high end restaurants had ordered truffles early in 2020, but canceled orders after Coronavirus-related closures in March. Check out the Burwell Farms website for prices and availability of mature and frozen truffles.

Meanwhile, Burwell Farms is taking orders for inoculated seedlings (call for pricing and availability).

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Burwell Farms, P.O. Box 2536, Burlington, N.C. 27216 (ph 336 570-3137; www.burwellfarmsonc.com; burwellfarmsonc@gmail.com).

Self-Serve Honey Stand Pays Off

By Klaire Howerton

As a young boy growing up in Iran, David Panahi was fascinated by local beekeepers. He started his beekeeping endeavor in 2008 with 3 hives, and today he and his wife Paula keep between 70 and 100 beehives that produce over a ton of honey every year on their farm in Fair Grove, Missouri.

David wanted to be able to market his honey, honeycomb, bee pollen and beeswax products direct to the public. He decided to build a farm stand at the end of their driveway, complete with log cabin siding, a small covered porch, and window air conditioning.

When they first opened the stand, David and Paula tried staffing it themselves. It took too much time so they decided to make it a self-service stand. There's a lockbox in the stand where people can pay for their purchases with cash or check. Many are repeat visitors, according to the customer log.

The stand is stocked with quart jars and the traditional bear jars of honey, flavored honey sticks, beeswax lip balms made by Paula, food grade bee pollen, and comb honey. They also sell box comb or chunk honey (with comb in the jar), both of which are customer favorites. Paula notes that many of their customers are folks who suffer from allergies, and have found that honey and honeycomb offer relief. Honey by the gallon is another popular option for customers. Nearly all of their honey crop is sold straight off the farm, although there are a few local businesses that carry P & D Farm's honey.

David and Paula also have a few goats



David Panahi built this farm produce stand at the end of their driveway, complete with a small covered porch. Photo below shows the variety of honey products for sale.



and sheep, and a greenhouse for growing vegetables. They hope to add a produce stand alongside their honey stand within the next year.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, P & D Honey Farm, 1236 State Road AA, Fair Grove, Mo. 65648 (ph 417 761-9468).

New Service Matches Bees With Blossoms

HiveLend puts beekeepers together with farmers needing pollination services. An amateur beekeeper, Nick Zajciw got the idea for the online pollination service after struggling to find farmers to rent his hives. He and HiveLend co-founder Dawn Musil, who started keeping bees at the age of 14, say there's a need for beekeepers as small as 50 hives.

"We offer a solution to beekeepers trying to break into pollination servicing, as well as those looking for new customers closer to home," says Zajciw. "There are well known, existing markets for pollinators and often multi-generational relationships between beekeepers and farmers. We hope to create opportunities for those who don't have those relationships."

Zajciw expects increasing demand for hives and their services. He notes that a growing body of research demonstrates yield-increasing benefits of pollination in nontraditional crops and areas. While actively identifying farmers and beekeepers on the West Coast, HiveLend is also working in the Midwest and on the East Coast, where Zajciw is based.

"With our diverse platform in multiple areas, we are different from traditional beekeeper brokers," says Zajciw. "Our online services will be useful in identifying opportunities for a beekeeper traveling across country with hives."

HiveLend is designed to help facilitate contact between farmers and beekeepers, and also to streamline the paperwork process. Other goals include helping beekeepers



HiveLend co-founder Dawn Musil gathering pollen samples. Their business puts beekeepers together with farmers needing pollination services.

find new markets for the byproducts of pollination.

Zajciw and Musil are working with beekeepers to develop an acceptable transaction fee for their services based on the crops being pollinated.

"We think we can help traditional pollination services and the farmers they service also," says Zajciw. "We believe we can streamline their relationships with more of a paper trail than in the past. We can relieve stress on both ends."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Nick Zajciw and Dawn Musil, HiveLend, 2506 Maryland Ave., Baltimore, Md. 21218 (ph 586 703-0417; www.hivelend.org).