

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).

## All-Natural Cotton Candy In Tasty Flavors

North Dakotans can enjoy an unusual treat during the holiday season or any time of year thanks to Simple Sugar, a new venture by a Bismarck, N. Dak., couple. Mark and Becky Binstock make and sell cotton candy using only natural, local ingredients.

Chokecherry, Juneberry, honeyberry and rhubarb are fruits and flavors North Dakotans grow and love, says Becky Binstock, adding that even the beet sugar (Crystal Sugar) they use comes from the region.

"We've been through lots of processes so that we don't have to add anything artificial," she notes. "We want it to taste like fruit."

It started in 2018, after the Binstocks decided to make cotton candy as a treat for their three daughters - specifically for the oldest who has food allergies. Instead of purchasing premade sugars for cotton candy that are full of artificial flavoring, dyes and additives, the couple experimented with plain sugar and flavors made from fruit grown by people they know.

Beyond their kids, they discovered interest from people of all ages. It's still sugar (15-20 grams) Binstock emphasizes, but it's allergen-friendly and gluten-free so their cotton candy can be enjoyed by almost everyone.

"It's become popular to have a cotton candy bar for a wedding," Binstock says, as



Simple sugar cotton candy is made with beet sugar and real fruit flavors.

well as part of birthday parties, business and corporate events and other celebrations. The Binstocks enjoy spending time with their girls attending the events all over North Dakota, as well as selling at Bismarck's BisMarket farmers market.

They make two sizes. Clouds (\$6) are larger, similar in size to cotton candy sold at carnivals, and the smaller Pops (\$3) are a great favor size for a treat. In addition to the other fruit flavors, they have strawberry, grape, lemon-raspberry, holiday flavors and coffee.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark and Becky Binstock, Simple Sugar (ph 701-471-7737; Facebook: Simple Sugar; [simplesugarmd@gmail.com](mailto:simplesugarmd@gmail.com)).

## Minnesota Couple, Catches Sells Alaskan Salmon

Kevin and Stephanie Schmidt operate a "net-to-plate" salmon business. Operating as Sunrise Salmon, they harvest salmon commercially in Alaska and then sell fillets from their Minn. home.

It's unique in the business to do it all, from fishing to processing to selling, Schmidt says. His switch from "turf" to "surf" started in 2008 when, at 18, he left his parent's grain farm to work with his brother's commercial fishing in Bristol Bay. They purchased a boat and salmon fishing permits. The following year Kevin and Stephanie were married, and she bought out her brother-in-law's share and his permit. By 2014 the couple started direct marketing with Sunrise Salmon, which led to leasing a remodeled USDA-certified kitchen and freezers in Fergus Falls, Minn., in 2017.

The following year they invested in an acre of land in Naknek, Alaska, and built an FDA-inspected facility to process the salmon they caught into flash-frozen fillets. "Processing was our biggest expense," Schmidt explains, noting his wife oversees the processing while he fishes.

He gathers sockeye salmon from nets that are anchored to the shoreline permitted to them. The season runs from the end of June to mid-July. The work is labor-intensive, and it is challenging to find workers for such a short time. The Schmidts have had the most success with farmer employees, and they fly them to Alaska and house them in cabins.



The Schmidts "harvest" salmon in Alaska and ship it back to the Midwest each year.

Other challenges are the high cost of electricity and transportation logistics that include plane, barge and truck travel to get the fish back to Minn.

"We modeled our business after CSAs and sell the fish in 10, 20 and 30-lb. packages of full fillets or portions," Schmidt says. Customers preorder and pay in full or make down payments in May to provide money for expenses.

No salmon is currently available, but the Schmidts are taking preorders beginning in May. Costs range from \$13.50 to \$15 per lb. (discounts for larger orders).

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Mustard can be used as a cover crop or as a cash crop which can be more profitable than similar varieties like canola.

## Growing Mustard As A Cash Crop

Mustard plants are considered weeds by most farmers and can be a challenge to uproot. But for some, the plant is a valuable cover crop with real profit potential.

As a cool-season spring annual, mustard grows deep taproots that, in dry conditions, can grow well over 5-ft. down. This has long made it an ideal crop for breaking up hardpan and loosening the top few inches of soil.

Research shows that utilizing mustard as a cover crop may reduce soil-borne pathogens like nematodes and fungi, improving soil health for the long term.

Mustard is a member of the brassica family, which is gaining attention for its biofumigant properties. Brassicas tend to have high amounts of glucosinolates, which are compounds found in bitter, pungent plants. When mustard is cut down and incorporated into the soil as a cover crop, it releases its glucosinolate content into the ground. Over time, this can reduce the amount of pesticide needed for the field.

When grown as a cover crop, mustard germinates quickly and can reach maturity between 80 to 95 days, depending on the variety. It should be mowed in or chopped down before flowering to incorporate it into the soil while still green. Make sure to cut the crop down before it goes to seed, otherwise you will be introducing a tenacious weed into your growing space.

Other farmers are using mustard as a cash

crop by selling to single buyers like Olds Products Company, a leading U.S. mustard manufacturer. Under their contract, mustard sells for about \$0.36 per pound for up to 800 lbs. an acre. Farmers are protected at this price point, meaning that they are guaranteed the payment even if weather conditions ruin the crop before harvesting. If a field has a bumper crop, the grower can look elsewhere to sell the surplus, though the company is often willing to purchase the full supply.

While yields from canola, a closely related crop, can easily triple mustard productions for the same acreage, pound for pound, mustard tends to be more profitable. Mustard takes minimal special equipment for harvesting, as farmers can use a combine equipped with the same header used for wheat. On the downside, mustard tends to be more temperamental and can be a challenge to harvest without shattering the seed pods and scattering the seeds.

Despite these challenges, mustard offers impressive profit potential for farmers looking to switch up their cash crops or prioritize soil health.

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## "Farmzy" Brings City Folks To Your Farm

Fifth-generation farmers and brothers Graham and Matt Graff know the value of experiencing a farm firsthand. That's why they created Farmzy, a service designed to connect urban folks with farms and the farmers who run them.

The project started when the Graffs realized there was a need to better acquaint people with their food source. "There is a gap between urban and rural people in understanding food production," they say.

Farmzy was their answer for bridging this gap. After launching in 2020, the Graffs partnered with the Government of Alberta to become the official online booking platform for Alberta Open Farm Days. This connection continues today, and the platform now accepts year-round bookings for hosts and visitors.

Hosts create listings that advertise their farm products and experiences, which potential visitors then sign up for directly through the site. The farms maintain complete control over their listings on the site.

The Graffs shared, "Signup is quick, and it makes it so farms don't necessarily need to pay for and manage their own websites. The Farmzy platform makes it easy to manage sales and inventory and control availability calendars, guest limits and bookings. After the event, secure payments are made directly to the host farm's bank account."

In this way, Farmzy gives the general



The Farmzy website helps hosts advertise their farm experiences and products at no cost.

public access to a community of farmers and experiences they might not have otherwise known existed.

To date, Farmzy has had over 200 farm listings and has booked close to 20,000 visits, generating income for the host farmers in the process.

Listing your farm is free and involves a 10-minute signup process. Just follow the "List Your Farm for Free" link on the Farmzy website. The platform is currently exclusive to Canada, but there are plans to expand into the U.S. within the next two years.

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