

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.

Bison Ranches Sell Meat Online

Heritage Bison Ranches of Sisseton, S.D., and Hinton, Iowa, manage herds of buffalo for in-person and online sales nationwide. The animals are raised on 2,000 acres of native prairie grasses across the Great Plains and finished on family-raised corn.

"Bruce & Corrine Prins started ranching in 1974 in Sisseton, S.D.," says their daughter, Rachel Bollmeyer.

The Prins own the production herd at Rocking P Ranch in Sisseton, while Bollmeyer and her husband own the finishing operation in Hinton.

"My parents bought land two miles from my grandparents and started raising cattle. In 1989, they bought 11 head of bison from a friend, really just for fun. Now those 11 head have turned into the production herd we have today, and the entire ranch is devoted to bison herds."

Why the shift away from cattle?

"Over the years, markets for bison have steadily increased," Bollmeyer says. "Maybe Mom and Dad were visionaries. Maybe they were just lucky. Who really knows? But they did it, and it worked."

Bollmeyer explains that caring for bison isn't easier or harder than caring for cattle; it's just different.

"First, you don't help a buffalo when it's in labor. With a cattle herd, you are always helping heifers and some cows. Bison have extremely high calving rates. Just leave them alone and let nature do its thing."

Still, she highlights some key differences. Bison farms don't castrate bull calves, unlike beef ranchers. Mineral programs also vary because bison require more copper in their diet.

"Bison need room to roam," Bollmeyer says. "We don't use any special types of fencing or electric wiring to hold our bison herds. As long as they have sufficient grass, room to roam, and good water sources, they tend to stay where they're supposed to. And if they want to go somewhere else, there isn't a fence in the world that'll hold them."

Rutting bulls are most likely to break through fencing during fights over females.

The yearly herd roundup presents a different challenge.

"We leave the bison alone for 364 days a year, and then on day 365 we round them up and run them through our pens and chute systems," Bollmeyer says. "Bison haven't been domesticated. They're extremely wild, fearful of humans, and will do anything to get away from you, including jumping 7-ft. tall pipe fences. We've learned over the years to



Bison meat is popular among customers looking for a lean, healthy meat option. "The flavor is just phenomenal," Bollmeyer says.

be very calm in all our actions, as quiet with our voices as we possibly can be, and to use our hydraulic gate and chute system to keep our distance."

During the roundup, each bison is weighed, sexed and checked for pregnancy, then sorted into separate pens. Calves are sold at an annual auction in Sisseton around Thanksgiving.

Recently, however, the ranches have shifted toward online sales.

"We've always sold some bison meat at the ranch, but in 2020, with the bison market being at record lows for bison producers, we decided to start selling online. Our customers can order online through our website or visit the Hinton ranch in person."

All ordered meat is shipped frozen with dry ice and gel packs. The farm ships every Monday, except on federal holidays. Orders must be placed by Sunday night at midnight.

"We continue to grow our online business by staggering percentages each year, with the goal to eventually not even have our

annual auction to the public each year," Bollmeyer says.

Bison meat is popular among customers seeking a lean, healthy meat option.

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For farmers looking to enter the bison industry, Bollmeyer emphasizes the importance of patience.

"It takes twice as long to finish a bison compared to beef animals, and they produce half the meat," she says. "Bison grow with time, not by the amount of food you put in front of them. And you have to love them. It's the love and caring for this beautiful animal that'll get you through the blizzards, the droughts, and the market's ups and downs."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Heritage Bison Ranches, 28697 300th St., Hinton, Iowa 51024 (ph 712-212-4286; heritagebisonranches@gmail.com; www.heritagebisonranches.com).



Similar to maintaining jewelry, the large DPF Alternative ultrasonic machine cleans the filter, converting soot into removable ash.

Unique Filter Cleaning System For DPF

Diesel engines from 25 to 700 hp typically use a diesel particulate filter (DPF) to reduce harmful emissions, keep equipment running efficiently, and trap harmful soot and pollutants in the exhaust system. The DPF is a standard component of most newer diesel-powered machines, from large excavators to light-duty pickups.

Ignoring the DPF can lead to serious issues, including costly repairs, increased fuel consumption, and loss of engine power. Cleaning this filter is the preferred course of action to minimize these effects.

For DPF Alternatives, a Denver, Colo.-based company, cleaning these critical filters to maintain optimal diesel engine efficiency is what they do best.

"Our competitors typically blow them out with air and bake them in a 2-stage process, which is really only a band-aid solution," says Josh Enger, owner of DPF's Alice, N.D., location. "We go the extra mile

and cut them open, blow them out, flush them with water, kiln bake them, and ultrasonically clean them."

Similar to maintaining jewelry, the large DPF Alternative ultrasonic machine cleans the filter, converting soot into removable ash. Once complete, the housing is welded back into its original form.

"Cleaning the DPF in this way gives the engine and exhaust system a longer, more efficient lifespan," Enger explains. "Plus, using our system means you don't need to tackle this job nearly as often."

The DPF Alternatives ultrasonic cleaning package retails for \$650, plus clamps, gaskets and other small hardware. The company doesn't perform removals or installations.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, DPF Alternatives, 4295 135th Ave. SE #1, Alice, N.D. 58031 (ph 701-361-9020; josh.enger@dpfalternatives.com; www.dpfalternatives.com).

They Make Custom Bale Spear Equipment

M3 Welding & Fabrication, a custom manufacturing shop in Alma, Kan., delivers show pens and barn equipment nationwide. Recently, they've begun offering heavy bale spears. Founders Hunter and Stephanie Maie manage the business together.

"In the fall of 2022, we were contacted about building pens for a county fair," says Stephanie Maie. "Since then, our business continues to grow. We've built pens, feeders, attachments, creep gates and custom repairs."

The business's heavy bale spears are custom-built to match any equipment and operation size.

"We don't mass-produce anything, allowing us to customize to our clients' needs," Maie says. "The bale spears are built to last by using steel a minimum of 1/4 to 3/8 thick. Producers can pick the design to best serve their needs, whether that's square or round bales."

Wheel loader sets start at \$4,500, while skid loader and tractor attachments start at \$1,000, depending on customization.

"We work to identify what our clients' needs and primary use are before beginning," Maie says. "A design is agreed upon, and production begins once we get the deposit."

All purchases are made through HitchPin, which offers shipping at \$1.75 per mile.

"Joining HitchPin has been a great opportunity—sharing our storefront, processing online payments, and providing peace of mind to our customers. We'll send an estimate for review, and HitchPin's invoicing portal will request a non-refundable deposit. The final payment is due on completion. There are always growing pains with starting a small



Heavy bale spears are custom-built to match any equipment and operation size.

business, but their support is priceless. A lot of HitchPin customers have become friends and, in some cases, family."

Explore M3 Welding & Fabrication's current listings and get in touch by visiting its HitchPin storefront.

"While we enjoy building custom attachments, our most popular products are our custom livestock pens and fenceline feeders," Maie says. "Please reach out with your next custom project."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, M3 Welding & Fabrication, Alma, Kan. (ph 785-844-2348; www.HitchPin.com/M3WeldingFabrication).