



Shirley Voran, of Kansas Wheat House, shows off some items made from wheat.

ADDING VALUE TO THEIR CROP

Kansas Couple Makes Sweets Out Of Wheat

A Southwestern Kansas farm couple is doing a booming business adding value to their wheat crop.

Shirley and Dave Voran operate "The Kansas Wheat House" at Cimmaron, Kan., which makes and markets a wide assortment of tasty snack foods and sweet treats containing wheat. The business started up in 1986, thanks to the Vorans' conviction that their crop should be sold as a finished product rather than a raw commodity.

Now, 11 years and over 70 products later, the Wheat House sells about 400 bu. of the Vorans' 1,000-acre wheat crop every year, and the amount continues to grow.

The Vorans sell their products all over the world by mail order. They attribute their success to the public's appetite for healthy snacks and the company's attention to personal detail and customer service.

"If someone asks for something we don't have, we go ahead and make it," notes Shirley. "For example, a Cimmaron-area pork producer early this year came to us looking for something unique to give his

customers. We created the 'Porker,' a hog-shaped peanut butter-based candy containing wheat nubs, soy nuts and sunflower seeds."

More standard fare includes crunchy wheat nubs (cooked, processed and seasoned kernels) in a variety of flavors, from Cajun to Mesquite and honey roasted to chocolate. Also, soup and bread mixes.

There are candies such as S'Wheat Chows (wheat, rice, cereal, peanut butter and chocolate), S'Wheat Dreams (marshmallows, wheat and almond bark) and S'Wheat Hearts (wheat nub and wheat germ dipped in chocolate and shaped like a heart).

The most popular product is trail mix that's a lot like granola except with a lot of wheat.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Kansas Wheat House Inc., 102 S. Main, P.O. Box 1051, Cimmaron, Kan. 67835-1051 (ph 800 261-6251 or 316 855-7718, fax 2216; Email: kswheat@kansasgrown.com, http://www.kansasgrown.com/kswheat/).



Magazine rack is made from 18 horseshoes welded together.

Western-Style Magazine Rack

You can keep all your farm and ranch magazines organized with this new Western-style magazine rack designed by Montana rancher Jake Wadsworth.

It's constructed of 18 horseshoes welded together. It measures 15 by 17 by 16 in. to provide 1 1/2 cu. ft. of storage and weighs 18 lbs.

Comes in pine or oak. Sells for \$59.95 and \$69.95, respectively, not including S&H.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Wadsworth Inc., 889 Dublin Gulch Rd., St. Ignatius, Mont. 59865 (ph 406 745-3162; fax 3688).



Wide assortment of pieces made from grain elevator wood includes refrigerator magnets, towel racks, cup and wine racks.

He Preserves History By Re-Using Elevator Wood

"They're knocking 'em down at the rate of one a day around here, destroying some great wood," says Peter Kirk, who's leading an effort to salvage wood from cribbed-type elevators.

The Innisfree, Alberta, woodworker not only wants to save the wood and turn it into "grain leg art" in the short-term, but eventually to renovate an entire elevator and turn it into a crafts store-office-restaurant complex.

Kirk is attracted to elevator wood because of the patterns worn in the wood over the course of 70 or 80 years. "Stored grain wears it like a riverbed. It creates some really exquisite patterns," he notes.

Along with helper Clayton Harrison, Kirk has stripped at least 30 elevators, using chainsaws and crowbars, in the last few years.

He uses the salvaged wood to make everything from common refrigerator magnets to elaborate custom-built pieces.

"Of the ten or twelve big pieces I've built, the most involved was a 7-ft. high, 9-ft. wide home entertainment center in the shape of a grain elevator complete with granary-style sliding doors," he says.

Meantime, he continues to stockpile wood (dozens more elevators are slated for



English-born woodworker Peter Kirk with some of his more elaborate pieces.

destruction in the coming months) hoping that in 10 or 20 years people will recognize its value as a part of Prairie history and art.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Peter Kirk, Box 359, Innisfree, Alberta, Canada TOB 2G0 (ph 403 592-2179).

Annual Hat & Cap Auction A Big Success

A Lions Club in a small northern Illinois community came up with a unique fundraising idea that has turned into a successful, day-long annual event.

The Ransom, Ill., Lions Club recently held its 14th annual Hat & Cap Auction. Hats, caps, T-shirts, belt buckles, jackets, and other memorabilia are donated by various sources and are auctioned off to the more than 200 bidders that show up for the sale, which always begins at 9:30 a.m. on the first Saturday in March.

"We send out 1,000 solicitation letters to seed corn companies, construction and trucking industries, sporting goods stores, professional sports teams, and other similar organizations," says club president Dale Johnson. "We average 600 to 700 hats and caps, 50 to 100 T-shirts, and a lot of other items such as farm toys and even an autographed photo of the Miami Dolphins football team."

Some seed corn caps go for \$25 or more, while more than half sell for \$5 to \$6, he says.

Bidding, which is conducted only by seasoned auctioneers, continues until all the items are sold, usually around 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon, he says.

"The item that brought the highest price so far was a 3 by 5-ft. hand-carved wooden Chicago Bulls sign," Johnson says. "It went for \$500 three or four years ago."

Proceeds from the auction go to support a number of local Lions Club causes, such as a children's eyeglass project, a guide dog program, and local playground and ball diamond.

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