

Farm-Based Businesses Help Boost Incomes

“Free-Run” Eggs Bring Premium Price

Wim Janssen tapped into a booming market when he and his wife, Judith, started raising free-run hens. The eggs bring in an extra 25¢ per dozen and it's a seller's market. Demand for free-run eggs is twice what Janssen and other poultry farmers can produce.

“Free run hens aren't as productive as caged hens, but the premium more than covers the difference,” says Janssen. The hens lay eggs in open barns instead of cages. It's the same as free-range poultry except that the birds are inside.

The couple runs 7,700 hens in two traditional-style barns on their 6-acre farm. A third barn is used to raise baby pullets to replace the laying hens every 14 months.

Because they raise their own replacement stock, Janssen says their birds have a healthier immune system which he credits for the 2.4 percent death loss among their layers, half that of conventional cage-style laying barns.

“Chickens face their greatest stress when they start laying in a new facility,” says Janssen. “That is when they are most susceptible to disease. Our hens have already been exposed to any germs here, so they

are less stressed.”

Chicks and layers enjoy a free run of their respective barns. The open floor is divided down the center by a row of nesting boxes about 3 ft. off the floor.

A conveyor belt under the boxes carries eggs to a sorting room at the end of the barn four times each day. Here, they are placed in trays for shipping.

Back in the barn, a hen exiting the nesting box can go to a scratch area, where she can take a dust bath, or hop into the feeding area. Automatic feeders and waterers are set up above a slatted floor. Manure collects below for easy removal. Feeders, watering pipes and nesting boxes all serve as roosting areas for the hens.

Janssen estimates that 98 percent of the hens lay their eggs in the nesting boxes within a short time after introducing them to the barn. Promptly picking up eggs that are laid in the open areas helps to discourage hens from joining the rebel 2 percent.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Judith and Wim Janssen, RR1, Blackfalds, Alberta, Canada TOM OJO (ph 403 885-4636; fax 403 885-2136; E-mail: Jarom@attcanada.ca).



Free run hens lay eggs in open barns instead of cages. “The eggs bring an extra 25 cents per dozen,” says Wim Janssen.

Boat-Mounted “Weedsickle”

If you own waterfront property and have big weed problems - or if you're looking for a money-making opportunity - you'll be interested in this new battery-operated sickle mower that mounts on a boat and cuts water weeds.

The “Water Weedsickle” clamps on back like an outboard motor. It's powered by a 12-volt gear motor that operates off a 12-volt battery.

Chemical controls for water weeds are fast becoming unavailable or even outlawed, notes inventor Basil J. Leonard. As a result, mechanical removal of water weeds may soon be the only option. Cutting water weeds on a regular basis not only allows you to use the water for swimming and boating, but it also keeps the weeds from going to seed.

The Weedsickle is equipped with an “Easy Cut” sickle made in Germany and sold throughout North America. It's a one-blade configuration and will cut any weed that grows in water, says Leonard. The unit is raised or lowered by loosening a clamp. Sickle angle can also be adjusted manually.

Sells for \$1,595 (U.S.) plus S&H. Leonard says several lakeshore owners can buy together, or you can buy it and hire out for custom work. Guaranteed.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Environ Mills International, Inc., 11500



Battery-operated, “Weedsickle” mounts on a boat and cuts weeds growing under water before they go to seed.

Simcoe St., Sunderland, Ontario, Canada LOC 1H0 (ph 705 357-2406 or 705 328-4531; Website: www.environmentmills.com).



Harold and Betty Barnard “adopted” more than 100 wild Mustang mares from wild herds in the West. They breed them to Mustang stallions and sell off the colts.

Wild Mustangs Turn Profit For Illinois Rancher

Harold and Betty Barnard, and their son Todd, probably have the largest herd of Mustangs in the Midwest. They owe it all to the U.S. government, which allowed them to “adopt” 110 mares from wild herds in the West.

U.S. Department of the Interior inspectors reviewed the request and evaluated the 2,900 acres of securely fenced fields and pastures, and then gave the Barnards a single mare. Instead, the Geff, Illinois family 119 mares. In return, they agreed to care for them for a ten-year period.

“We didn't adopt them to break or train them,” explains Barnard. “We use them as brood mares, breeding them to Mustang stallions and selling the colts.”

While they won't receive title to the original mares for ten years, they have full title to all offspring. The Barnards sell about 70 purebred Mustangs each year for an average price of \$650. Buyers come from as far away as New Jersey to California. They keep the female foals to increase the size of the herd.

Barnard also raises cattle and owns a western wear store. He rotates the Mustang herd through a series of pastures after his beef herd. The horses and cattle complement each other, and Barnard has found the wily Mustangs are easy keepers.

“We have a lot of fescue in the pasture, and once it goes dormant, the cattle need

fresh pasture, but the horses thrive on it,” he says. “We can have an inch of snow on the ground, and the horses will paw through it before they will touch big hay bales in the same pasture. They'll break the ice on ponds, where domestic horses would walk back and forth waiting for someone to do it for them.”

The wild horses are only worked once a year when Barnard runs them through a modified chute (he lined it with slick plastic sheeting to reduce bruising) for any needed hoof, mane or tail trims. He also worms them at that time and then turns them back out.

When Barnard discovered that he couldn't use domestic studs on the wild mares - he says the Mustangs were just too wild - he went back to the people at the Department of the Interior and inquired about studs.

“They picked out 16 real nice ones and delivered them to their nearest station in Milwaukee,” recalls Barnard. “My wife and I trucked them home from there. By the time we got them through Chicago traffic, they were just about halter broke!”

Barnard can't say enough good things about the government people he worked with. “They are the nicest people in the world if you cooperate with them,” he recalls, encouraging others to adopt horses, too. “If it worked for us, it could work for anybody.”

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Harold Barnard, RR 1, Box 143, Geff, Ill. 62842 (ph 618 897-2407 or 618 897-2493).

Farm-Based Business Equipment Sources

Make Money Selling Dirt

Have you ever thought about selling the dirt on your place rather than growing things in it?

If so, you'll want to check out Soil Pro™ machinery from CBT Wear Parts, Inc. They make all kinds of equipment for processing topsoil and compost, including shredders, pulverizers, rotary screens, blending equipment, baggers, and more.

“Our equipment is better built and more user friendly than anything on the market,” says company president Mark Heffernan.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark Heffernan, CBT Wear Parts, 13658 Hilltop Valley Rd., Richland Center, Wis. 53581 (ph 608 538-3290 or 888 228-3625).



Hand Cart For Big Nursery Pots

Anyone who raises container-grown plants and trees in 15 to 30-gal. pots will like this hand-powered mover and extractor.

The two-wheeled Pot Mate picks up any pot whether it has a lip or not thanks to clamps that grip both sides of the top edge of the pot. Raising and lowering the handle activates the clamps.

The cart sells for \$675 and comes with one clamping assembly that fits 15 to 30-gal. pots. Optional clamps for smaller and larger pots are available.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Specialty Converting and Supply, Inc., Box 913, 1114 E. Marion Ave., Nashville, Ga. 31639 (ph 800 524-7567; fax 229 686-7751; E-mail: scsinc@alltel.com; Website: www.scsincorporated.com).

