

Business Is Booming For Mail Order Meat

As strange as it may sound, two California women are proving that meat can be successfully marketed on a small scale by "mail order."

Carol Pasheilich and Maggie Howard, of Tawanda Farms at Montague, Calif., sell their Murray Grey beef and Romney lamb to loyal, repeat customers. They fill their orders by delivering "quick frozen" cuts, via Federal Express.

"This is our third year selling lamb and it's definitely a seasonal product," Pasheilich says. "This year we are projecting we will sell about 50 lambs between mid-September and the end of December. Volume has been steadily increasing and we have about 90 per cent repeat customers. It is our first year for steers and it is our repeat lamb customers who are trying the beef so far."

According to Pasheilich, they offer both whole and half-lambs, as well as halves and quarters of beef, but most of their orders are for select cut "gourmet packages" that average 15 lbs., for special occasions.

The women have a 120-acre farm where they run 75 ewes and 15 cows. They also sell some hay as a cash crop, and boost their in-

come by marketing breeding stock, wool and machine washable sheep pelts.

Direct marketing provides an opportunity for the women to educate their clients and develop a strong loyalty. They send out a newsletter that explains their sustainable farming practices, the health benefits of eating meat, particularly grass-fed meats, and they also share easy and delicious recipes they've collected.

To establish a bigger clientele, the partners rented mailing lists for high-end cooking magazines and sent out promotional material to 3,000 people, initially. As a result, they reaped about 30 orders. But rental of mailing lists can be very costly, they say.

The ladies price their meat at \$236 for a whole lamb, promising 50 lbs. of meat. The various individual lamb cuts range from \$4 to \$9 per pound. Their beef price averages about \$4.50 per pound and ranges from \$2.50 per pound for ground beef, up to \$17 per pound for prime cuts.

The women base their meat prices on a formula that takes into account all of their expenses including feed, veterinary supplies, packaging, shipping and marketing. They



Tawanda Farms produces gourmet packages of Romney Lamb that are sold to high-end chefs and restaurants.

divided their total costs by the number of head involved, calculating a break-even cost per ewe and per cow, and added what they felt was a reasonable profit for their trouble. They took that figure and divided it by the pounds of meat produced, to figure their per pound end price.

Because of the shipping they needed to do for restaurant and interstate orders, they had to have their slaughtering done by a USDA approved facility, rather than a state facility. This, they say, accounts for as much as one-

third of their costs.

Pasheilich and Howard use Styrofoam containers and cardboard shipping boxes with dry ice and frozen gel packs.

The ladies are in the process of setting up a website so they can expand their mail order business to include the internet.

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Chairs Made From Tractor Seats

"When I first considered using a tractor seat on an office chair I had no idea how well it would work," says Michael Wiederrich, Saco, Montana, who ended up making an IH barstool and rocking chair.

"After I made the first alteration on my office chair, I stood back and thought to myself, 'I can do a lot more of this.' In addition to the Deere tractor seat, I added a cast iron toolbox lid to the back, a steel wheel as a kick plate, the wheel guards as arm rests, and a steel spring on back of the chair to finish it off. Finally, I painted it Deere green and yellow," notes Wiederrich.

"After the first chair I still had a bunch of extra parts left over. Following the design of

the first chair I decided to make more. For the barstool I used a corn-packing wheel as the base and a wheelbarrow wheel as the footrest. The backrest is made from an old Model 'A' rim and sports a McCulder emblem," says Wiederrich. "I finished it off with red and white IH paint and the name 'International Harvester' on the backrest.

"The final chair I made was a rocking chair that includes a headrest, footrest and adjustable lever to change the tilt. It even sports the IH logo. I painted it IH red and white."

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Wiederrich's office chair was made from a Deere seat, toolbox lid, and a steel wheel (left). The more complex rocking chair (right) was made with an IH theme.

Illinois Man Makes Art Out Of Farm Machinery

David Carrington hasn't spent much time on a tractor, but he can describe many of them in detail.

The Maple Park, Illinois, artist has built a business around capturing the images of antique tractors, cars, airplanes, and even construction equipment. He puts his work on canvas, paper, T-shirts, and even saw blades. "I get most of my business from going to local shows and fairs, and from satisfied customers telling their friends and neighbors about me," he says.

"I'm not a farmer, but I've been interested in antique farm machinery for years," he says.

So after taking classes in graphic design, he began painting for pay about six years ago.

Carrington admits his artistry still doesn't pay the bills, but every year it's doing a little better. "Right now, I'm driving a school bus to supplement my income," he says.

"Farmers love their old tractors, so that's mostly what I paint," he says. "But I'll take on any reasonable project. All I ask is for them to send me a photo of the subject from the angle they want it painted. I'll take it from there."

He says he's had a few difficult assignments over the years, and when he got in a photo of a rusty beat-up old Ford tractor, he figured he had a really tough one. "I called

the tractor owner and asked if he wanted me to paint the tractor as it would be when he was finished restoring it. He said he was finished with it and it that was exactly how he wanted it drawn," Carrington recalls.

"I did what he asked and, in the end, I think it was some of my best work. The rough condition of the tractor gave the picture a lot of character that you don't see when the machine is restored to mint new condition."

He says his most difficult assignment to date has been a steam engine. "It had a dual flywheel and it was very difficult to get it proportioned correctly," he says.

While he'll use just about any type of paint or pencil on just about any surface, most of Carrington's work is what he calls marker rendering, usually done on Bristol board, a heavy paper that's easy to frame.

"I do a lot of airbrush paintings on T-shirts, too. Only once in awhile do I get to do anything on canvas. That's usually trains or something like that," he says.

Carrington will also do portraits of people, pets and even livestock. "I've painted a lot of grandchildren for people who first had me paint their antique tractor or auto," he says. He also paints farmsteads and farm scenery.

For a marker rendering of an antique tractor on Bristol board, Carrington charges a fee



David Carrington paints farm scenery, antique trucks and tractors, and animals. He'll paint onto almost any surface, including canvas, paper, T-shirts, and even saw blades.

of \$100. Fees are the same for a painting of up to three persons, animals or machines. "I charge \$25 for each additional face or item in the painting," he says.

As for scenery or farmsteads, Carrington says those fees can be negotiated once he's seen a photo of the scene. He adds that rates are higher if he's required to paint on location rather than from a photo.

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