

Farm-Based Businesses Help Boost Incomes

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 E-mail us at: Editor@farmshow.com.

Asparagus Business Runs On Honor System

Three acres of asparagus and the honor system of marketing make a good combination on Mark and Linda Smith's farm near Edinburg, Ill.

The Smiths grow asparagus in an area that used to be barn lots and nearby dairy pasture. When the crop is in full swing, they pull the asparagus twice a day. Linda says they prefer pulling asparagus to cutting because cutting can damage the roots and also because it takes more time than pulling. They converted a small milk room building attached to a barn, into an asparagus packaging facility where the freshly pulled asparagus is cleaned. The asparagus is then stored in an honor system refrigerator. Customers come in and pick up what they want and then slip the money in a cash box.

The Smiths established their asparagus patch back in 1989. They have not applied additional fertilizer, but production has held up well.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Mark and Linda Smith, 17 Sunnyside St., Edinburg, Ill. (ph 217 623-4048).



Mark and Linda Smith grow asparagus on former dairy pasture.

Once harvested, asparagus is stored in an honor system refrigerator. Customers slip money into cash box.



Deboning machine removes more bones with less waste, in less time and without cutting or damaging the fillet.

Deboning Machine For Fish Farmers

When a friend asked Lonnie Dalgord and Eric Evenson if they could make a fish deboning machine, they took up the challenge. The result was a machine that works so well commercial fishermen started lining up to buy it.

FARM SHOW reader Rick Ronk, Luxemburg, Wisconsin, figured other subscribers would be interested in the machine.

The two Green Bay, Wisconsin, machinists hadn't expected their deboner to become such a big part of their lives. "It allowed us to quit our full-time jobs and start our own machine shop," Dalgord says.

They sell the deboning machine and also work on other custom projects. "Between us, we have almost 40 years experience in building machinery for the food and packaging industry. We are able to take a problem, think it through, create a prototype and then build a finished product."

Dalgord says most of their sales of the \$30,000 deboning machine have been to commercial fisherman and processors.

They've recently demonstrated it for a trout producer and have had interest from catfish and tilapia farmers, as well.

Their customers say the machine works better than other deboning machines because it removes more bones with less waste in less time and without cutting or damaging the fillet. It'll process about 300 lbs. of fresh cut fillets per hour, with an average loss of only 1 to 2 percent. For day-old fillets, it'll handle more than 500 lbs. per hour with losses of less than 3 percent.

It's made of stainless steel and can be disassembled quickly for easy cleaning and maintenance.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Lonnie Dalgord, Genesis Custom Machinery, Inc., 835 Potts Avenue, Suite 725, Box 8535, Green Bay, Wis. 54308 (ph 920 829-6349 (office) or 920 499-4191 (shop); email: genesiscustommachineryinc@yahoo.com; website: www.genesiscustommachinery.com).



Roland and Coreen Rivard use the fruit and leaves of red raspberry bushes as the main ingredients in a new organic drink called "Sips."

Raspberry Drink Business Takes Off

A Pickardville, Alberta couple has developed a new product and farm business by using the fruit and leaves of red raspberry bushes as the main ingredients in a new organic drink called, "Sips."

Roland and Coreen Rivard have so far produced 8,400 bottles of the cold "herbal tea" from last year's production of 2 1/2 acres of raspberry canes and 200 lbs. of purchased organic raspberries.

The began experimenting with their own raspberry drink recipes as a way to diversify their farm. It went so well, this year they also planted 4 1/2 more acres of raspberries.

The Rivards produce four drink flavors: Raspberry Lemon Balm, Raspberry Peppermint, Raspberry Oat, and a seasonal offering called Winterspice.

Their product contains no additives or preservatives and the drinks are low in fat, high in nutrients, and low in calories. With raspberry leaves as one of the main ingredients, the drinks are also high in anti-oxidants and are a good source of iron, magnesium and potassium.

The Rivards start harvesting the raspberries in early to mid-August and freeze them for later use. After the berries are picked they pull the leaves. Since raspberry canes die after bearing fruit, leaf removal is not harmful

to the plants.

The Rivards dry the raspberry leaves in boxes inside their garage, with fans blowing on them. They also grow and harvest their own peppermint and lemon balm herbs.

The rest of the drink making process is done at the Food Processing Development Center in Leduc, Alberta, where the Rivards pay \$500 per day to rent the necessary equipment and work with a food scientist.

The ingredients are simply placed in large steam kettles full of boiling water. A small amount of honey is added to the strained juice for sweetening and then it goes through an automated filling line.

The Rivards started marketing their "Sips" product in October of 2002, at Farmers' Markets. A number of stores now carry the product.

The raspberry drinks sell for \$2.50 per 1/3-liter bottle or \$27 (Canada) per dozen, plus shipping and handling.

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"Man-Powered" Wild Seed Harvester

Mervin Wallace harvests several acres of wildflower seed every year at his Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, Jefferson City, Missouri. He uses a home-built walk-behind harvester that cuts off and collects seed heads. It's been called a combine, but Wallace says it doesn't thresh and separate the seed. That has to be done later.

The harvester is built as lightweight as possible. It's equipped with a gasoline-powered 42-in. hedge trimmer that acts as a cutterbar. The frame is made out 3/4-in. steel conduit and measures 42 in. wide by 5 1/2 ft. long and 15 in. deep.

He bought lightweight garden cart wheels and hubs fitted with bicycle tires. The wheels are mounted so they can be adjusted easily to match the height of the crop being harvested.

The reel is made from 1/4-in. steel rod, and the bats were formed by covering the frame with duct tape. A bicycle chain running off of a 3-speed bicycle sprocket welded to one of the wheels powers the reel. "That lets us change the speed of the reel if we need to," he says.

Wallace figures there's about \$1,000 worth



Home-built walk-behind harvester is used to cut off and collect seed heads.

of parts and labor in his harvester. While he uses it exclusively for wildflowers, he says it would be ideal for cutting small plots of grass seed or small grain.

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