

# Farm-Based Businesses Help Boost Incomes

## “No Sales” Way To Run Lawn Service

Wayne Dorsett of Kirkland, Washington came home one day to find a small notice with an elastic band stapled to it hanging from his door.

The notice was from a company called “Golden Rule Lawn Care,” and they offered to aerate his lawn the next day, suggesting that if he wanted the service, he should sign his name and phone number on the bottom of the notice and replace it on the doorknob before 9 a.m. the next morning. It stated that an invoice would be left behind if no one was home after the work was complete.

The note also addressed the advantages of aeration and the comparatively high cost and inconvenience of aerator rentals.

Dorsett liked the offer and the price, so he followed its instructions. Sure enough, the next night he came home from work to find that his lawn had been satisfactorily aerated. He mailed off his payment, happy with the deal. The whole business transaction was completed without either party ever

meeting face to face.

Dorsett thought, “Hey, this is something anyone could do,” and then contacted FARM SHOW to share what he thought was a good business idea.

We did some research and found that Golden Rule Lawn Care is a company created by college students Charity and Spencer Arnold, who are married, and Golden Lund. During the summer they hire a youth to pound the pavement, distributing about 300 flyers a day throughout suburbs on the east side of Seattle. It takes about 3 1/2 hours per day. They don’t knock on doors at all; they just leave the flyers behind.

“From the 300 flyers, we average eight or nine jobs per day, and only a quarter of them actually phone us to set up appointments. The rest just sign the flyer and we never meet,” says Charity.

Golden Rule Lawn Care also offers lawn mowing contracts and free estimates on lawn thatching (moss removal).

## Neighborhood Special!!!

**Why pay more? Aerate now!!! Only \$40 (front and back)**

(Rentals cost \$45/ 2 hrs. or \$110/day. They weigh up to 400 lbs.)

Improves drainage, reduces runoff, and allows nutrients direct access to the root system. To accept this offer: Leave this flyer on your door with your name and phone # by 9 am on: \_\_\_\_\_ (We will leave an invoice if no one is home.) We also offer...

Free estimates on thatching (moss removal). If you have questions, call (425) 557-0636.

Feel free to call if you want to schedule an alternative time.

Work performed by Golden or Spencer. (experienced college students)

Watering lawn the night before will improve results.

Be sure to mark sprinkler systems! Thanks and have a great day!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

Lawn mowing contracts are also available. Ask about our summer contracts.

Flyers distributed by “Golden Rule Lawn Care.”

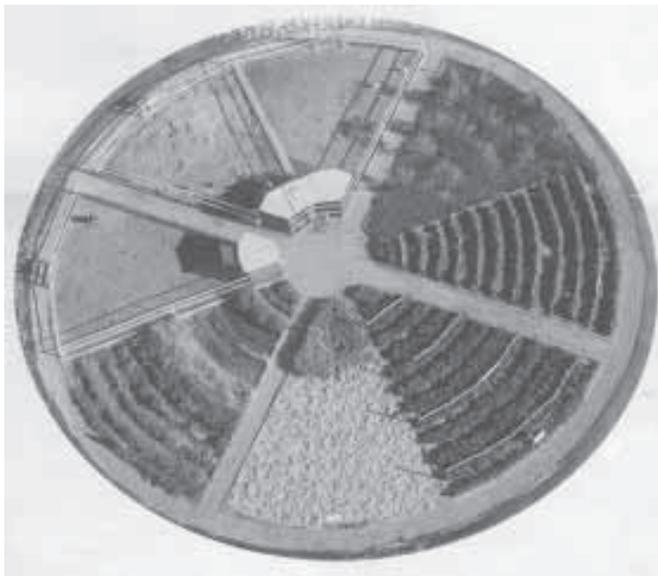
Last summer, Golden Rule Lawn Care distributed about 300 flyers a day like the one above throughout Seattle suburbs. Anyone wanting work done simply signed the flyer.

They say their marketing system works well and could be applied to many other types of businesses. Of the 650 aeration, thatching and mowing jobs they have done so far this summer, they’ve only had to call about 40 people to remind them to pay. Only one person has given them trouble collecting.

Arnold says their net income averages \$200 per day, and the busiest times are in May

and early June. They’ve found that their success rate is higher when they give people two days to replace the signed flyer on their door to place a service order.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Golden Rule Lawn Care, 460 E. 200 S., #14, Provo, Utah, 84606 (cell ph 801-836-1417, summer ph. # in Seattle: 425 557-0636, email: sa67@email.byu.edu).



People pay to tour Walt Gregory and Lynne Weis’s Pizza Farm. It’s a 150-ft. dia. circle divided into “slices,” each of which produces one of the ingredients needed to make a pizza.

## “Pizza Farm” Idea Catches On

After reading about a “Pizza Farm” in California, Walt Gregory and Lynne Weis decided to replicate the idea on their Dow, Illinois farm (see FARM SHOW’s story in Vol.24, No.4).

A Pizza Farm is a 150-ft. diameter circle divided into “slices,” each of which produces one of the ingredients needed to make a pizza. People pay to tour the mini farm.

Gregory and Weis were already in the direct-to-consumer business selling meat and vegetables directly to local customers. They decided that a small farm that actually produces all the ingredients for pizza would be a good way to teach children about agriculture.

The farm is composed of eight “slices,” four for raising meats and dairy and four for crops. Chickens are raised for eggs used in the pizza dough. Goats are used for the cheese, a beef cow is used for meat, and pigs are used for sausage and pepperoni. Tomatoes, peppers, onions, herbs, and wheat for the crust are raised on the other slices.

Pizza was chosen because it is especially popular among children. “Most kids don’t have an idea where the food they eat actually comes from,” Gregory says. Groups have come from as far as two hours away to tour the pizza farm. Most are on field trips from elementary schools.

Also on the property is a General Store where one can buy goods from the farm including meats and sauce. There are plans to expand the pizza farm idea around the Midwest. Future sites include Missouri, Kansas, Iowa and even inside the city limits of Chicago. “Because of its small size you can set one up almost anywhere,” Weis says. “All you need is parking.”

Walt Gregory and Lynne Weis give tours March through October, seven days a week. Admission for kids and seniors is \$4.50 and adults \$5.50.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, R Pizza Farm, 25873 State Highway Route 3, Dow, Ill. 62022 (ph 618 466-5950; email: rpizzafarm@sbcglobal.net).

## Welding Hobby Leads To Sideline Business

When Todd Eldridge, Collinsville, Mississippi, bought his first welder a few months ago, his intent was to make a few add-ons for the Deere Gator he uses to maintain his immaculate lawn.

Those add-ons have mushroomed into a nice little business for Eldridge, a Federal Firefighter at the Meridian Naval Air Station, who works every other day. His schedule gives him a lot of spare time.

Until recently his yard was his hobby. “I am a very avid lawn maintainer,” he says. “I pull a 58-in. reel mower behind my Gator to cut the grass. I have an electric fertilizer spreader attachment and a 15-gal. sprayer with a 9-ft. boom to apply herbicides and insecticides for ant control.

“I bought the welder to make some attachments for my Gator including a two-piece receiver hitch, dumped side extensions, and a box front basket for carrying supplies and tools,” says Eldridge, who couldn’t find any of the items on the market.

“These add-ons made my Gator even more useful, and people started asking me to make things for them,” he says. Eldridge found a good steel supplier, added more metalworking equipment, and started running a small part-time fabricating shop.

Because he’s just getting rolling, he doesn’t want to tie up a lot of money in inventory. So he’s been marketing his Gator add-ons one at a time on the Internet, through the on-line auction site e-bay. “That way, I can control what I sell,” he says. “If I don’t have it built, then it isn’t for sale.”

He says after he’s listed something on e-Bay, he usually gets e-mail from several people who want to buy products. “My online customers pay me via the internet using Paypal. When payment is received, I build what they ordered and ship it to them,” he says.

He figures this web-based operation is the best way to run a small business if you can’t always be in the shop or office to answer the phone. “I do have a business phone, but hardly anyone calls on it. I’m gone half the time, so there’s a good chance anyone calling will get the answering machine,” he adds. “I do check email several times a day, though, and try to always reply promptly.”

He’d welcome email, or even phone calls,



Todd Eldridge made a few add-ons for his Deere Gator, including this 15-gal. sprayer with a 9-ft. boom.



Front basket is used for carrying supplies and tools (above). He also mounted a two-piece receiver hitch on back of his Gator (below).



from people who’d like more information about his Gator products and other items he’s made in his shop, or who’d like to know more about how he established his on-line business.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Todd Eldridge, HunterworksLLC, 9291 Collinsville Circle, Collinsville, Miss. 39325 (ph 601 626-7449; email: todd@hunterworks.com; website: www.hunterworks.com).