

He Raises Organic Hybrid Blue Corn

Do you ever wonder where they get the corn for those blue corn chips in the grocery store?

Jack Erisman, a farmer in Pana, Ill. knows because he sells organic hybrid blue corn to a middleman who sells it to a corn chip maker.

He says his yield varies a lot. In six years, his lowest has been 50 bushels per acre and 84 the high. Yet, he's heard it go as low as 35 and as high as 110. Hybrid blue corn sells for between 12 and 16 cents per lb. (or \$6 to \$8 per bushel).

Farming blue hybrid corn isn't much different than it is for any other food-quality corn, he says.

But farming it among other fields of corn can produce problems. "Blue corn can cer-

tainly mess up a field of white corn," Erisman says. "It cross pollinates quite easily." To reduce that risk, he plants his "hybrid blues" after everyone else does. And that's created a few problems. One year, everyone else planted early in the season and then it rained a lot which meant a later start for Erisman's corn.

Yet, he farms about 240 acres of it among the 2,300 of all organic crops. It's planted between farms or just at different times.

Erisman's been strictly organic since 1993. He has a herd of 200 organic cattle and practices crop rotation. He's used no insecticides or anhydrous since 1969.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jack Erisman, 781 U.S. Highway 51, Pana, Ill. 62557 (ph 217 226-4050).



Erisman plants about 240 acres of organic hybrid blue corn. His yields have varied between 50 and 84 bu./acre.

Tractor Restoration Business

In the past 18 years, Ed Post of Post Sandblasting and Painting in West Point, Ill., has restored close to 500 tractors of all makes and models.

"I grew up in town, but once I painted my first tractor, I was hooked. It's very rewarding work because they come in and look like a pile of rubble, but when they leave, I'm just tickled with the way they look," Post says.

"I've done tractors from the 1920's up to the 1990's. There are a lot of farmers who, instead of spending \$100,000 to buy a new one, they just revamp and spruce up their old tractor - and make the neighbors think they got a new one," he says. "I've done work for people who just want to prolong the life of their tractor, those who want to restore them for their own enjoyment,

and those who are serious tractor collectors."

Post also restores implements such as antique plows and discs, and fertilizer equipment.

"I have one full-time employee and we've been pretty swamped with work over the last five or six years," Post says. "We're usually able to get tractors in and out within two weeks. We normally use factory paint, but for show quality results, we use PPG brand automotive paint because it weathers better."

He says his business has grown steadily, thanks mainly to word of mouth advertising, and he also briefly advertised on the internet, which was very successful.

"I have some tractors here right now that are from at least 300 miles away. I've checked around, and I have very competitive pricing,"



With one full-time employee, Post gets tractors out within two weeks. Price depends on tractor's size and shape and whether he's worked on a particular model before.

Post explains. "Pricing is based on the size and shape of the tractor, plus whether or not I've ever done one of that type before."

He says he concentrates on cosmetic work, spending a lot of time on details, but doesn't get into mechanical repair.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Post Sandblasting and Painting, P.O. Box 20, West Point, Ill. 62380 (ph 217 743-6349 or 217 430-1607; email: sandmanil@frontiernet.net).



Tingler's patent-pending machine turns a conventional square bale into about 18 smaller Bunny Bales.

Hay Farmer Expands Into "Bunny Bales"

JW Tingler has been a hay farmer for 23 years near Covington, Va. When he wanted to expand his business, he spent two years analyzing the market and found that although other businesses supply hay to small pet owners, most provide loose hay in bags.

He decided to provide a high-grade hay (timothy or alfalfa) in 6-lb. bales about the size of a shoebox. Like normal bales, they come off in slices and have two bale ties around them. Tingler created a feeder for the "Bunny Bales" as well.

To make the smaller bales, he created a patent-pending machine in his shop that rebales a regular square bale into about 18 smaller Bunny Bales.

"As we create new products, we test them on our own rabbits first," Tingler says.

At first, Tingler planned to sell the smaller bales to area pet stores and possibly larger grocery chains. A friend convinced him to put them on the internet. "Had we not set up a website and just sold to stores, our success would have been doomed for sure," he admits.

6 lb. Timothy Grass and Alfalfa Bunny Bales sell for \$9.80 apiece plus shipping.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pine Hill Farms, 308 Armentrout Rd., Covington, Va. 24426 (ph 540 863-0209; email: jwtingler@bunnybale.com; website: www.bunnybale.com).

Build Your Own Small Animal Cages

Whether you need one cage for the family chinchilla or 100 cages for rabbit does, building quality cages is easy with parts and materials from Quality Cage Company. After 30 years of building and selling cages, the company has now started selling do-it-yourself materials to individuals, feed stores and others.

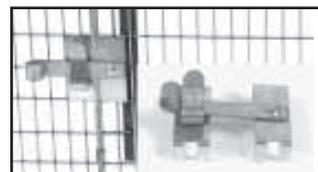
"We do everything the hard way, making edges smooth and notching corners so they aren't sharp," says Guy Cone, who runs the business with his wife Judith. "Safety of the animal and the people using the cages is our first concern. Doorways have wire trims to stiffen them, and door guards are extruded plastic to give a smooth edge."

The Cones build banks of cages for small animal and bird breeders as well as individual cages, which they wholesale in the Pacific Northwest. They also sell direct locally and via the internet.

Because they use all domestic materials, Quality Cage building parts are more expensive than some cages. But they say their attention to detail makes the parts worth the extra cost.

"We spent quite a bit on machinery to flatten cage wire before we start building the cages," says Cone. "We use metal clips to secure the cage sides, not hog rings or plastic. And, we use galvanized or powder coated metal trays instead of plastic."

Pet owners and animal breeders alike can order cages assembled or knocked down for shipping and ready to be assembled. For do-it-yourselfers, wire netting or screening is available by the roll in a variety of sizes, lengths, gauges and widths. The company



"We do everything the hard way, making edges smooth and notching corners so they aren't sharp," says Guy Cone.



also offers door latches, handles, spring and hook assemblies, galvanized steel trays and safety edge strips.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Guy Cone, Quality Cage Co., 5942 SE 111th Ave., Portland, Ore. 97266 (ph 503 762-2607 or 888 762-2336; email: sales@qualitycage.com; website: www.qualitycage.com or www.qualitycageparts.com).