

## Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income

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 email us at: editor@farmshow.com.

### They're Turning Flour Into Gold

By Jim Ruen, Contributing Editor

It's not easy to make a living on 5 to 7 acres of wheat. But you might say that Hamish Crawford and his wife, Bonnie Yarish, have figured out how to turn flour to gold in developing a farm-based bakery with sales of about \$1 million a year.

Their bread, sandwiches, and other products are all sold at The Roost, a bakery, plant nursery and gift shop they built with a neighboring family on the edge of the farm. It was the idea of adding value to grain that got them started.

"If you do the gross numbers on wheat, we grow enough wheat on five acres to make about 50,000 loaves of bread or about \$200,000 in sales," calculates Crawford.

"But when we make sandwiches out of the bread, we triple our return, and that's just from the flour that goes into it."

Crawford found the gold in wheat the hard way, but he believes that other small acreage farmers could do the same with their products. When he and Yarish got interested in direct marketing farm products, they joined a tour to northern California to look at direct market apple orchards there. At the time, a glut of apples from China had depressed the U.S. market.

"The ones who were doing the best and having the most fun were baking apple pies and running a pie house," recalls Crawford. "I thought if we concentrated on our 10 acres, we could do something like that with flour rather than apples."

Crawford's plan was to grow the grain, mill it on site and bake breads and pastries with it doing all the labor themselves. The first step was learning about wheat and flour production.

The second step was going into business with a neighboring family, the Robinsons, and building a bakery. Working during the winter and doing most of the work themselves, Crawford, Ray Robinson and their wives took two years to build the bakery.

It also took Crawford about the same amount of time to get his wheat production and flour milling system up to speed. Using heavy inputs of fertilizer and irrigation, he quickly built his yields of hard red spring wheat up to the 80 bu. range.

A combine was easy to find, as he only needed a small one. "They are a dime a dozen on the prairie, as most of the farmers need big ones today," says Crawford. "It cost more to get it here to Vancouver Island than it did to buy it."

While the combine did a fair job on weed seeds and chaff, wheat for flour needs to be cleaner yet. Crawford got his hands on an old fanning mill that does a good job cleaning the wheat before running it through the mill.

Although Crawford and Robinson planned to market most of their bread as whole stone ground wheat, they needed finer flour for pastries. Crawford needed a sifter to remove the bran.

"You can buy one built for home use or a large commercial one for a big flour mill, but there's nothing in between," he says.

The only solution was to build one.



Crawford designed this portable "sifter" to make finer flour for pastries.

Crawford designed a portable unit that is only 2 by 3 by 5 ft. high. It includes a hopper, a flourmill, a sifter and room for flour and bran tubs underneath.

He used 2 by 2-in. steel tubing for a 3-sided base on caster wheels and for the motor supports at the closed end. The uprights at the corners are angle iron, and the hopper and sifting table are sheet metal. A cover for the sifter clamps in place with simple T-screws.

He adapted the mill by replacing the steel burrs with stone burrs and mounted the mill beneath the hopper. The ground flour drops into the sifter powered by a used 1/3-hp motor. An offset shaft gives the sifter both a reciprocating motion to keep the flour moving across the screen and an oscillating motion to keep the fines moving through the screen.

Crawford has tried different types of screening, including professional grade metal screen. What he likes best is nylon mesh from the fabric store.

"It only costs pennies, but has 190 holes per square inch for very fine flour, something you can't get with metal screening," he says.

"The hopper holds a bushel of wheat, and the mill can do about 100 lbs. of whole wheat and the sifter can do about 50 lbs. of flour an hour," he says. "The bakery uses about 30 to 50 lbs. a day, so I grind once a week and am done in 4-5 hours."

With the wheeled three-sided base, Crawford simply wheels it out of the way when finished. The entire apparatus cost him less than \$200.

Crawford and Yarish produce much of the food sold through The Roost, which is run by Ray, Darlene and daughter Chelsea. Bran from the flour is fed to chickens, which produce eggs for use by the bakery. In the fall, there is a pumpkin catapult and farm tours year round.

The Roost started out selling baked breads, pastries and a simple sandwich or two. Today they offer a complete menu of sandwiches, pastries, sticky buns and loaves, as well as soups and coffee (both brewed and packaged).

"Coffee and bakeries seem to go hand in hand," says Crawford, who finds gold in the bottom of coffee cups too. He points out that you can add water to a special blend of cof-



Their bread, sandwiches, and other products are all sold at The Roost, a bakery, plant nursery and gift shop they built on their farm.



They offer a complete menu of sandwiches, pastries, etc., as well as soups and coffee.

fee, brew it carefully and sell it for \$2.00 a cup. Make it into a cappuccino or latte, and it goes for \$4.00.

The 10 seats The Roost was allowed inside have been supplemented with picnic tables outside. An old school bus with seats replaced by tables and chairs adds to available seating.

"Kids love to sit in the school bus," notes Crawford.

Not everyone has the tourist economy of Vancouver Island and the nearby city of Victoria to draw on. However, Crawford

thinks others could do what he and Yarish have done. Although he doesn't plan to build more sifters, he would be glad to provide some basic specs for others to build something like it.

"I think there are great opportunities for folks to do what we are doing," he says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hamish Crawford, 1819 McTavish Rd., Sidney, B.C., Canada V8L 5T9 (ph 250 656-1819; fax 250 655-6577; www.highlandhousefarm.com).



The 6-legged cow (the extra legs are draped across its back) was used to raise money for a charitable organization.

### How To Make Money With A 6-Legged Cow

Most deformed animals make the news one day and disappear the next, but a Wisconsin family found a way to raise cash with their rare 6-legged cow.

They put the animal inside a tent at a recent farm show and asked for donations to the National MS Society from people who came inside to gawk.

Barbara Hesselink approached the MS Society about the idea because they had a daughter with multiple sclerosis. "We wanted to do something to benefit this nonprofit or-

ganization. About \$5,000 was raised," says Ben Hesselink, a son of Mark and Barbara. "My sister was too ill to attend the show and passed away soon afterward."

The two extra legs are located high on the cow's shoulders. The leg on the right side is shorter, as it never continued growing like the one on the left did.

The cow was born May 20, 2005. It's pretty unusual for an animal with two extra limbs to stay alive that long.