

## Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income



Fred and Jean Proft recycle old barn boards, turning them into attractive furniture and decorations.

### Barn Board Business Takes Off

Dilapidated farm buildings and fences harbor a precious resource - aged boards and posts that can be put to other uses. Fred and Jean Proft breathe new life into old barn boards, turning them into attractive furniture and decorations.

The Barrhead, Alberta couple have been recycling "barn board" for six years now, a retirement hobby that keeps them quite busy. The weather-beaten planks with their tiny cracks, add a country flair to any item. Seasoned fence posts are also in demand for birdhouse stands.

The Profts say they enjoy traveling around the countryside, keeping an eye out for old weathered buildings that have collapsed. They also enjoy meeting the various landowners they meet in their travels.

"Many landowners are happy to let us go in and collect whatever wood we can use before they push the rest up into a heap and burn it," Fred says. "Other times we pay a little for what we get."

They also run a classified ad in their local paper to let people know that they're looking for barn boards.

They build a wide variety of items, including shelves, benches, wishing wells, wheelbarrows, birdhouses, chairs, garden workbenches, wall hangings, and picture frames. They sell the majority of them through greenhouses, although they also attend some farmers' markets and craft shows.

Custom orders are sometimes made from woods supplied by a client. "It's a way for people to hold onto a small piece of their past and incorporate it into their current surroundings," Jean says. "There's nothing better for displaying an heirloom family photo of Grampa's old dairy barn, than a picture frame made from red barn board



The weather-beaten planks with their tiny cracks, add a country flair to any item.

recovered from that very site."

All of the Profts' creations are pre-drilled and screwed together, not nailed. This is because the older wood no longer has the same fiber content as new wood, and nails can work their way back out. The couple learned this from experience.

Because of the marketing and travel expenses involved, this is not a get-rich-quick scheme, the Profts point out, but they say there is some profit in it, and it's an enjoyable business. "It keeps you busy and out of trouble."

They've sold some large cabinets for as much as \$500 each, and say some of their small items sell for as little as \$8 apiece.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Fred and Jean Proft, Box 4817, Barrhead, Alberta, Canada T7N 1A6 (ph 780 674-5873).

### "Life On The Farm" Game

A "reality game" created by a farm family attracted attention recently when it was honored by educators with a "2006 Teacher Choice Awards for the Family" by Learning magazine.

"Life on the Farm" was created by Ev Johnson and her brother, Keith Gohl, of central Minnesota as a way to explain dairy farming to a city cousin. The prototype was made with poster board and purple markers. Once it was perfected they had it professionally designed to go onto store shelves.

Similar to Monopoly — follow the cow path and pass the barn for your milk check — players negotiate through various true-to-life situations. The winner is the first to retire, with \$10,000 and 60 dairy cows. That sounds simple enough until you land on a space that says—"Pay taxes: \$100 per cow."

Cards and board spaces reflect real incidents, Johnson says, such as the time an unknown deer hunter shot the only brown cow in their farm's herd, then cut the fence to escape on a four-wheeler. The other cows



"Life On The Farm" game is played similar to Monopoly.

found the opening, of course, and got out. But the game captures farming's rewards too. One card says: "Creamery awards you bonus for butterfat content."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ev Johnson, We R Fun Inc., 16915 235<sup>th</sup> Ave, Pierz, Minn. 56364 (ph 800 937-3864); evjohnson@werfun.com; www.werfun.com).



Many of the chicken coops in Pangman's book are on wheels or skids.

### How To Build Your Own Chicken Coop

If you've ever thought about putting a few chickens in your back yard, here's a book that'll show you how to put up a chicken coop that looks good and works with any size flock.

"Chicken Coop: 45 Building Plans for Housing Your Flock", by Judy Pangman takes a look at 45 different chicken house designs. They include everything from a setting hen hut (capacity of one hen) to a cordwood chicken house (16 hens and one rooster) to several of Joel Salatin's housing systems, including the Feathernet unit (1,000 laying hens on pasture). Also covered are hoop houses, A-frames, converted sheds, mobile units, and pastured poultry models.

Many of the structures are on wheels or skids. There's even a cotton trailer coop that holds 250 hens, 50 nest boxes, and 12 roosts.

Cezanne's Garden Coop has an intentionally sagging roof, lopsided windows and crooked door. It looks like a playhouse built by an elf. The San Miguel coop is little more than a 6-ft. high steel and stone monolith filled with more than a ton of gravel, and three "henhouses" that appear to be horizontal bar-



Book covers many different coop designs.

rels. They're really 14-in. ductwork and function as nest boxes.

The plans in the book are really more like sketches than blueprints. So you'll need some construction experience to convert the ideas into reality.

The book sells for \$19.95 plus S&H. Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Chicken Coops, Storey Publishing, P. O. Box 206, North Adams, Mass. 01247).

### Automatic Apple Cider Production

Grinding apples before crushing them for juice is the most strenuous part of making cider. Jack Nachamkin of Glen Mills, Penn., found a way to reduce the effort "to the point where it's now almost an enjoyable pastime".

He uses an apple grinder from Happy Valley Ranch (www.happyvalleyranch.com or ph 913 849-3103).

"My helper, George Jones, devised a way to mount an electric motor to belt-drive the drum."

The pair used a 110-volt AC, 1/3 hp 5,600 rpm motor they had "just lying around." A motor controller that's connected in series with the motor is very helpful, but not essential.

"The 1/3 hp motor is barely sufficient, so some modifications were needed," Nachamkin says. George added a spare wheel to the machine for extra flywheel action. This helped considerably, as long as we weren't too enthusiastically loading the hopper. An overflowing hopper crammed full of large hard apples could slow the motor to a stall if we aren't careful."

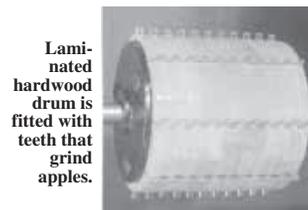
At this point, the chore of apple grinding became almost fun, he says, adding that he and Jones couldn't help laughing when the first apples flew through the motorized hopper.

"Once we found the right feeding rate, the apples went through as fast as two people could load them into the hopper."

The pulleys were sized to turn the grinder drum at about 300 rpm's.



Apple grinder's drum is belt-driven by an electric motor.



Laminated hardwood drum is fitted with teeth that grind apples.

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