

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.



Larry Seibel says camels do a great job clearing weeds and brush.

Rare White Camels Come With One Hump Or Two

Larry Seibel of Ferncroft Farms in Wake Forest, North Carolina, says he's found the perfect livestock for smaller farms - baby white camels.

He sells them to other farmers to clear noxious weeds from fields, and to people who just want something exotic to look at. His Dromedary camels have one hump and are quite common. Bactrian camels have two humps and are on the endangered species list. White camels of either breed are quite rare.

Many years ago, a West Coast zoo had the only white Bactrian male in the U.S., and to keep them rare they sterilized male offspring. One of the young males was ill with pneumonia and escaped the procedure. Seibel ended up owning that camel - appropriately named Lucky - and used it as the sire to start his operation.

Camel food, shelter and fencing needs are similar to cattle. Seibel feeds his camels hay and supplements and has a multi-pen, two-story barn for cold weather and calving.

"They're better than a brush goat because they eat weeds and other invasive plants cattle won't eat," Seibel says. When grazed alongside cattle and horses, they'll eat the weeds and leave the grass alone."

Weighing 1,200 to 1,500 lbs., the camels are very trainable when raised as bottle-fed babies. Though adult camels have a reputation for spitting, that is only when they are threatened or injured, Seibel says. Properly raised they are gentle creatures.

Camels have a gestation period of 11 to 13 months, and their lifespan in captivity is 40 years. They're the oldest domesticated



Properly raised, camels are gentle creatures, says Seibel.

animals known to man. At the hump the average height of a Bactrian is about 7 ft. A thick, shaggy coat covers the camel during cold weather and is shed when the temperature rises.

Due to their rarity, white camels are expensive. Dromedary camels can cost up to \$25,000 depending on age and how white they are. Bactrian camels cost up to \$50,000. Seibel sells them all over the U.S.

Most customers are breeders, Seibel says. Others, such as theater groups, like the white camels, especially for night productions. Some business owners use camels to give rides. Up to four small children can ride an adult camel.

"They're more intelligent than a horse," Seibel says. "You just have to make friends with them to train them. You can't force them to do anything, just go with their nature."

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Tom Colbaugh and Jean Nick bring poultry processing equipment right to the farm.

Portable Butchering Trailer Speeds Poultry Processing

Instead of taking your poultry to a processing plant, you can bring a processing plant to your farm. It's the best way for small poultry farmers to go, says Tom Colbaugh. He and Jean Nick raise and direct market pastured chickens, ducks, and turkeys on their farm in Kintnersville, Pennsylvania.

"The problem we have is that many poultry processors don't want to process a small number of birds at their facilities," Colbaugh says. "They are geared toward larger processors." Plus, the cost is high, often \$2.50/bird or more.

Fortunately, most states allow poultry farmers - at least up to a certain number of bird units - to butcher and process their own birds on the farm for sale. But good equipment to simplify the job is a significant expense. When Colbaugh and Nick saw a portable processor at a New York poultry conference, they talked to the manufacturer, Eli Reiff, who sells a line of stainless steel processing equipment (Poultry Man, ph 570 966-0769). He agreed to install equipment on a 6 by 12-ft. road-legal trailer, and Colbaugh and Nick take care of renting it out to local processors for a daily fee of \$100.

Colbaugh says their speed of processing more than doubled from 10 to 15 chickens per hour with their basic equipment to 25 to 30 per hour with three people working the processing trailer.

The killing station - a six-cone cabinet - is set up on the ground, but everything else is done on the trailer: a 42-gal. rotary scalding, a 27-in. drum picker with overhead shower, a two-person eviscerating table with offal hole, and a stainless pre-chilling table.



Equipment includes a 42-gal. rotary scalding and 27-in. drum picker.

All that is needed on site are electric cords for the plucker and scalding, a cold water hose for the plucker, and a warm water hose for the eviscerating unit. With a heavy rubber mat floor, cleanup goes quickly with a hose or pressure washer.

"It's a huge time saver," Colbaugh says. "And the Humane Society likes it because there is no transportation, so there is a lot less stress on the birds."

Less stress means better meat. "You can see the difference in the processed bird," Colbaugh says. "You can taste it obviously."

Because of the cost of the equipment - about \$8,000 - Colbaugh suggests that poultry raisers in communities work together and seek out grants or pool resources to put together mobile processing units that they can share and use year after year.

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Poultry processing equipment is carried on a 6 by 12-ft. road-legal trailer.