

Teacup Pigs Selling Like Hotcakes

At birth, tiny teacup pigs weigh just 9 oz. and easily fit inside a small cup. The little porkers were bred down from potbelly and other small domestic breeds.

Joyce Wells is a teacup breeder in Florida who had an explosion of interest after her mini pigs were featured on the Today Show in October.

"I went from 6,000 hits a month to 37,000 hits a day on my website - www.teacuppiggies.com," Wells says.

Wells is the police chief of Bushnell, Florida. She started raising mini pigs at her rural home a couple years ago. Her breeder pigs live outside in little structures that look like dog houses. The second bathroom of her home is the piggy nursery. Wells worms, socializes, litter trains and gets the pigs on a pellet feed before sending them to their new homes at 7 to 8 weeks.

After a few weeks, the pigs graduate from the litter box to going to the door to

be let outside to do their business. Wells adds that mini pigs that will be indoors pets must also be spayed or neutered to eliminate odor and other problems.

"Pigs are really smart and easily trained," Wells says. "They like a lot of attention. They seem to be at a 2-year-old child's level permanently. They need something to play with and devise ways to amuse themselves. They will follow you all over the house and push their nose on your leg for attention."

The pigs are food-driven and want to eat all the time. Though full-grown pigs are smaller than a cocker spaniel, they will easily gain too much weight if they're fed too much. To keep them less than 55 lbs., Wells feeds babies ¼ cup of pellet food twice a day. Adults receive one cup twice a day. She feeds them vegetables and some fruit snacks in between.

Exercise is key. They like to go on a leash for daily walks.



Tiny teacup pigs weigh just 9 oz. at birth, easily fitting inside an 8-oz. cup.

Because of their short legs - 6 in. or less - a ramp may be needed if there are steps. Check for zoning requirements also, Wells says. Some communities consider them to be livestock and don't allow them as pets.

"I just caution people to be absolutely sure they want a pig," Wells emphasizes. "It's a commitment for about 18 years. They are mischievous. So many end up going to rescue shelters."

Wells sells her mini pigs starting at \$350. Customers usually prefer spots and color instead of plain black pigs. She is currently sold out, but purchased more breeding animals so she will have more litters in the near future.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Angel Enterprise Farm, P.O. Box 1814, Bushnell, Florida 33513 (ph 352 303-8371; www.teacuppiggies.com).

Parade Float Business

By C. F. Marley, Contributing Editor

Matt Millburg, Witt., Ill., has an unusual specialty business called "Floats 'N More".

Millburg provides parade floats for homecomings and fairs in cities and towns up to 100 miles away in all directions. This is his ninth year operating the business.

Of course, it's a seasonal business. Matt also owns and operates 70 acres that's mostly devoted to grass fed beef.

He's the third owner of the float business, and it all began 39 years ago when the idea was originated by some ladies in Greenville, Ill.

After Millburg took over the business he came up with several techniques to

"knock down" and transport floats on highways. He uses 4-wheel wagon gears and flatbeds to haul the floats. He's able to compact everything to where he can pull the floats at speeds up to 45 mph on the highway.

"About half my floats are 'stock' floats that I rent out each year," says Millburg, who has ten 14 to 16-ft. floats, as well as a half dozen 28-ft. floats. "At least half the floats have a patriotic theme, because no matter what the parade is people want a patriotic float in it. The other float themes vary from year to year and from place to place. Popular float themes include fairy tales, cowboys and Indians, pumpkins and gardening. I'm willing to customize a float although that gets pretty expensive so most people prefer to go with



Matt Millburg has an unusual specialty business - he provides parade floats for homecomings and fairs in cities and towns up to 100 miles away.

something that's already made.

"I charge \$500 on up per float. That may sound expensive but it's not if you figure the cost to make a float and the cost for storage.

"I don't pull floats in parades but instead

rent them to people who provide their own pulling vehicles."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Matt Millburg, Floats 'N More, P. O. Box 202, Witt, Ill. 62094 (ph 217 972-3965).

Flour Mill Sales Spur Specialty Grain Sales

Darold Granville is looking for a few good grain farmers. He's in the market for high quality grain, but not your run of the mill varieties.

"I work with farmers to find unique grains with unique qualities. For example, we use Briggs hard red spring wheat for bread flour. I'd love to talk to anyone with experience working with heritage grains," says Granville.

An interest in bread baking led Granville to invest in his own flour mill. When friends and neighbors started asking for freshly ground flour for their own use, he bought a larger flour mill and began taking small packages of whole wheat, rye and other flours and grains to a farmer's market in Minneapolis, Minn. He also began to sell the small counter top flour mill that he first started with.

"It's made in Germany and will last forever," he says. "It sits inside a beautiful wood cabinet and comes either by itself or with a side-by-side oat flaker for making rolled oats. Each has its own electric motor so you can run both at once."

Granville also sells the dual system for \$780 or the flour mill alone for \$375. The flour mill has an output of about 10 lbs. of flour an hour and can grind fine or coarse flour for breads, pasta and muesli.

Granville even sells a hand cranked oat flaker for making small amounts of rolled oats at a time. The stainless steel and beech wood unit clamps to a countertop to make fresh rolled oats for morning cereal or baking. It sells for \$175.

Granville knows that once most people try fresh flour, they'll want their own mill. And once they've invested in a mill, they'll need raw grain to use in it. That's why he's looking for growers to provide quality grains.

"I think the appreciation for different varieties of grain is now where coffee was 20 years ago," says Granville. "My goal is to become a source of quality grain so people can grind their own."

Currently he charges \$7 for 2 1/2-lb. packages of organic whole grains. In addition to the Briggs hard red spring wheat, he also offers customers a soft white winter wheat for muffins and durum for pasta making, in addition to varieties of corn and oats.

"I'm interested in the whole spectrum of grains, including buckwheat and rye," says Granville. "If someone wants to try 10 to 15 acres, I'll sample it and make some flour with it and work with them on marketing it as flour and grain."

He knows he will pay a premium for small quantity purchases, but says, "I hope it will amount to something over time."



Darold Granville works with farmers to find grains with unique qualities. Photo shows a German-built flour mill that he sells.

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