



Mobile Rust Control Business

Bob Lawrie and his son, Greg, started a mobile rust control business 29 years ago that has been so successful they've set up nineteen other operators in their own franchised businesses.

Pro-Fleet Care operators come to the farm to spray a special blend of chemicals for corrosion prevention onto vehicles and equipment. The application penetrates into hard-to-reach seams and crevices, according to Bob.

"We spray the exterior trim, including door handles, mirrors, bumper rails, window trim, and so on," he says. "We believe rust control should protect the entire vehicle, from the undercarriage, fenders, doors, door posts, hood, and trunk all the way up to the roof line. We've established this total process because we know that rust isn't selective."

The company's unique product displaces moisture as it protects and seals. It defies gravity as it creeps in all directions on surfaces, including over tar, wax and previous rust control products that have cracked and left the vehicle exposed. It also protects electrical wiring and components from corrosion, according to Lawrie.

He points out that, in many cases, rust control treatment is only needed once a year, and the equipment owner benefits by increasing his private resale value.

One client, a large Canadian wholesale nursery, says using Pro Fleet Care "is like regularly changing your vehicle's oil. It's a small cost when you compare the extended life of equipment."

Some of Pro-Fleet's clients include tractor refurbishers, body shops owners, school bus operators, trucking fleets, government

agencies, bus lines, farmers, construction companies, car rental agencies, and landscape companies.

"When I started this mobile rust control operation 29 years ago, I thought it would make a great retirement business because I could be my own boss and work the hours I wanted to," Bob says. "As it turns out, I'm especially happy that it lends itself to working with my son."

The investment required to become a franchise operator is in the \$30,000 to \$60,000 (Can.) range. In addition to a turn-key equipment package, this fee guarantees a variety of benefits, including assistance in establishing a client base, two weeks of intensive training, ongoing support, and exclusive protected territories.

"There are no ongoing royalties and no costly storefront is required," Bob points out. "This type of business provides low overhead and high profit potential."

Lawrie says the company charges flat rates for various types of vehicles such as \$135 for pickups and \$225 and up for highway trucks.

We now have three dealers in the United States and sixteen franchisees are located in Canada. Lawries can work with anyone in the U.S. or Canada.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Pro Fleet Care, 51 Sundial Crescent, Dundas, Ontario, Canada L9H 7R6 (ph 905 667-8595; greglawrie@profleetcare.com; www.profleetcare.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 139

Garden In A Barrel

"A lot of people want to have a garden but don't have enough space. Barrel gardening may be the answer, even if you only have a few square feet to work with," says Nathaniel Burson of Big Sandy, Texas.

He's come up with a low-cost system that lets you convert used plastic barrels into highly productive container gardens.

"Lettuce, beets, carrots, strawberries, potatoes, tomatoes, and many other kinds of plants can be grown in barrels. You can grow practically an entire garden in just one barrel," says Burson.

The idea is to make "pockets" around the outside of the barrel, and then fill it with soil. Plants grow in the pockets and also on top. The bottom of the barrel is punctured to create drainage.

To make the pockets a heat gun is used to heat the plastic, then a saw is used to cut 6-in. long slits at intervals into the barrel. A specially cut wooden brace is then wedged into each slit to make the pocket. Once the

plastic cools down the braces can be pulled out.

"The beauty of this system is that every available square foot is used," says Burson. "A 30-gal. barrel will produce enough lettuce for the average family to have a salad a couple times a week. The barrels can even be stacked on top of each other for more efficient use of space.

"A 55-gal. barrel will hold 72 plants on the outside and a lot more on top. If you're really cramped for space, you can also use plastic 5-gal. buckets," says Burson.

Burson sells an instructional Plans/DVD set that shows in detail how to make a barrel garden for \$29.95 plus \$4.95 S&H. A video preview is available on his website, along with other gardening ideas.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Easiestgarden.com; 10758 St. Hwy. 155 S., Big Sandy, Texas 75755 (ph 903 576-6800; www.easiestgarden.com/barrel-garden).

Reader Inquiry No. 119



Plants grow in "pockets" on outside of barrel and also on top.