

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.

Business Is Booming For Used Grain Bins

Need a bin? Got a bin to sell? Randy Wood at Woody's Used Bin Sales can help you out. He recently sold a bunch of bins to farmers in Guatemala. His crew also recently moved a set of four 50,000-bu. bins from Michigan to Alabama. He even used a ferry to move a bin from Wisconsin to a small microbrewery in Michigan.

"We can generally fix a customer up with a bin for half the price of a new one," says Wood. "We can set up a 100,000-bu. bin for about \$55,000 versus \$110,000 to \$130,000 for a new one."

Wood says his 25-man crew has worked with everything from 5,500-bu. bins to 100,000 and even million bushel bins. He offers full installation of his renovated bins. Rusty roof sheets are replaced. Auger, floor or other components needing repair are fixed or replaced.

"We travel throughout the U.S.," says Wood. "We handle everything including electric work, concrete work and crane rental."

Demand from buyers for used bins is also creating a demand for sellers. "We pay top dollar for a good used bin," says Wood. "We'll give a fair price, take it down and ship it to someone who needs it."

Wood likes to buy whole elevators (including wooden ones) and multiple bins and equipment on a farm. In the case of wooden elevators and storage, he will tear it down and give away locally what he can't find a market for, or prepare it for dumpster removal.

"I would rather see it used than thrown away," says Wood.

He encourages landowners with unused bins to call him or send him pictures of the bins. "Include brand, bin size, equipment that goes with it, such as augers and floors, and the general condition of it in your words," says Wood. "If you need a bin or are expanding and want to replace a bin with a larger one, give us a call. We'll assess your goals and provide you with an estimate and timeline for completion."

Woody's Used Bin Sales grew out of an earlier business taking down stave, poured cement and harvester silos and reselling parts and equipment. Wood realized there was a need for a similar service with grain



Randy Wood buys and sells used grain bins across the country.

bins. In addition to selling entire bin systems, he also retrofits existing bins with upgraded fans, sweeps, augers, etc.

Wood says the business has grown by word of mouth, Craigslist postings and ads placed free on bestfarmbuys.com, a sister company owned by FARM SHOW. He has filled requests by people wanting bins to turn into houses, garages and pavilion canopies.

For Wood, service doesn't stop at the sale. The week following the 4-bin installation in Alabama, a tornado took out 3 of them. In late May, Wood and his crew returned to the farm to put the damaged bins back into shape...for a reduced cost.

"I've really enjoyed the folks I've met," says Wood. "In 9 out of 10 jobs, the family cooks meals for us, and we get to know them and often stay in touch."

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Dan Downs and his wife, Linda, own Pine Acres Reindeer Farm in LaRue, Ohio. They hire reindeer out for events.

Reindeer Thrive On Former Christmas Tree Farm

If you love Christmas and have thought about owning your own reindeer, you should do a lot of research first, says Dan Downs, who owns Pine Acres Reindeer Farm in LaRue, Ohio, with his wife, Linda. While there's plenty of fun to be had raising the domestic cousins of caribou and they have income potential, raising reindeer requires meeting certain regulations to accommodate their special needs. And, breeding stock isn't cheap. Reindeer cost an average of \$4,500 apiece.

The Downs' love of Christmas and desire to take their holiday display up a notch, led them to purchase their first pair of reindeer in 2003. It was a natural addition. Their property was a former Christmas tree farm, and its 1 1/2 acres of mature pine trees, pasture and barn provide good habitat. In the heat of summer, the reindeer hang out by the fans in the barn. In nice weather they nip at grass in the pasture and hang out in the pines. The property is surrounded by 8-ft. fencing, one of the federal regulations for raising reindeer.

The fence is to keep whitetail deer out, Downs notes, to prevent spreading disease. Other regulations require USDA certification with two inspections a year, plus a surprise inspection at a scheduled event.

For example, reindeer are pack animals, so there should be at least two of them. If they show any signs of health problems they need to be taken care of immediately. When the antlers (on both male and female reindeer) are in velvet it's important to monitor them closely so that injuries or flies don't cause infections that can be deadly.

One of the Downs' biggest chores is making sure their six reindeer have fresh water during the summer. The reindeer like to stand in the water tank to cool off, so the

Downs clean and disinfect the tank often.

They feed their animals a custom feed similar to horse/cattle feed with extra nutrients, based on research done by the Reindeer Owner Breeders Association (www.reindeer.ws). The Downs are members and highly recommend that anyone interested in raising reindeer join because of the helpful information the organization provides.

Though reindeer require more work than some livestock, they're very rewarding, Downs says. There are many opportunities to make money with them - at least enough to help cover some of their expenses. (Downs estimates it costs \$10,000/year for feed, veterinary care and other expenses for six reindeer.)

The Downs actively hire out their reindeer for events - on display, not to pet, because of sanitary and liability issues. One year they attended 64 venues in 6 weeks.

Entrepreneurs can market reindeer in a variety of ways to bring in income, such as corporate events, town celebrations, commercials and photos, Downs says. But for him they are more than a sideline business.

"They have personalities, and they've become like pets. We've gotten attached to them," he says. "I see the enjoyment that people get out of them at Christmas time."

People are fascinated by reindeer, he adds, and often surprised to learn that Santa's sleigh pullers actually exist.

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"Cow Spa" Takes Care Of Dry Milk Cows

"When larger dairies began moving into this area and didn't have the permits to keep as many cows as they wanted, we saw it as an opportunity to provide special cow care services," says Ohio farmer Brian Harbage. "We were feeding beef cattle at the time, but we had room for more cattle, so we started by bringing in dry cows from two local dairies. That freed up space at the dairies for milking cows so they weren't over their permit numbers."

Brian and his wife Jennifer provide services like vaccination, hoof trimming,

clipping tails and adding new ear tags. They charge a fee for each service, as well as a daily fee for labor and facility rental. "We rolled right into a lot of these services and my wife said it was almost like a spa for cows, so we started calling it a Cow Spa," says Brian with a laugh. "The cattle stay for 4 to 6 weeks and then go back to the dairy in time for calving."

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Ohio farmer Brian Harbage provides special cow care services to local dairies, such as vaccination, hoof trimming, clipping tails and adding new ear tags.