

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.



Hannah and Jamie Chisholm help their parents make cheese products at their farm's micro creamery and cheese plant.

Dairy Farm Has Its Own Micro Creamery

What began as a 5-acre farm with 2 cows almost 10 years ago has grown into a thriving 30-cow family dairy, micro-creamery and cheese production facility on a 160-acre Nebraska farm. Laura Chisholm, her husband Andy, and 4 of their 5 children operate the Chisholm Naturally Grown Dairy and the Orchard Hill Creamery. Their 2 boys, Alex and Michael, feed the calves and help their dad milk. Sisters Hannah and Jamie help their mother make and package cheese and work at farmer's markets.

Laura Chisholm proudly says "all of our Jersey cows have names and they're outside grazing on pastures year around. We raise alfalfa to supplement the pastures as needed. The cows are happy and content and give us plenty of creamy, healthy milk." The farm's 'Cream Top Milk' is so named because it isn't homogenized, so the cream floats to the top. It is, however, vat pasteurized.

The Chisholms started their venture by selling raw milk direct to customers. Laura says "we quickly learned that selling just milk wasn't going to provide enough revenue to keep us afloat. We added cheeses in 2011 and began selling bottled white and chocolate milk when we opened our micro creamery in 2013. Then we added yogurt and ice cream. Those products really make a difference with income. Since our creamery is fairly new, we've been experimenting with different types of artisan cheeses and other products as we work through finding out what sells, what's profitable, and what

our customers need and want."

To promote the operation, the Chisholms participate in farmer's markets and in 2016 are running a yogurt flavor contest. Their goal is to have a new yogurt flavor every week, gauge which ones customers like best, and then settle on 6 regular flavors and 4 seasonal ones. They also have a fall festival with activities, live music and product tastings. It gives the family an opportunity to connect directly with their customers.

Their products are in local stores and they're listed with a few online retailers. Several local chefs also use their products. A small store on the farm serves drive-in customers.

Chisholm says online sales have been "a tough cookie to crack." One of her biggest challenges is to find time to grow sales when she and her kids spend several hours a day making the products, then attending markets to sell them. She says it's also difficult to carve out time to work on websites, find new accounts and other venues to sell through. Despite all these challenges, Chisholm says she and her family wouldn't want to experience farm life any other way.

Her advice to others who might start a similar enterprise is to "dream big and be prepared to work like you want it! Do your homework, get a strong business plan in place and stick to it. And lastly, be sure you love the work, because dairy farms are one of the most time intensive ways to farm."

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Andy Chisholm and his family produce homemade dairy products from 30 Jersey cows.



Potato growers Pete and Euan Grewar have installed vending machines that sell potatoes as well as fresh eggs, Brussels sprouts, strawberries, carrots and onions.

Vending Machine Sells Veggies Direct

Using vending machines to sell their potato crop has paid off for growers Pete and Euan Grewar of Perthshire, Scotland.

The potato-growing cousins have installed 4 vending machines in several Scottish locations and are considering more. "The core of our business is certified seed and potatoes for supermarkets, and that will continue," says Euan. "But the vending machines are a great add-on, a logical diversification."

In addition to the Grewars' potatoes, the machines are stocked with fresh eggs, brussels sprouts, strawberries, carrots and onions. Interestingly, the Grewars have discovered that customers prefer unwashed produce. "One of the most common comments we got was that customers like dirty carrots. They don't want us to clean them," says Euan.

The farm-food vending machines are manufactured by Roesler in northern Germany and are being used throughout Europe for eggs, vegetables and potatoes. "Vending machines are the ideal solution to replace honesty boxes for farm-gate sales, where would-be customers walk off with eggs or produce without paying," says John

Gordon, an egg producer in Scotland.

Roesler vending machines cost from \$7,500 to \$16,000, depending on whether a unit is refrigerated. The Roesler vending website states that the machines are made of rust-free high-grade steel and are weatherproof. Machines can be equipped with a cash-card scanner.

Pete Grewar says the brothers are contemplating adding more vending machines. "Obviously it doesn't make sense to have one machine in Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Glasgow, but 6 to 10 in each city might be efficient." He says they're also considering franchises for the vending business.

The business uses Facebook and Twitter for promotion and the cousins say they value interaction with customers and customer feedback.

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William Hale makes organic compost for use on his own farm and also sells it under the farm name All-Farm Organics.

Market For Organic Compost Grows

William Hale makes organic compost for use on his own farm and also sells it under the farm name All-Farm Organics. He says the business started small, but has grown over the past dozen years with sales by the bag and in bulk.

"I started making compost with chicken litter and waste hay bales, using a tub grinder and a mixer," says Hale. "Eventually, I needed a windrow turner and got one for a good price before demand took off and they got expensive."

As demand for his compost grew, he added new sources. He gets wood chips from a planer mill down the road from his farm. A local tofu plant ferments soybeans and has a soy byproduct. They need wood chips for

their own composting process, so Hale trades with them.

"I get their soy byproduct in palletized tubs," says Hale. "It is a really good nitrogen source and has more moisture than chicken litter, which helps in the composting process."

Hale recommends checking with local food manufacturers, wood processors and others for possible sources. He emphasizes that whatever the source, he checks with his organic certifier to get his okay.

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