

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.



Instead of using lethal methods to protect their sheep from predators, Becky Weed and her husband use a guard dog. That earned them "Predator Friendly" certification.

Marketing "Predator Friendly" Sheep

Becky Weed and her husband, Dave Tyler, do not use lethal methods to protect their sheep from bears, coyotes and other predators. Their operation is certified as "Predator Friendly".

"The certification has given us a fair bit of attention over the years, so it has been a good marketing tool," says Weed.

The certification program was started in 1991 by a coalition of ranchers, conservationists and clothing manufacturers to certify wool growers using Predator Friendly practices. In 2003, it expanded to include producers of meat, eggs, honey and more. In 2007, it became part of the newly formed Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network. Today, both "Certified Wildlife Friendly" and "Predator Friendly" labels recognize producers whose actions contribute to wildlife conservation around the world. Predator Friendly producers commit to not using any lethal control (shooting, trapping, poison) to protect their livestock, hens, hives and such.

Applicants for certification fill out a pre-assessment form and, if approved as eligible, fill out a formal application with a \$100 fee. A field visit and audit review verify the applicant meets program standards. They include providing habitat for native predators and other wildlife, how the livestock is protected from predators, and when emergency lethal protection can be considered.

Once certified, the producer pays a logo license fee of \$150 the first year and, after reinspection the second year, pays a \$250 license fee for operations with less than \$250,000 turnover. The logo can be used with any product that has been raised from birth (or in the case of hens, first day after hatching) on the certified farm or ranch.

In Weed and Tyler's case, they produce organic lamb as well as wool products that are marketed directly to consumers. Initially they used llamas to protect their sheep, but they still lost several head to black bears. They then added a guard dog.

"He is getting quite old now, but he has

been 100 percent effective," says Weed.

Weed and Tyler currently have a small flock, having recently sold many of their animals to a neighbor. They're working on developing a localized breed that does well in their area on the edge of Bozeman, Mont. Small producers are more likely to be Predator Friendly certified, suggests Weed, although large producers may follow similar practices.

"I've communicated with a lot of ranchers much bigger than us, and many are using predator friendly practices," she says. "I think the certification has served as a benchmark and educational tool, and the center of gravity has shifted on the issue."

Weed is quick to admit that sticking the label on products doesn't guarantee profitability. She considers it part of the "whole package" of running a business. Thirteen Mile is also certified organic and has operated a wool-processing mill since 2003.

"We process our own fiber and sell it as yarn and finished products," she says. "We also do custom processing. We offer washing, carding and spinning services, whatever the customer wants. We deal with a diverse array of people."

"It has worked out financially and adds value to a small flock of sheep," she says.

It also exposes her to the diversity of fibers produced from grass, something she appreciates. Even though most of the fibers she processes are from within a 100-mile radius, they have included bison, alpaca and rabbit. They have also included wool from nearly every breed grown in the U.S.

"There is a wonderful diversity in American sheep flocks, and I think that is a good thing," she says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Thirteen Mile Lamb and Wool, 13000 Springhill Rd., Belgrade, Montana 59714 (ph 406 581-8543; becky@lambandwool.com) or Wildlife Friendly, 433 Sprout Path N.W., Bainbridge Island, Wash. 98110 (www.wildlifefriendly.org).



Raindrop Farms needed more storage for their fresh flower business, so they converted an 8 by 10-ft. cargo trailer into a mobile cooler that makes use of a window-style air conditioner controlled by a "Cool Bot".

Mobile Cooler Keeps Flowers Fresh

When Erin McMullen and Aaron Gaskey needed more storage for their fresh flower business, they put it on wheels. They had no more space in their small walk-in cooler and were planning to build a larger one in their barn using a CoolBot controller that lets you use a standard air conditioner to set up a cooler (Vol. 32, No. 5) now marketed by Store It Cold, LLC.

"We quickly realized our planned cooler wouldn't be big enough, plus we were delivering flowers farther and farther from the farm," says McMullen. "We realized that if we put a cooler on a trailer, we could use it for deliveries too."

The couple started growing vegetables and a few flowers on a 1-acre plot. Eventually they moved their Raindrop Farms to a larger farm near Philomath, Ore., and their cut flower business took off. They sell flowers at 5 markets and do weekly and monthly deliveries to subscribers. They also offer bulk flowers or bulk buckets occasionally throughout the season, as well as flowers for weddings, including bulk flowers for brides who do their own arranging.

They started out with a conventional 8

by 10-ft. cargo trailer, spraying foam on the ceiling and removing all interior wall panels. They attached pieces of 2-in. thick solid foam insulation to the walls and doors.

"We cut a hole out for a window-style air conditioner and installed it and the CoolBot controller," says McMullen. "My dad made a cover to go over the air conditioner to protect the fins while on the road."

It has been more than a year since the mobile cooler was finished and plans are in place to add more cooler space to the farm operation. Once again a CoolBot and air conditioner system will be used.

"CoolBots are a godsend to those of us without the space or financial ability to buy a large production level cooler," says McMullen.

A video at www.farmshow.com shows how the mobile cooler was built.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Raindrop Farms (raindropfarms@peak.org; www.raindropfarms.net) or Store It Cold, 3132 Federal Blvd., Denver, Colo. 80211 (ph 888 871-5723; info@storeitcold.com; www.storeitcold.com).

Dairy Farm Thrives With Specialty Milk

As most dairy farms get larger to gain efficiency, some producers like Wisconsin farmer Joseph Zaiger and his family are taking a different approach. Their herd of 40 cows only produces A2 beta casein milk rather than conventional milk with A1 beta-casein protein, which some people have problems digesting. All of Zaiger's cattle have been genetically tested and certified by a lab. In a typical dairy herd, about half the cows would produce A1 and half would produce A2 milk, and the two would be mixed together.

Zaiger explains that genetics determine the type of beta-casein protein cows produce. Zaiger's cows have been selected and bred for the A2 trait so it isn't the result of any kind of genetic modification.

Trust Local Foods handles about 120 gal. of Zaiger's milk a week. An Appleton store sells the product for \$5.50 a half gal., which includes a \$2 deposit for the glass bottle. Retailers say there's not a huge market for the product yet, but that might change as more people become aware of the milk's properties.

Customers say Zaiger's milk is more flavorful than regular store-bought milk, possibly because it isn't homogenized. Zaiger says they also use low temperature batch pasteurization. Processing and bottling is done on their farm.

The Zaiger cattle are 100 percent grass fed, grazing on pasture during the summer and consuming quality grass hay through the winter. They don't use pesticides or herbicides on their pasture and use only natural fertilizer. "We don't give our cattle any antibiotics or synthetic hormones and use natural herbal treatments, if needed."

The market for A2 milk may grow in the U.S. as it has in Australia and New Zealand, where the product is consumer-preferred, even at a premium price. A milk company from Australia recently entered the U.S. market with U.S. product and sales in California and Colorado.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Locally Grown, P.O. Box 282, Little Chute, Wis. 54140 (ph 920 687-1899).