

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](mailto:editor@farmshow.com).



Gary Witter and his brother Danny turn old fuel tanks into various storage units. Tank can be left above ground or buried.

## They Made A Business Out Of Converting Old Fuel Tanks

If you need storage, an old fuel tank may be just the thing. Gary Witter in Thomas, Penn., sells old fuel tanks for every kind of storage from root cellars to flush tanks, fertilizer to feed. They make great storm shelters, hunting blinds and even covered footbridges over small streams. He has even repurposed them for grain trailers and grain bins.

"We've made grain hauling tankers to be pulled by tractors or trucks," says Witter. "They can be pulled down the road at 55 mph and trail like a regular trailer."

He and his brother, Danny, turn tanks into grain bins by cutting off a portion of the top. He then installs a hopper on the bottom or a funnel. Many of the old tanks get flushed or steamed out, if needed and then sandblasted, primed and repainted, notes Witter.

Depending on the intended use, they cut doors and other openings into them. "We weld pieces of 4 by 6-in. tubing onto old tanks for fork pockets," explains Witter. "Add a chain to hold it to the forks, and you can quickly dump the contents, whether they are ashes from a firebox or junk metal that has been collected."

Turning a tank into walk-in or drive-in shelters for small vehicles is easy. Doors can be cut out of one or both ends. Plywood sheets or gravel can be laid down for a level floor. The tank can be left above ground or buried.

"It is easy to weld pipes or pins on the sides of the tank for hanging items off the floor," says Witter. "Tanks can be used for storage sheds, even if they were damaged



Tanks can be converted into walk-in or drive-in shelters for small equipment or vehicles.

and had holes in them. Cover them over with dirt and they stay at 50 degrees summer or winter."

Witter explains that the size of the tank determines how long it is likely to last, whether above or below ground. Larger tanks can be 3/8-in. thick, while smaller tanks can range down to 1/4 or 1/8 in. thick.

"We've had used tanks in the ground for 25 years," says Witter.

The Witters now sell new poly, steel and fiberglass storage tanks as well as recycled older tanks. He notes that vertical tanks are priced higher than horizontal ones.

Price varies by size, condition and thickness of the metal. As an example, a good 10,000-gal. tank can range from \$2,500 to \$4,500.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, WitLane, 10520 Lincoln Way West, St. Thomas, Penn. 17252 (ph 717 369-5319; [sales@witlane.com](mailto:sales@witlane.com); [www.witlane.com](http://www.witlane.com)).



Mike and Tammy Mitzel produce milk and other dairy products for their family and 5 individuals who own a share in their goat herd. Their children play a major role in the business.

## Herd Sharing Allows Customers To Benefit From Raw Milk

The desire to provide healthy milk for their 8 children prompted Mike and Tammy Mitzel to start their "Herd Sharing operation." They produce milk and a wide range of dairy products for their family and have enough left over for five individuals who own a share in the Mitzels' goat herd.

All the "herd sharers" appreciate the value of raw goat's milk.

"There are increasing numbers of people who cannot tolerate the lactose in cow's milk, but can enjoy the nutritional value of drinking real milk since goat milk is lower in lactose," says Tammy Mitzel. "That's what led me into herd sharing. In South Dakota it is not legal to sell raw milk unless you become a licensed raw dairy, but it is nearly impossible to attain when you are small."

Customers pay one time for a share, plus monthly care fees. They receive regular deliveries of milk, based on production over a year's time. If customers decide they want to quit their share, they can sell it to someone else or give it back to the Mitzels.

Just five milking goats in the Mitzels' herd of Nubian goats provide more than enough milk, Mitzel says.

"Nubians have higher butter fat content in their milk so it makes good cheese, ice cream, pudding, and Neufchatel cheese, which is lower fat compared with cream cheese," she explains.

Even after making all those dairy treats, there is still extra milk during high milk production periods. So, the Mitzels recently started making soaps (The Lonely Goat Soap Company) to sell locally and through a website.

"We made soap last year for a church fundraiser. We had such a positive response, and people wanted more," Mitzel says. "We have quite a variety. My husband is creative and we have everything from manly smells

to flower smells. Vanilla almond is one of our best sellers."

The couple's children played a major role in developing the business and profits go into their college funds.

While they could expand and add more shareholders, Mitzel says the small size works well for their family. It provides extra income and is a good learning experience for their children. Three sons between the ages of 12 and 17 and a 9-year-old daughter are involved in milking and caring for the goats.

"The boys benefit from 4-H involvement, learning about record-keeping, business practices and work ethic," Mitzel says.

Each goat's volume of milk is recorded every time they are milked. That helps keep track of herd health and to make breeding and culling decisions.

"This is a commitment that takes time and effort," she emphasizes to anyone considering herd sharing. The Mitzels spend a couple hours a day on goat chores including milking twice a day.

She highly recommends contacting [www.farmtoconsumer.org](http://www.farmtoconsumer.org) to set up a herd sharing operation, whether small or large. The organization provides safe milking practices training, helps write contracts, and answers questions about setting up shares.

For now, a small operation is good for the Mitzels, but they are open to change.

"If we were willing to allot more time every day into milking, I'm sure I could find more herd share folks and grow the business," she says.

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## Rocking 'N Rolling With Pumpkins

Family, music and pumpkins. Mr. Gourdman's Pumpkin Patch is a perfect blend of all three, says Gary Bussart. The Derby, Kansas, resident was inspired 5 years ago to start the pumpkin patch business on his family's Roads End Ranch just east of Wichita. He and his family continue to add unique activities.

"We're the only one around with live entertainment, fishing, horse trails, and a Little Rascal's Clubhouse (with Little Rascal's shows played on a TV)," Bussart says. There are also boat rides and animals.

Besides the nearly 3 1/2 acres of pumpkins and a corn maze, the highlight

for him is the new outdoor stage where he and other local musicians put on a rock and roll show.

"I was tired of traveling with the organ; now I can do it right here," he says.

The music adds to the atmosphere as well as the genuine bond between family and friends that work together to operate the business each October. The pumpkin patch and activities are open on Saturday and Sunday and by appointment for groups during the week. In addition to "normal" pumpkins, Bussart offers crossbred gourds and pumpkins in many colors, shapes and sizes.

Each year the word spreads about the family-run operation, Bussart says, and the crowds grow. With the new stage, he has plans to expand entertainment and provide a local venue for weddings, parties and other events.

"I want to have as many rock and roll shows as we can through the year," Bussart says.

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Mr. Gourdman's Pumpkin Patch includes an outdoor stage where local musicians put on a rock and roll show.