

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.



Trapper and fur buyer Eric Saltzman buys animal skulls, cleans them, and sells them to crafters and collectors. About half his business is bison skulls.

Fur Buyer Also Buys Skulls & Other Parts

Trappers discouraged by low fur prices are missing out on extra income if they don't save the skulls and other body parts. There is a market for all kinds of skulls as well as the feet and claws from some animals, says Eric Saltzman, owner of Porcupines Unlimited.

The Roundup, Mont., trapper and fur buyer typically gets enough coyote skulls locally. But there is a demand for animal skulls from wildlife such as marten and otter that live outside of Montana.

"The wolf, wolverine, fisher and lion skulls are especially hard to get," Saltzman says.

Cleaned skulls, claws and other parts are purchased by crafters, collectors and university and environmental educators. Saltzman runs ads in trapper publications and has connections with fur buyers. Trappers from all over the country ship to him.

"As they catch the animals they freeze them. When they are ready to ship I encourage them to box them up (frozen) on a Monday and send them through FedEx or Priority Mail," he says.

Saltzman has a large walk-in freezer to

keep the skulls until he's ready to process them - first boiling them, then soaking them in a peroxide bath before final cleanup with a pressure washer.

About half his business is cleaning bison skulls. He is the leading distributor of them in the U.S. Saltzman sells skulls, bones, claws, hooves, porcupine quills, fur pelts and horns on eBay in addition to selling at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show*. Many items are sold to wholesalers.

"I also do powwows and sell fur, leather, bone carvings, artifact reproductions like antler pipes and fur bags," Saltzman says. "Call me and ask what you are looking for - there is a good chance I have it."

He plans to have a website soon to list his products and post prices he is paying for various parts (\$2/ermine skull to \$85/wolverine skull, for example). But Saltzman also invites trappers to call him if they have questions and want pricing on specific items. "We use just about everything," Saltzman says.

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"Our biggest challenge is getting Teff to grow here," say Michigan farmers Claire and Brad Smith. They're marketing it as flour and as a granola product.

Teff Gets Toehold In Michigan

Teff grain is normally grown in hot and dry conditions, but a Michigan family is challenging the norm. They added teff to the mix on their 2,500-acre row-crop farm. Brad Smith and his daughter Claire are making it work as a crop and as a value-added business enterprise.

"My dad got some seed from a friend who travels and works in Africa," says Claire Smith. "He planted his first crop in 2015."

The tiny seed was broadcast on the 33-acre test plot which was rolled to pack the soil. That fall it was cut, windrowed and dried in the field for several days before being harvested, cleaned and milled. Claire returned to the farm to work on distribution and marketing in 2016 under the brand name Tenera Grains.

"We started selling on Amazon and made our first sale direct to consumers in October 2016," she recalls.

The business has faced challenges. Sales continued through the following summer and then were interrupted due to supplies nearing their one-year expiration date. The 2016 crop was a failure. Problems getting the Teff cleaned adequately in 2017 led to the Smiths installing their own cleaning equipment.

"Our biggest challenge is getting teff to grow here, but we are figuring it out," says Claire. "Our second biggest challenge is cleaning the harvested grain. Many weed seeds are very similar in weight and density to teff."

The third challenge is related to the first two. With only one herbicide labeled for teff,

weed control and the competition weeds offered are a big problem.

"In 2016 our crop was pretty much lost, as the weeds came up faster and took over the fields," says Claire. "We learned a lot in 2017, our third year, and are cautiously optimistic about our fourth year."

The Smiths are confident there is plenty of room in the market to grow. "We've invested a lot in how to grow, clean and mill," Claire says. "The moisture content of our grain is higher than that grown in more arid areas. Ethiopians who have tried ours say they like it."

Tenera Grains grows both brown (also known as red) and ivory. It is marketed as flour and as a granola product developed by the Smiths. Called teffola, it is sold direct to consumers on Etsy and is in several stores. A 13-oz. (8 servings) package sells for \$9.99 plus shipping.

Tenera's teff flour is available in 2 and 5-lb. packages on Amazon. Prices start at \$11 for the 2-lb. package of brown teff. It is also available from Tenera in 25-lb. packages, price on request.

"My favorite use of teff is in brownies," says Smith. "The brown teff has a nutty, malty taste that combines well with chocolate."

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Former FFA'er Makes Massive Display Emblems

Terry Zulkowski has taken FFA pride to a new level with his 3,600-lb., 80-in. high FFA emblems. Even the base is big, standing 17 in. tall, 60 in. wide and 32 in. deep, with room to stand or sit on it. For the artist, the first one he made was personal. "I was in FFA in high school, and when a vo-ag teacher I had worked with was retiring, I wanted to give him a special gift," says Zulkowski.

Since then he has made massive emblems for 24 sites from California to Georgia and West Virginia to Texas.

Zulkowski created the mold using the lost wax technique to capture the quality and detail of cast bronze statuary. Each casting has an interior structure of 3/8-in. rebar and galvanized welded mesh.

The artist uses his own ThemeCrete aggregate composite developed originally

for custom concrete garden benches. Even though it is considered a lightweight mix, the completed emblem and base weigh about 2 tons.

When the cast is finished, Zulkowski lets it age for 18 days. He then coats it with a bronze finish for beauty and resistance to the elements. He says it can easily handle a 150 mph wind.

Each handmade emblem has the FFA motto on the back and a place for a bronze dedication plate. A removable eyebolt allows the emblem to be lifted up and set it in place.

"It takes about 3 weeks to make one," says Zulkowski, who also does work for the Houston, Texas, Parks Department, as well as custom gate design, sandblasting, graphic design and more.

The FFA first licensed Zulkowski to make replicas of the emblem in 2009. In addition to



Terry Zulkowski makes massive 3,600-lb., 80-in. high FFA display emblems. A bronze finish provides beauty and resistance to the elements.

the large design, which is priced at \$5,800, he also makes smaller ones for use on a podium or desk. They are copper plated and priced at \$20.

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