

## Farmer-To-Farmer Equipment Rental

Need a hay wagon just for a day? Or maybe a land leveler? Instead of purchasing equipment seldom used, an Ontario farmer started "Rent Farm Tools" – a website to connect farmers with equipment to farmers willing to rent it.

"The site is peer-to-peer renting," says Phil Smith, a livestock farmer in Coldwater, Ont., who partnered with a website manager to launch [www.rentfarmtools.com](http://www.rentfarmtools.com) in September 2019.

He recalls how he and his wife started farming 20 years ago and couldn't afford much of the equipment they needed. And as they acquired equipment, it generally was not being used most of the year. He initially started with his own website, renting out his farm equipment, and tested the idea for about a year and a half.

This year, he got other farmers on board who are interested in renting out their equipment. While in its early stages the

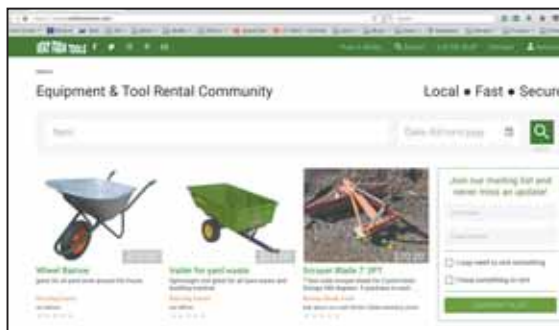
service is focused on central Ontario, the goal is to create a pool of farmers with tools to rent in many other areas. Ideally, people with the equipment and people who want to rent it will live close to each other.

People who need equipment simply go to the website and search for tools they need. Prices are set up with daily rates and reduced prices for longer rentals. For example, a 3-pt. hitch scraper blade rents for \$70/day or \$50/day for seven or more days.

Smith and his business partner charge a small commission on the rental rate to cover transaction fees, website maintenance, and an internal insurance claim fund. The plan is to partner with an insurance company to add that as an option for some rentals.

"Really, we want everything and anything," Smith says. "It could be a combine or even construction equipment, backhoes and the like."

Currently renters and those who rent work



"Rent Farm Tools" website connects Ontario farmers who want to rent out equipment, with farmers willing to rent it.

out how to deliver equipment, but Smith plans to add links of people with trailers to haul.

Without overhead, Smith anticipates most prices will be a bit lower than rental businesses, but since farm equipment isn't generally available, prices are set based on cost of the equipment and condition.

"I think this is a much needed service," Smith says. "One person is saving money

from not having to purchase a piece of equipment and one is collecting money from equipment that sets idle when other farmers could use it."

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## "Easy Care" Sheep Breed Continues To Expand

In 2006 a group of 8 UK farmers formed SIG Ltd. to genetically produce Exlana sheep, a breed that sheds its wool naturally, is disease-resistant, and has outstanding maternal traits. After 14 years and dozens of genetic crosses, there are now 2,800 registered females in the stud flock, making it one of the largest performance recorded nucleus flocks in the world. There's tremendous interest from producers in the UK and Europe.

Tim White, a spokesman for the Exlana breeding company, runs a flock of 800 Exlana ewes. The breeding company sells more than 2,000 ewes and 100 rams every year, all fully recorded and double-checked with DNA technology to ensure genetic purity.

White says buyers in the UK and Europe use Exlana rams to improve their own stock and gain profitability because Exlana sheep shed their fleece and don't require shearing. They carry inherent parasite resistance, which reduces the need for anthelmintic drenching. Exlana breeders raise their stock only on pasture. "We have a high demand for the stock and we've taken on multipliers to keep up with demand, but there are still waiting lists at some times," White adds.

Christy Willett is an Essex, England farmer who says her Exlana ewes are easy to maintain and they're very attentive mothers who produce healthy lambs with little or no assistance. She and her son are expanding their

flock to sell breeding ewes as well as market lambs. Berkshire farmer James Edwards, who runs more than 4,000 ewes, says if he had to use only one maternal breed that he'd go 100 percent with Exlana.

Another producer says shedding Exlana sheep are a "no brainer" because "we don't have to break up our cropping routines to shear the animals and we eliminate the expense of shearing".

White says the breed association has received numerous inquiries from the U.S., Canada, New Zealand and Australia about Exlana availability, but as yet no Exlanas have been exported. Any inquiries about Exlana stock, semen or embryos should be



Exlana sheep breed sheds its wool naturally and has outstanding maternal traits.

directed to White's attention.

Contact: Farm Show Followup, Tim White ([Tim@exlana.co.uk](mailto:Tim@exlana.co.uk)); [www.exlana.co.uk](http://www.exlana.co.uk)).

## Where To Buy Exotic Chickens

Greenfire Farms is a Florida company that's benefiting from the backyard chicken craze, selling close to 50 breeds of chickens from around the globe to customers across the United States.

Paul Bradshaw's Greenfire Farm opened in 2007. Bradshaw had noticed the growing demand for exotic poultry and thought he'd try selling a pair of Sussex Coronations, imported from Australia. The experiment was a profitable success so he switched his farm from cattle and pork to exotic poultry.

Greenfire farm provides many breeds of egg layers, meat birds, game fowl and exotic show birds. One of their most unusual breeds is the Ayam Cemani chicken from Indonesia. The Cemani is all black, inside and out, from its comb and feathers to its bones. This large bird has traditionally been raised for medicinal and spiritual purposes, but those who've tried its dark colored meat say it could be the next gourmet poultry.

Another extraordinary bird at Greenfire is the Altsteier, which has its history and roots in Austria. This large-bodied breed is a great egg-layer and can provide a good meal for any table.

Greenfire Farm became well known in the chicken community rather quickly because the business only breeds the highest quality, fundamentally breed-true birds. Bradshaw and his knowledgeable crew track pedigrees and are innovative in their poultry farm technologies.

The adult breeding flocks raised at Greenfire Farm are given plenty of space to roam, lots of fresh air, and a healthy diet. All of the chickens are vaccinated for Marek's disease



This light Sussex is one of about 50 breeds of chickens sold by Greenfire Farms in Florida.

and checked for good health periodically by the USDA. The chickens are bred to be robust and hearty, no matter their purpose, with careful attention to breed-specific characteristics.

Customers can buy larger quantities for commercial production or in quantities as small as 6 chicks. Most breeds are available year-around. Orders are shipped by the U.S. postal service priority express, with up to 20 birds in a box. They often arrive at their destination within a day, depending on the zip code. The Greenfire Farm website has regular updates of breed availability and stock information.

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## Canadian Farmer Markets His Own Cold-Pressed Oils

Chefs at some top-notch restaurants love the rich oils from Jason Persall's family farm. His business, Pristine Gourmet, is located 90 minutes southwest of Toronto, and produces a variety of cold-pressed virgin gourmet oils.

A fourth generation farmer, Persall's family has a long history of finding innovative ways to supplement the farm's cash crop business.

About a dozen years ago, Persall and his wife, Linda, became intrigued by stories about European farmers making their own oil. Persall began turning his soybeans into oil.

It wasn't long before they added sunflowers, canola, pumpkins and CBD hemp to their specialty oil production. Vinegar production compliments the oils, some of which are infused with maple syrup, raspberries, and blueberries.

Persall says their oils are different than many supermarket oils because they're made using a mechanical screw press with no added heat or chemicals. This produces oils with full flavor, aroma, texture, natural anti-oxidants, and quality rivaling a fine extra virgin olive oil. Mass produced oils are typically extracted using solvents and then refined to produce a low flavor, low color and virtually odorless oil.

Persall says "The term extra virgin means oil is extracted in the purest way possible

without any additives or mixing with lower quality oil. Unfortunately, because of label restrictions, we can't use that term, but we do label our Pristine Gourmet oils as 'Virgin / Cold Pressed' to communicate that these oils are as good as it gets."

Persall's production techniques make sure nothing is wasted. Other manufacturers seek out their food-grade 'leftovers', and the rest becomes animal feed.

He began selling his products by knocking on a lot of restaurant back doors in Toronto. "Much to my surprise, many chefs were looking for a direct-to-farm connection and were interested in these oils," Persall says.

What started as a one person, one machine operation, now has four full time employees and several part time people, including Persall's high school and college-age children. Today 6 press machines run 24 hrs. a day. Products are sold direct, on-line, and through specialty stores.

While most of Persall's oils are sold in Ontario, they continue to expand across Canada.

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