

They Do River Floats In Metal Stock Tanks

When Dusty Trails started offering canoe, kayak and inner tube rental on a nearby river, owner Dusty Barner also rented out big plastic tubs for "tanking". They are lightweight and easy to move and stack. However, they don't always hold their shape.

"They can fold up like a taco if there are just a couple of people across from each other," recalls Barner. "I switched to 7 and 8-ft. metal stock tanks made right here in Nebraska."

Barner found he could roll the metal tanks into place, so handling is not an issue. Tanks have wooden benches inside that latch in place. His customers like them.

"They recognize the metal tanks as authentic," says Barner. "They like the look better."

"Each summer we have tank races," says Barner. "One year we got some plastic tanks to handle the overflow. The people in the plastic tanks complained. They said when they signed up the next year, they wanted the galvanized stock tanks, not plastic ones."

Barner understands keeping his customers happy and does what is needed. The tanking and other river item rentals supplement his year-round business of trail rides, riding lessons and week-long day camps for Girl Scouts and others.

Barner also holds a pumpkin festival in October and offers birding tours when tens of thousands of sandhill cranes stop in the area during migration. In 2020 he was one of the few tour operators to stay open.



Dusty Trails rents stock tanks for group river rides.

Others canceled reservations and closed their doors without refunds for the sold-out tours. Barner allowed visitors to use their unused 2020 tickets in 2021.

Perhaps as a result, his 2021 business boomed. He sold \$15,000 worth of tickets in 2020. In 2021 he sold \$53,000 in tickets, not counting coupons honored from the year before.

"If you get flexible and creative, you succeed," he says.

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Trappers Find Profit In Porcupines

A growing market for porcupine hair, claws, skulls and quills means that North America's second-largest rodent is a target species for trappers across the country.

In most cases, porcupines are captured in traps set out for other species. Harvesting is best in the winter when the porcupines have put on their winter coat. The legality of trapping porcupines varies by state, so you should research local regulations.

While their quills get most of the attention, porcupines have long guard hairs across their backs that are valued for making male headdresses for Native American ceremonial events. When this hair grows over 8 in. long, it's easily worth more than \$20 per animal.

The value of porcupine quills is related to their size. The largest and most valuable quills can be found along the animal's back and tail. Most are purchased for crafting purposes like decorating moccasins or making beaded necklaces. Dying the quills before selling them further increases their worth.

The easiest way to prep porcupines for sale is to skin the animal with hair, quills, and claws intact. The hides tend to be less valuable than when the components are separated, but processing takes a fraction of the time.

Alternatively, trappers can remove the animal's long guard hairs by pulling them out a few dozen at a time and securing them with rubber bands in 1-inch bundles. Waiting a few days after procuring the animal can make them easier to remove. Premium hairs sell for \$24 per ounce or more.

Claws are simple to cut off, but they must be dried and hairless before selling. Expect to make about \$3 to \$4 per animal.



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Quill removal tends to be the most tedious step but rushing the job can lead to bent or broken quills that are essentially worthless. One method is to press the quills into a material they will stick to, such as potatoes or cotton towels. You can remove each quill from this material without the step of cleaning away the underfur.

Trappers can add several dollars of value per ounce to the quills by dying them before selling. Instructions will vary by dye brand, but the process typically takes around an hour.

Trapping and preparing porcupines for resale is not for the faint of heart. The process takes time and careful attention, but do it right, and you will be financially rewarded for your effort.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Moscow Hide and Fur, P.O. Box 8918, Moscow, Idaho 83843 (ph 208-882-0601; www.hideandfur.com).

They Turn Horseradish Roots Into Profits

In 1980, Katie Stoltzfus sold her first horseradish made with a hand grinder using horseradish that grew on her and husband Sam's Pennsylvania farm.

"One thing led to another, then we added labels and got more efficient," Sam recalls. "Then we sold big roots and made money and had lots of fun."

With its big leaves nearly 4-ft. tall, neighbors thought the horseradish plants looked like tobacco plants. But Sam notes horseradish is a lot healthier and more lucrative. Until 2010, the couple grew their own horseradish and sold the biggest roots with attached greens to clients in New York. They ground up the smaller roots and sold the prepared horseradish in jars. When their children left home, the couple quit growing it and started buying 1,000 lbs. (annually) of horseradish roots from an Ill. farmer.

The roots are stored in a cooler and processed in batches. Sam cleans the roots in a barrel with pressure washer jets, and he cuts out black spots by hand. Then he grinds the roots with a heavy-duty grinder that runs on diesel. The ground horseradish falls into a plastic-lined bucket with a gallon of vinegar. Anyone who has ground horseradish knows that the fumes can be noxious, but Sam says the vinegar, fans and a shield on the bucket help keep them manageable.

When the bucket is about 3/4 full, he adds more vinegar, seals it with a lid and returns it to the cooler. Sam can process about eight 5-gal. buckets of roots in an hour.

From there Katie bottles the ground horseradish according to customer orders. Some want it with distilled vinegar, others



Photos by Lancaster Farming/Sue Bowman

Sam Stoltzfus grinds the roots with a heavy-duty diesel grinder.

with apple cider vinegar and a little salt and sugar. She adds red beads to some and mustard to others. She also has a "super tonic" recipe.

"We ship all over," Sam says. Pints sell for \$4.50 and quarts sell for \$7.50, plus \$15 for shipping.

Sam says he and Katie are blessed to make a healthy product that is high in Vitamin C and known to have many nutritional benefits.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Irishtown Shop, Samuel Stoltzfus, 3184A Mill Lane, Gordonville, Penn. 17529 (ph 717-687-8194).



A perfect condition replica stagecoach is available for sale or rent in Chicago, Ill. Owner Jack Rivo had the stagecoach custom-built in 2003 for use at his Lucky Star Ranch stables.

Custom-Built Stagecoach For Sale Or Rent

A perfect condition replica stagecoach is available for sale or rent in or near Chicago, Ill. Owner Jack Rivo had the stagecoach custom-built in 2003 for use at his Lucky Star Ranch stables.

The stagecoach was designed and constructed by Justin Carriage Works in Battle Creek, Mich., a family-founded and operated business that has been handcrafting horse-drawn vehicles since 1974.

Its design is based on the horse-drawn Concord stages coaches of the 1800's, popular at the time for transporting passengers and mail across the Eastern United States. Each coach was propelled by six horses and cost \$1,000 to \$1,500, making it accessible to only the very well-off.

This stagecoach boasts a heavy-duty steel frame with a 1/4-in. top floor and deck. It measures 2-ft. wider, 2-ft. higher, and 4-ft. longer than a standard-sized stagecoach and can comfortably seat over two dozen people, including 16 inside with room for six to eight

on the outside and the top deck.

Also included is a hydraulic brake system, an AM-FM radio and CD player with speakers and four rare lamps mounted to the outside.

While Rivo originally intended to use the stagecoach for scenic rides through his property, the county claimed his land for expanding a forest preserve by the time it was built. It's almost entirely unused and remains in perfect condition.

"At this time, the stagecoach sits in storage and is as beautiful and brand new as it was when first built, so I'm hoping it will catch someone's eye," says Anna Diomedea, a friend of Rivo.

At writing, the stagecoach has a purchase price of \$36,000, and Rivo will also consider renting it to interested parties. To learn more or express your interest in buying or renting, contact Rivo directly.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Jack Rivo, Chicago, Ill. (ph 708-975-5493).