

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.

Honey Farm Finds Gold With Mead

Kon Paseschnikoff didn't plan to make mead when he started raising bees in 2004. He was honoring his father, who had raised bees in the 70's and thought beehives would be a good addition to their market garden operation. But as Paseschnikoff, his wife Julie, and their children grew the operation to 200 hives and started Bee Boyzz Honey, they developed a line of value-added honey products.

Besides creamed honey, Julie created 18 sweet and savory flavored honey blends, from Jalapeno honey to coconut honey to espresso coffee honey that customers use to sweeten their coffee. In late 2018, Paseschnikoff was searching the Internet for new product ideas when he learned about mead, an alcoholic beverage made by fermenting honey.

Eager to try something new, the Paseschnikoffs traveled to UC Davis in California for a weekend mead-making course. In the process, they learned that their honey is quite unique, made mostly from bees pollinating canola blossoms in Manitoba.

"It's almost white like snow," Paseschnikoff says, which attracts customers in the U.S. as well as Canada.

He started small with 100-liter batches and sourced local fruits such as strawberries and rhubarb to make different flavored meads. Working with a mead maker, soon they were making 1,000-liter batches and selling in Manitoba liquor stores.

Early sales were good, and they even made carbonated versions of mead with



Bee Boyzz Honey makes a variety of products including mead and iced tea.

reduced alcohol (5 percent instead of 12 percent) that could be canned.

"Education is the biggest thing with mead," Paseschnikoff says. The couple started attending heritage and reenactment events where mead is well known. They invited guests to their Oak Bluff, Man., farm to taste their honey products and learn about bees and the 9 to 12-month process of making mead.

They also started experimenting and working with a culinary school to create honey iced tea.

What started as a hobby with a few hives has become a sideline business that continues to grow as they develop new products from their honey. Available items can be found on their website.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bee Boyzz Meadery, 4742 McGillivray Blvd., Oak Bluff, Manitoba, Canada R4G 0B7 (ph 204-791-7940; beeboyzzmeadery@gmail.com; www.beeboyzz.com).

Family Dairy Markets Milk In Glass Bottles

"If we hadn't made the move to bottling our milk, I know we wouldn't be milking cows today," says Kentucky dairyman Willis Schrock of Russellville. Schrock moved to processing and bottling his milk in 2006 and today JD Country Milk employs a half dozen family members and distributes several milk products to retailers up to 200 miles away in Kentucky, Indiana and Tennessee.

JD Country Milk gets its name from the "J.D." initials of all eight of Willis and Edna's kids. The company sells its non-homogenized milk products in returnable and reusable glass bottles. Glass preserves the milk's natural flavor and also reduces landfill waste. The company's top three products are whole milk, chocolate milk, and cream. Other products include strawberry milk, buttermilk, ice cream, and yogurt.

"We only pasteurize our milk at 145 degrees for 30 minutes, which keeps the good bacteria alive and allows milk to retain more of its natural flavor," Schrock says. "People told us we couldn't make chocolate milk without homogenizing, but we developed a system that makes it work, and our chocolate milk has become very popular."

The company processes milk from its



JD Country Milk is packaged in glass bottles rather than plastic or paper cartons.

55-cow on-site herd and also buys some milk from neighboring farmers. Their Jersey cow herd is owned and operated by the Schrock's daughter Janette and her husband Luke. Milk is bottled every week on Monday, delivered on Tuesday, then bottled again on Wednesday, and delivered Thursday and Friday. The company maintains five delivery trucks and routes, four of them operated by four Schrock sons. Milk products are also available on-site at the farm.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, JD Country Milk, 1059 Ellis Road, Russellville, Ky. 42276 (www.jdcountrymilk.com).

Pickled Egg Business Finds A Niche

Hilltop Pickling is a woman-owned business in Strum, Wis., specializing in canned and pickled products, especially its regionally famous pickled eggs.

Owner and founder Rachel Gullicksrud dreamed up the business concept in 2019 when she had surgery on her leg and needed to recuperate at her parents' home. "During that time, my mother was making her annual secret recipe pickled eggs for the guys at deer camp. So, I brought up the idea to her - why don't we make a business out of this?"

Initially, both parents were very skeptical of her idea. "I can still hear my dad in the background saying, 'You want to do what?'" laughs Gullicksrud.

Fueled with motivation to prove them wrong and show that a cannery could be a success, Gullicksrud got Hilltop Pickling up and running. She started by distributing to two stores, but since then has expanded to 147 stores across four states.

"Our eggs attract a variety of people," says Gullicksrud. "People who've never tried a pickled egg before absolutely love them now!" To date, the sweet and hot-flavored eggs remain the consistent favorite.

Everything is made in a commercial kitchen with the help of three staff members. Gullicksrud manages all deliveries herself and hopes to ship nationwide in the future. "My future goal is to keep adding stores around the Midwest. We want everyone to taste our product and to see a smile on returning customers' faces."

It's taken Gullicksrud a bit to perfect her



Gullicksrud and her crew typically boil about 200 eggs at a time before peeling them by hand to prep for the pickling process.

process. As she explains, "There is 'art' that goes into making the perfect pickled egg." Gullicksrud and her crew typically boil about 200 eggs at a time before peeling them by hand to prep for the pickling process.

Although there's been plenty of growing pains starting her cannery, Gullicksrud has no regrets about following her intuition for starting the business.

"My advice, especially being a 'women-owned' business, is not to let that stop you from making your dreams come true!" she says.

For order inquiries, you can contact Hilltop Pickling directly through its Facebook page.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hilltop Pickling Company (ph 715-533-9345; Facebook: Hilltop Pickling Company).

New Jersey Farm Finds Success With Yaks

Yaks fit well with Eric and Susan Mandatta's desire to raise something exotic on their Silver Cuff Farm in Stockton, N.J. Their interest in the breed began when they purchased four heifers 5 years ago. The Tibetan animals have become a passion that led to research and education, as well as making new friends.

The Mandattas focus on breeding stock, collecting down fiber and hair for fiber artists, and selectively milking the yaks to make soap and butter, as yaks are not high-volume dairy producers.

They spent a couple of years looking for the right bull.

"We wanted a certain bloodline and lineage that we could trace since the gene pool in the U.S. is so shallow. We also looked at temperament, the symmetry of horns, and conformation," Eric says.

He was enamored by how versatile yaks are for Tibetans, who use everything from their dung for heat, to their milk, meat and hair to packing and trekking.

"Yaks don't need a lot of land and leave a low carbon footprint," Eric says. They eat a fraction of what Angus cattle eat, but they also mature slower and weigh less. Cows are 600 to 700 lbs. and bulls weigh 1,200 to 1,800 lbs.

Very hardy and self-sufficient, they rarely need help with calving and do well on orchard grass, free choice mineral, and occasional alfalfa at Silver Cuff Farm.

The Mandattas currently have 14 animals in their herd, annually trimming hooves and combing them to collect fiber in the spring. Each yak averages a fiber harvest of about one pound per year.

"The down undercoat is so fine in microns that it rivals other luxury animal fibers. The outer hair is thicker and water-repellant," Susan says. The hair has no lanolin and is



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antimicrobial and scent-free.

"Their fiber is so niche. There are less than 10,000 yaks in the U.S., and less than 500 are combed for a fiber harvest," Susan says, so the fiber and yarn can sell for a premium price to fiber artisans. She and Kat Tylee, owner of Little Hawk Yarns LLC in Oregon, promote and educate people about yak fiber on their podcast, The Yakademics. Some yak owners raise them for meat, which is sweeter, leaner and healthier than beef.

Prices for yaks range from \$1,000 for meat animals to upwards of \$20,000 and beyond for breeding stock with good bloodlines and temperament.

For more information, there are yak associations, USYAKS, a Science-Based Registry (www.usyaks.org) and the International Yak Association (www.iyak.org).

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