

He Makes His Own Liquid Plant Food

Eugene Hauzie has a fast method for brewing a nutrient-rich drink for his garden plants. It's a simple process that keeps Hauzie's garden in good health.

"I grow vegetables in my hoop house, garden beds and containers, raising enough to take to the farmers market from July to October," says Hauzie. "Between yard-waste compost I get from the city, composted manure and my liquid plant food, I haven't bought fertilizer from the store for years."

Hauzie is less concerned about the material he uses than the process. He has used composted manure, leaf and grass compost from the city compost site, as well as fish parts. All of them start with a square bucket sized to fit inside a 5-gal. pail with a brass spigot.

"The square bucket has 1/4-in. holes in the bottom," explains Hauzie. "I put a shovel full or less of compost in the square bucket, set it in the 5-gal. bucket, fill it with water and let it sit for a few days."

He follows the same process with fish he has caught. However, he admits he sets the fermentation buckets farther from his house.

"I clean them over a bucket, catching every bit of the fins and scales, as well as the head and guts," he says. "I put them in the square bucket and let it sit for 2 to 3 days, stirring it up occasionally."

Once fermentation has slowed, he lifts the square bucket out, letting the water drain back into the 5-gal. bucket.

It's raised on concrete blocks so he can drain the liquid fertilizer into sprinkling cans. He removes the sprinkling head from the cans to prevent sediment from blocking them. Hauzie's water comes from a 55-gal. rain barrel with a valve near the bottom.



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The barrel also sits on concrete blocks, raised enough for the water to gravity flow into the bucket.

"I can pour the water directly over the leaves, foliar feeding the plant," says Hauzie. "In the case of the fish parts, you can buy liquid fish from the store for \$19.95. This is free."

He repeats the process with the same material four or five times. At that point, he pours the compost or fish remains onto his compost pile to capture any remaining nutrients.

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Automated Farmers Market (AFM) lockers offer customers a quick and easy way to pick up their orders.

Remote Meat Lockers Make Buying Easy

Munsee Meats' customers can pick up their beef, pork and other meats easily at the Automated Farmers Market (AFM). Located in the parking lot of a Harley Davidson dealer, the AFM consists of a set of lockers and an access kiosk. Online orders offer the option of delivery to the AFM. Text alerts are sent to the customer with a QR code when the order is ready for pickup.

"We have a set of 20 lockers in the AFM in a parking lot across from the largest supermarket in town," says Jason Mauck, Munsee Meats. "Our customers can park right next to the AFM, get their order and leave in 20 seconds. It's very convenient."

Mauck and a group of local partners bought the meat processing plant in 2020 to handle the animals they raised. The company offers prepackaged meat bundles, as well as cut-to-order, locally raised beef, lamb, pork, bison and poultry. They also carry seafood and other products, delivering to around 1,000 restaurants across their region. Until the AFM was established, retail customers had to use a side entrance of the processing plant.

"We have logistics in place to handle the restaurant trade, but there are a lot of costs involved with a retail market," says Mauck. "We can have several AFMs in high-traffic areas for the cost of one brick-and-mortar store."

Setting up the first AFM involved identify-

ing a high-traffic area with available parking and a nearby billboard. The billboard ensured power availability. For \$5,000 they were able to access power. They leased the AFM for \$1,500 per month. Mauck estimates a retail outlet would cost at least \$10,000 per month and at a less desirable location.

"We offered the dealership a percentage of our sales at the site for use of excess parking lot space," says Mauck. "We can fill it several times a day, and customers can pick up their orders at their convenience."

While the company is still building awareness of the new concept, Mauck is satisfied with the results. "We're averaging \$115 per transaction," he says. "Once people try it, they become weekly or monthly customers. As business increases, we can simply add modules."

Mauck is already looking at future potential utilizing the company's restaurant delivery system. "We have plans to do one in Indianapolis, 60 miles away," he says. "We want to grow. We're trying to be a facilitator of our meat products, but also other local businesses, such as pre-made pizzas, produce and other locally made foods."

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Small Farmer Sells Attachments Online

Price and quality were the priorities for Brian Hancock when he started Equipment For Less 3 years ago. The Ontario small farmer and general contractor wanted cost-effective tractor, skid loader and excavator attachments that were smaller and not as expensive to ship.

After careful research and only considering Chinese factories that were in business for more than a decade and offered at least a year warranty, he ordered a container of tools. He was satisfied with the quality, and the pricing allowed him to offer customers fair prices. Now he regularly places orders from five different factories and keeps his farm's warehouse well-stocked.

Some tools, like breaker hammers, are as much as 50 percent less than comparable tools on the market. Other equipment may be 10 to 15 percent less.

"As a small business owner, I'm not in business to be greedy, but I have my margins set and offer a fair deal," Hancock says.

"Equipment For Less is very helpful," says an Apple Hill, Ont., FARM SHOW reader, who suggested we write about the business.

Besides breaker hammers, Hancock carries just about every kind of attachment homeowners, farmers and small businesses need. That includes everything from pallet



Hancock buys in bulk direct and sells equipment online.

forks to rock bucket grapples to equipment for tilling gardens, chipping wood, moving snow or leveling driveways.

There are also excavator attachments and heavy-duty tool cabinets. Ordering and checkout are easy through the website, but Hancock welcomes customers to buy directly from the farm if they want to see the quality of the products for themselves.

When shipping is required, Hancock often works with customers to pick up items at terminals to save money. Most business is with Canadians, though he can also ship to the U.S.

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How To Run A Successful Farmers Market

A well-run farmers market doesn't need expensive marketing. Social media posts, effective signage, and word-of-mouth advertising take care of promotion, says Santiago De Choch, an organic gardener and former manager of the GreenMarket in Ft. Myers, Fla.

As a grower and writer, he had the right skills to manage the market for a decade. He recruited farmers who could offer quality local produce. Having "sharp focus on farmers," is most important, he says.

"I needed small, quality growers, so I forfeited their fees," De Choch explains. "I also needed great bakers, soap makers, cooks and chocolatiers, who were charged a small fee. I didn't need arts and crafts people, so I only took the best at a full fee that subsidized the presence of the most wanted categories."

The fee arrangement worked well to cover insurance, his modest part-time manager salary, and other expenses at the GreenMarket located near the picturesque Caloosahatchee River.

Instead of hiring a manager, farmers markets can be set up as cooperatives, but it's important they make sure they are dealing with food safety, the fire department, and local rules and regulations, De Choch says.

"For me, a midsize market of 20 to 40 vendors is the best of both worlds. Big enough to cause a stir and attract a following. Small enough that it has a friendly atmosphere, where you know all your vendors and many of the visitors, by name, and can deal with them in a personalized, warm manner. It becomes a big group of friends," he says.

Add interest by offering extra activities such as musicians, art projects for families, or educational events.

Remember to take photos and share the best on social media a couple of times a week. Take advantage of special activities that attract media coverage and work with non-profits to build connections.

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