

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.

"All units have a basic smart system to program lights, temperature, curtains, thermostats, and skylights with your phone," says sales representative Chera Jackson. "You can turn on your A/C before you get there."



Modular Home Becomes An Instant Airbnb

With walls of metal and glass, a Vessel house by Massimo Modular is not your typical stick-built cabin. With floor-to-ceiling windows and 270-degree panoramic views, it's easy to recognize their appeal to people who love being surrounded by nature. And that makes the "nature vessels" ideal for Airbnbs, cabin park rentals, vacation homes, and guest homes.

"The biggest thing is they're very simple. They can be delivered and hooked up, and you can have rentals up and running in a matter of hours," says Patrick Schuchart, sales representative for Massimo Modular, based in Garland, Texas. When secured to concrete footings they're durable and sturdy, built to last with a 7-gauge steel frame and aluminum materials. The double-paned, insulated impact glass is rated for hurricanes and tornadoes with up to 140 mph winds.

The owner of Vessel Houses created his first models in 2022 after seeing similar modulars overseas.

"All units have a basic smart system to program lights, temperature, curtains, thermostats, and skylights with your phone," says sales representative Chera Jackson. "You can turn on your A/C before

you get there. They also have smart locks so B&Bs can change the code between visitors."

Built in Houston, the modulars are well insulated and tested for snow loads and climates through Zone 6. They come with plumbing, sewer and electrical hookups, heat, AC, automatic curtains, integrated bathrooms, and environmental wood floors.

The models are narrow enough (up to 10'8" wide) to load on semi-trailers to be shipped anywhere in the U.S. Prices range from \$49,000 to \$99,000.

Customers include glamping and other rental businesses, campgrounds, and ranchers adding guest houses.

"At the glamping show, they were very popular because people had never seen anything like this before," Jackson says, and the Aurora, Colo., setting accentuated how well they showcase nature.

With a patented design that resists earthquakes over level 8 and typhoons over level 12 and 70 years of estimated service life, they also offer an efficient return on investment for rental business owners.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Massimo Modular, 3101 W. Miller Rd., Garland, Texas 75041 (ph 877-983-7735; www.massimomodular.com).

Farm Sitting Service Takes Off

Chris Youngmark is a matchmaker for folks interested in doing farm sitting and those farmers who need them. In the past, family members, friends, and close neighbors could be counted on to take care of things when people went on a trip. In many areas, that's no longer the case. Professional farm sitters are filling the gap, but finding one can be challenging. Making that easier is why Youngmark started The Farm Sitter.

"With family and friends spread out, help is often not available," says Youngmark, The Farm Sitter.

He first observed the need as the owner of a small hobby farm with horses, chickens, dogs, and cats. "It can be difficult to find a caretaker that's consistently available and knowledgeable," recalls Youngmark.

In 2018, he decided to start filling that need for others. He started a farm-sitting business. Everything went well until the pandemic hit and his customers stopped traveling. Once things started back up, so

did the business. However, a couple of things had changed.

"In addition to farm sitter, I had taken on the role of assistant director of the Illinois small business corporation," says Youngmark. "I needed to hire independent contractors to meet customer needs. This also allowed me to expand our geographic reach. That, in turn, produced more referrals from satisfied customers."

Youngmark has operated regionally in Illinois with independent contractors for the past couple of years. Thanks to news stories and an internet presence, he's had queries from more than 40 states and several countries. Some contacts are from people looking for farm sitters. Others want to become farm sitters. Recently, he began expanding.

"We're developing an app for people wanting to find farm sitters in their area, as well as prospective farm sitters," says Youngmark.

Before listing a farm sitter on the site,



"Over half of each salad by weight is our own produce," says Mooney.

They Sell The World's Freshest Salads

Clayton Farms of Ames, Iowa, sells fresh salads made with greens grown right within a converted Fazoli's restaurant for an experience that's genuinely farm to drive-thru.

Co-founders Danen Pool and Clayton Mooney started the company in 2017. "The first step was to design indoor farming equipment that could be set up close to the consumer," says Mooney. "We then partnered with chefs and produce managers to have their insights on flavor profiles and best foods to start growing."

Over the years, they tested their equipment with a subscription box service before landing on the restaurant space for their growing and salads. Upon entering the restaurant space, they converted the dining area to a farm for growing all the leafy greens and microgreens that go into salads and smoothies. "Over half of each salad by weight is our produce, and the food miles is about 15 feet. We've made it simple and economically practical," says Mooney. "For our other ingredients, we have great local partners, including Capital City Fruit."

The salads range from \$10 for Caesar to \$12 for Cobb and Southwest salads. Another popular menu item is smoothies (priced at \$6 to \$8 each), packed with fresh farm produce like broccoli, peas, and bok choy

microgreens. It's also possible to skip the prepared food and purchase containers of cherry tomatoes or microgreens. Recently, Clayton Farms Salads has begun offering a catering service throughout Central Iowa.

While still a growing company, Clayton Farms' business strategy has promise. "We're grateful to have filled a major need for people in our community," says Mooney. "We just celebrated 25,000 salads and smoothies served since opening just under 6 mos. ago. Our customers continue to help us fine-tune our menu offerings, and every piece of feedback we've received has helped us focus further on our mission of providing people with the food they deserve."

The farm is looking to expand to more locations throughout Iowa and Minnesota. Says Mooney, "We want to expand nationally next year, so millions of people all across the U.S. can have access to the food they deserve. If growing and serving the world's freshest salads strikes a chord with you, please contact us via our website. We'd be grateful to hear from you."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Clayton Farms Salads, 2435 Grand Ave., Ames, Iowa 50010 (ph 515-882-2669; www.claytonfarms.com).



Youngmark started Farm Sitter to match farm owners with help who could watch property and care for animals during trips.

Youngmark establishes their credibility. He runs background and reference checks and screens them for experience with animals. However, doing that remotely can be difficult.

"Ultimately, the customer needs to rely on how they feel about the farm sitter and their comfort with the customer's animals," says Youngmark. "We facilitate a meet and greet with the customer and the prospective farm sitter to familiarize them with the animals. We also offer individual training of the farm sitter."

Pricing is where Youngmark feels he can advise prospective farm sitters. In his current practice, he has set prices for different levels of service, from single visits with an hour of chore time for \$39 to extended stays on-site or overnight versus single or twice-a-day visits, all at different rates. Other rates cover wellness checks on property with or without animals, as well as emergency visits and customized farm sitting. As his service expands to other states, he notes that rates will vary based on local conditions.

"Pricing is a local thing," he says. "We provide a way for sitters to establish their own pricing. Someone in central Illinois has different expectations from someone in Chicago."

Youngmark emphasizes the importance of communication between the sitter and the customer. As a service provider, he seeks reviews from both sides when a job is complete. He also encourages written checklists left around the barn or other buildings to help the sitter get into the routine.

"We're a growing company interested in expanding to new markets," he says. "We don't have all the answers but are working on them. I'd love to hear from FARM SHOW readers about the challenges they face when leaving their farms and pets and how they currently find farm sitters."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Farm Sitter (ph 309-925-1140; www.thefarmsitter.com).