

Farm-Based Businesses Help Boost Incomes

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 E-mail us at: Editor@farmshow.com.



Bud Page bred llamas "down" to produce miniature-sized animals.

Little Llamas Growing Into Big Farm Business

Bud Page, Tyler, Texas, likes raising exotic animals and, at just 5 ft., 2 in. tall himself, he prefers livestock that's on the smaller side.

When he went looking for llamas to buy, he discovered that many llama breeders had a few smaller-than-average llamas in their herd. So he bought some of the smaller animals and began breeding "down" to produce a miniature llama.

In 1999, about four years into his project, Page called a meeting of all interested breeders during a national llama show and sale in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and they organized the American Miniature Llama Association.

To be registered, the animals must have proper llama conformation and not be more than 38 in. tall at the withers when fully grown.

"We now have some adult miniatures only 34 inches tall that weigh 125 lbs.," Page says.

Page currently serves as president and

provides an office for the group. To date, they've registered about 200 animals from breeders in 28 states. Page expects the number to increase steadily, but not quickly.

"The gestation period for a llama is almost 12 months and females don't breed until they're about two years old. That means it takes nearly four years to progress from one generation to the next," he says.

A good pair of miniatures sells for around \$3,000. Page recently sold a female and her baby for \$3,200, a 36-in. high male for \$2,000, and a bred female for \$2,500.

"Remember, too, that nobody's selling their best stock right now while herds are being built," he adds. "I have an 18-month-old fourth generation male that I wouldn't part with for \$10,000."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bud Page, American Miniature Llama Assn., Box 9609, Tyler, Texas 75711 (ph 903 839-3737; E-mail: amla@tyler.net; Website: www.minillamas.com or www.miniaturellamas.com).

"Eye In The Sky" Helicopter

You can make money with this new radio-controlled helicopter fitted with a lightweight video camera.

It looks like something out of a James Bond movie but is designed for practical use. You can take photos of crops from the air for yourself, or hire out to take aerial shots for others at a fraction of the cost of conventional airplane photo services.

With four rotors and three state-of-the-art gyros to stabilize it, anyone can fly it safely. And because it has electric motors rather than a gas engine, it's quiet and lightweight. It won't spook livestock, wildlife or anything else you want to watch.

The 28-in. sq. Dragan helicopter is just 7 in. tall and weighs only 17 oz. The gyro stabilization makes it almost crash-proof (but not quite, so be careful). It's made of ultra-lightweight super-tough carbon fiber, and has only a few parts.

It carries a wireless color micro-video camera that weighs less than half an ounce and can stay aloft for about five minutes. The camera sends an excellent quality digital video signal to a small, portable base



Radio-controlled helicopter measures 28 in. square and is fitted with a lightweight video camera.

From there the video can be watched on a TV, recorded onto VHS by a VCR, or routed to a digital video recorder.

Range on the radio control is about half a mile, but Dragan cautions against trying to fly it that far. "We don't recommend flying it where you can't see it."

The Draganflyer III with camera sells for \$899.95 U.S.; \$749 without camera.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Zenon Dragan, Draganfly Innovations Inc., 2108A St. George Ave., Saskatoon, Sask., Canada S7M 0K7 (ph 800 979-9794 or 306 955-9907; fax 306 955-9906; E-mail: info@draganfly.com; Website: <http://www.draganfly.com>).

Farm Visitors Like Ride-Along Combine

If you've been looking for a unique way to haul small groups around your farm, county fair, or even in a parade, you might like this idea from England.

Visitors to Fishers Park Farm in West Sussex get to ride on a 1960 Massey Ferguson 400 combine. The combine was used on the farm until it was retired in 1992. It was going to be scrapped until the owners decided to diversify and turn the farm into a visitor's attraction with many rare breeds of animals on display. So the grain tank was covered with a platform and a railing was fitted around it.

The combine has become a top attraction. Fisher Farm advertises it as the world's only passenger-carrying combine.



Photo courtesy Vintage Spirit
Passenger-carrying combine provides visitors a great view of rare animals.



Marlin Stump creates "paintings" in wheat stubble fields with a mower and tractor.

Farm "Artist" Hires Himself Out

Most people who see Marlin Stump's art look down on it. It's not that they don't appreciate it. They just have to look down to see it.

With a 15-ft. wide "paintbrush" and a canvas that's measured in acres, the only way to really see Stump's creations is to look down from high in the sky.

For several years now, this Nashville, Ohio farmer has been creating "paintings" in wheat stubble fields with a John Deere rotary mower and a Case-IH tractor.

Stump, who farms about 1,600 acres with his brother Monty and their father Clyde, got the bug to create in 1993. Since then, he's clipped 53 designs into wheat fields, sometimes doing as many as five a year. Most are created on the Stump farm, but he's done some for others — for a fee of \$300.

To begin a piece of wheat stubble art, Stump draws a design or picture on paper. He then calculates the scale based on the width of his mower. After that, he transfers the design to the field by stepping it off (one big step equals one yard) and outlining it with surveyors' flags.

After that, he mows the design in two passes. In the first pass, he sets the mower high and makes a rough cut. Then he sets it lower to the ground to sharpen the image.

He says as long as he follows his flags with the mower, the image almost always turns



He has completed 53 different works.

out as he'd planned. "You do have to remember to shut off the mower at the right times," he adds.

Included in the 53 works he's completed are Mickey Mouse, birth announcements when his children were born, a steer, his town name, a promotion for a county fair, and one that said "Welcome to Ohio."

Weather and weeds usually limit the longevity of Stump's creative works to a month or so. He tries to get into fields shortly after harvest early in July. By mid to late August, however, green weeds in the field have usually obscured the design. Since his brother is a pilot, the two usually fly over his completed stubble art and record it on film.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Marlin Stump, 1805 Greenville-Nashville Road, Greenville, Ohio 45331 (ph 937 548-1804).



One of Stump's designs was part of a "Welcome to Ohio" promotion.