

Editor's Notebook



Mark Newhall
Editor & Publisher

Franchise Your Farm?

Is it possible to franchise a farm?

That's a question raised recently by Mary and Klaas Martens in an article for the online publication, The New Farm (www.NewFarm.org). The Martens are organic farmers who have come up with many of their own unique methods and techniques. When they were approached by another farmer who wanted to duplicate their operation, the idea of franchising came up.

That prompted them to sit down and attempt to identify the key factors that make their operation a success and could be transplanted to another farm. They ended up with a detailed plan for a franchise-ready organic grain farm that could probably be sold to others. However, they decided to lay it all out for free in a multi-part article that you can find on the internet (go to www.NewFarm.org and search up "Martens").

But the whole idea got us to thinking? Has anyone ever patented a unique farm operation? Small "hobby farm" operations are the fastest-growing segment of U.S. agriculture. Maybe there's an opportunity to design a turnkey farm operation for all these new farmers - complete with livestock, equipment, buildings, etc.

Free Classified Ads

If you haven't tried on-line classified ads - either as a lister or a looker - you've missed out on what may be the most convenient and least expensive way to buy and sell equipment and services.

Several years ago, FARM SHOW helped launch an internet site called BestFarmBuys.com. We sold the site some time back but have continued to link to it from our website. It's still going as one of the best sites for ag classifieds on the internet. It receives hundreds of thousands of visitors a month, giving you an audience bigger than most farm magazines.

How does it make money? There is an option for placing a "Premium" classified which costs a few dollars. It highlights your ad and puts it at the top of its category. However, if you choose not to pay for a premium ad, the listing is free for as long as you want to run it. Looking is also free.

Where To Find VegiForms

VegiForms are clear, 2-piece plastic molds that are placed over growing vegetables while they're still on the vine. The vegetable grows into the form, permanently taking the shape of the mold. They were originally featured in our Vol. 13, No. 5 issue and more recently in our special book, "Money-Making Ideas To Boost Farm Income". We recently tracked down the company's new address.



VegiForms make it easy to add character to veggies.

Works great on gourds, squash, pumpkins, cucumbers, etc. Forms include elf faces and also an ear of corn, which is great for yellow squash or zucchini.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, VegiForms, P.O. Box 6484, Cincinnati, Ohio 45206 (www.vegiforms.com; sales@vegiforms.com).

Don't Fall For This One

Nowadays, it seems like most people buy batteries by the case load, especially if you have kids. Flashlights, TV remotes, cameras, garage remotes, hand-held games, and

much more chew through batteries like there's no tomorrow.

I was recently looking through a catalog called "Improvements" and spotted a "revolutionary" new product manufactured by Emerson that said it would recharge ordinary alkaline batteries. I had to check that twice. It didn't say "rechargeables". It said *ordinary regular alkaline batteries* - any AAA, AA, C or D size battery, rechargeable or not.



Recharger did not quite live up to its billing.

This sounded too good to be true so I ordered one (\$29.99). It appeared to be a well-built unit so I dug through the trash to find some worn-down batteries and started reading the instructions. That's when I spotted the fine print that proved this thing really was too good to be true.

Apparently the recharger won't work on batteries that are worn down all the way. It works best, the instructions said, if the batteries are discharged only about 1/3 of the way. The booklet suggested using it on batteries that get used every day, like a flashlight that you take outside every night. If you recharge batteries regularly when they're only partially discharged, they will supposedly last 10 times longer than non-recharged batteries. But if you let them run down, and then try to recharge them, it won't help at all.

So who's going to pay 30 bucks for that? I'm guessing no one, unless all they read is the advertising copy.

Liberty Quotes

"Liberty has never come from government. Liberty has always come from the subjects of government. The history of liberty is a history of the limitation of governmental power, not the increase of it." *Woodrow Wilson*

"The individual has always had to struggle to keep from being overwhelmed by the tribe. To be your own man is hard business. If you try it, you will be lonely often, and sometimes frightened. But no price is too high to pay for the privilege of owning yourself." *Rudyard Kipling*

"Laws control the lesser man. Right conduct controls the greater one." *Chinese Proverb*

"There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supercedes all other courts." *Mahatma Gandhi*

"You've got to rattle your cage door. You've got to let them know that you're in there, and that you want out. Make noise. Cause trouble. You may not win right away, but you'll sure have a lot more fun." *Florence Kennedy*

"If you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may as well not say it at all because people will not trouble themselves about anything that does not trouble them." *George Bernard Shaw*



Machine makes it easy to demonstrate what happens when tractors roll over.

Rollover Machine

"Our company designed and manufactured a Rollover Simulator for the Kentucky Department of Agriculture Safety Program," says Steve Ratliff, Ratliff Weldcraft (barlyn@srctc.com; ph 270 524-5298). He says it's designed to be taken to farm shows and other events to demonstrate the value of ROPS and seat belts.

The photo above shows a 3,000-lb. tractor on the simulator. When the tractor rolls over without the ROPS in place, a dummy that is placed in the seat is crushed. Within 15 seconds, the tractor is turned back up, the ROPS is folded out, and the tractor is rolled over again to show what a difference the ROPS makes.

The simulator made an appearance at the last National FFA Convention and at a recent "Farm Safety Just For Kids" convention. It also has a full schedule across the state of Kentucky for training fire rescue teams and other groups.

Make Your Own Duct Tape Wallet

A story on page 40 of this issue tells where to buy a wallet made out of duct tape. While we were researching that story, we came across a web site that tells in detail how to make your own duct tape wallet.



It took us about an hour to make this wallet out of duct tape.

Just go to www.rpi-polymath.com/ducttape to find complete step-by-step instructions and photos (if you don't have access to the internet, just go to the library and print out the instructions). We sat down at the computer with a roll of duct tape and made the wallet shown in the photo above. It took about an hour (but would go much faster a second time) and the result is pretty darn good. It's quite the conversation piece and would be a good project for kids who want to make something for dad.

Is It Duct Tape Or Duck Tape?

Duct tape was called "duck" tape when it was first invented during World War II. The U.S. Military needed waterproof tape to keep moisture out of ammunition cases. Because the tape was waterproof, everyone referred to it as "duck" tape (like water off a duck's back). It worked so well soldiers started using it for everything, like patching clothing and fixing weapons and even jeeps.

After the war, someone discovered that the tape worked great for joining heat ducts. So the color was changed from army green to the silvery color we see today. And people started calling it "duct tape".

However, there's still a brand of duct tape on the market called "Duck" tape. It's manufactured by Henkel Consumer Adhesives, which owns the trademark to the name.

Getting out this farm magazine is no picnic. If we print jokes, people say we are silly; if we don't, they say we are too serious.

If we stick close to the office all day, we ought to be out hustling material. If we go out and try to hustle, we ought to be on the job in the office.

If we don't print contributions, we don't appreciate genius. And if we do print them, the paper is filled with junk.

If we edit the other fellow's writeup, we are too critical. If we don't, we are asleep.

If we print things from other papers, we are too lazy to write ourselves; if we don't, we are stuck with our own staff.

Now, like as not, some guy will say we swiped this from some magazine. We didn't. We swiped it from the Des Moines Register newspaper, which swiped it from the Sioux City Journal, which swiped it from the South Sioux City Star, which swiped it from some magazine.

A farmer was pulled over by a state trooper for speeding and the trooper started to lecture the farmer about his speed, and in general began to throw his weight around trying to make the farmer uncomfortable. Finally, the trooper got around to writing out the ticket, and as he was doing that he kept swatting at some flies that were buzzing around his head.

The farmer said, "Having some problems with the circle flies there, are ya?"

The trooper stopped writing the ticket and said, "Well yeah, if that's what they are? I never heard of circle flies."

So the farmer says, "Well, circle flies are common on farms. See they're called circle flies because they're almost always circling around the back end of a horse."

The trooper says, "Oh," and goes back to writing the ticket. Then after a minute he stops and says, "Hey... wait a minute, are you trying to call me a horse's rear end?"

The farmer says, "Oh no, I have too much respect for law enforcement and police officers to even think about calling you a horse's rear end."

The trooper says, "Well, that's a good thing," and goes back to writing the ticket.

After a long pause, the farmer says, "Hard to fool them flies though."

The passenger tapped the cab driver on the shoulder to ask him something. The driver screamed, lost control of the car, nearly hit a bus, went up on the sidewalk and stopped centimeters from a shop window. For a second everything went quiet in the cab, then the driver said, "Look mister, don't ever do that again. You scared the daylights out of me!" The passenger apologized and said he didn't realize that a little tap could scare him so much. The driver replied, "You're right. I'm sorry. It's not really your fault. Today is my first day as a cab driver. I've been driving a hearse for the last 25 years."