

## Walnut "Estate" To Benefit Heirs

Some people give blue chip stocks to their grandchildren. Kenneth Lloyd plans to give something that could be very valuable, too, but it has nothing to do with chips. He's going to give them whole logs.

At nearly 84 years, Lloyd knows he won't harvest any of the more than 3,000 black walnut trees he has planted on 51 acres over the past 14 years. He has, however, found a way to pass them on to his nine grandchildren. After selling off some nearby cropland, he set up a limited liability corporation (LLC) for the wooded acres. He then issued shares of stock in it to his grandchildren. While the stock has limited value today, in another 30 to 40 years, it should be worth millions.

"I figured if I put the same money into stocks appreciating at 10 percent, it would take at least 60 years to equal the return on growing hardwood trees," says Lloyd.

In the meantime, he has put marginal farmland to good use. The land is a valley floor with several creeks that created little chunks of land too small to be worthwhile farming, but perfect for walnut trees.

Lloyd planted special highly productive tree stock developed by Purdue University. Not only do the trees grow faster, but their nuts will have a higher value, too.

He recommends using tree tubes to protect the young trees and controlling competi-

tive weeds and brush. If he were planting more trees, Lloyd says he would mulch and even drip irrigate young trees for maximum growth.

Even without mulching and irrigation, he estimates his trees will increase in value by about \$10 per year for the first 20 years. By 20 to 30 years of age, each tree is expected to increase in value by \$50 to \$70 per year, depending on growth. Best of all, there is very little maintenance to be done with them after they reach 20 years in age. Lloyd says most labor (pruning) usually takes place in years 10-12. Because he planted them in rows, mowing is easy, as will be mechanized nut harvest. Trimming on older trees can now be done from a pickup bed.

Lloyd points out that numerous government programs help cover the cost of tree planting, and some involve annual subsidy payments for a number of years. There are also a number of tax advantages to tree plantings, he adds, including annual tax credits and not being taxed on the value of the "growing crop".

Lloyd set his LLC up with several provisions to protect and maintain the timber. Stock can only be held by his direct blood descendants. If a grandchild has no, the stock is redistributed to other shareholders upon his/her death. Stock cannot be used as col-



**Kenneth Lloyd has planted more than 3,000 black walnut trees on 51 acres over the past 14 years. He set up a limited liability corporation to pass the trees on to his nine grandchildren as an inheritance.**

lateral in a loan, nor can a divorce action or a bankruptcy action take it. Before any land or timber can be sold, 70 percent of stockholders have to agree with the action.

"I have seen what happens to family with inheritances and it can get to be a real nightmare," says Lloyd. "The land I sold covered

the cost of setting up the LLC with the rest being invested to cover yearly maintenance costs."

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## Chuck Wagon Cook-Offs Gaining Popularity Fast

Chuck wagon cook-offs are an event that is catching on across the country like wildfire.

Competition is getting fierce according to participants Les and Lyda Darsey who ranch near McLean, Texas. Together with their daughters, Tonya and Robbie, they've caught the bug to compete in cook-offs far and wide.

"It gets in your blood. We've traveled as far as 650 miles to enter cook-offs," Les admits. "What got us interested in it, is that everything has to be authentic. Everything is done the way it was on trail drives after the civil war in the late 1800's."

The Darseys belong to the American Chuck Wagon Association, which has been around for about seven years, organizing events.

There are usually about 20 cook-offs per year around the country, held in conjunction with some type of community celebration, often rodeo events.

Each team of cooks (two to six people) brings their own authentic chuck wagon, and cooks with Dutch ovens and coals – the same way as the old trail drivers used to cook, and using the same ingredients. A committee of organizers supplies the ingredients and usually asks each team to cook five different foods such as: biscuits, meat (often chicken fried steak), cobbler (or other dessert), beans and potatoes.

"We're given about half a day to prepare the food. Usually, we need about four hours, depending on which foods we're cooking," Les says. "Spectators come around and ask a lot of questions. When I'm cooking bread in the Dutch oven, I don't talk to anyone because it's awful easy to burn it."

Crews are judged on the quality and overall appeal of their meals, and prize money is usually awarded. Another set of judges evaluates the authenticity of the chuck wagons, team member dress and overall impression.

Since each wagon crew cooks enough food for 40 to 50 plates, the committee sells tickets to the general public.

"Anything cooked outside with a wood fire tastes better, and there's a lot of good cooks at these events," Les says. "Often, tickets will be sold out two weeks before we ever get



**Les and Lyda Darsey and their daughters have caught the bug to compete in chuck wagon cook-offs. The family operates a ranch near McLean, Texas.**

there. They're specific to a particular wagon, and certain wagons start to earn a reputation for superior cooking, so those tickets go even faster."

Prize money totals can be as high as \$8,000. For example, the food prizes might be \$300 for first, \$200 for second, and \$100 for third place. Wagon awards are usually higher, such as \$500 for the top wagon.

While a successful wagon can earn quite a bit, the Darseys acknowledge that it is also a very expensive hobby – some wagon units (complete with all the necessary accessories) have sold for \$20,000.

The Darseys' 100 year-old wagon was originally built in Winona, Minnesota.

"We found our wagon at Big Sandy, Montana," Les says. "It took us a week of traveling to get there and back. Authentic wagons have no modern bolts or screws in them. There's a lot to learn, but the association provides guidelines that help a lot in providing information on what is considered authentic."

They say it is a real challenge to find the appropriate period utensils, clothing and paraphernalia. They are always on the lookout at flea markets, antique stores and garage sales.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Les and Lyda Darsey, HCR2, Box 12, McLean, Texas 79057 (ph 806 779-3148) or American Chuck Wagon Association, President Owen Noble, 5520 – 76 St., Lubbock, Texas 79424 (ph 806 794-2916; email: president@chuckwagon.org; website: www.chuckwagon.org).

**Jerry Bray, Sr., sells more than 150 "chicken items" through his website, Everythingchickens.com.**

**He specializes in collectables, household items, games, toys, and other outdoor accessories that feature chickens.**



## Poultry Lovers Flock To "Everything Chickens"

If you like chickens, we've got a website for you.

Everythingchickens.com is the place to go for collectables, household items, games, toys and other outdoor accessories that feature chickens somehow.

Site owner Jerry Bray Sr., from Highland, Michigan, only started the website at the beginning of November, but he already carries more than 150 products.

"It's constantly growing," he points out.

Bray, whose children are members of a 4-H poultry club, actually "hatched" the idea a couple of years ago.

"Everything Chickens is an idea I came up with while attending my children's 4-H fair. There were many vendors at the fair selling wildlife items such as eagles, wolves and seals, etc. They were selling their T-shirts and figurines and such, but no vendors at the fair sold anything pertaining to 4-H animals such as cows, pigs and chickens," he says.

"I overheard many 4-H parents walk by and comment, 'I wish they had something with pigs, or I wish they had something with cows, or I wish they had something with chickens,'

and so on. Hence my idea for Everything Chickens," Bray adds. "From the person who may be buying their first chicken item, to the serious enthusiast who may have hundreds of different items in their collection, we hope that all will be happy with our selection and quality of merchandise."

The chicken paraphernalia includes such eclectic items as a poultry-themed chess set with 12 different rare and unique chicken breeds represented by the hand painted resin pieces.

Most items are priced at under \$100, plus shipping. Bray says the most popular items so far are a finely detailed "rooster and hen glass top table, a cutting board with a chicken scene on it, and a crowing rooster timer.

He works from his basement.

Bray welcomes inquiries from manufacturers or suppliers who have new and different chicken-themed items.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Everything Chickens, Attn. Jerry Bray Sr., Box 248, Highland, Mich. 48356 (ph 248 889-4232; email: sales@everythingchickens.com).