

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](mailto:editor@farmshow.com).



California farmer John Clemons grows a variety of edible flowers on his farm. Some go through a meringue crystallizing process that gives them up to a 2-year shelf life.

## Candied Flowers Bring Premium Prices

Crystallized candied flowers are too expensive for an afternoon snack, but they can be a real draw at special events.

California farmer John Clemons grows a variety of edible flowers in greenhouses on his 33-acre farm. Some are sold fresh. About half go through a meringue crystallizing process he patented that gives them up to a 2-year shelf life.

"They are like a sugared potato chip, crunchy and sweet," says Shanna Johnson, CEO and marketer for Sweetfields, the company that sells the flowers. "We do custom flavors and custom scents. We work with chefs and mixologists to complement their dishes or beverages."

With more than 100 edible flower varieties, there are plenty of options. Currently Sweetfields focuses on violas, snapdragons, pansies, mini roses and rose petals. While much of the business is wholesale, individuals can purchase flowers through the website. Prices for SweetCrystal flowers start at \$28.75 for 25 violas. Order a mix of 25 flowers for \$62.50 or 40 snapdragons for \$76.

For waterproof flowers that float in drinks, Sweetfields offers SweetGlaze packages starting at \$39.30 for 15 Snapdragons. To really make a statement, check out the SweetDust flowers sprinkled with 24k gold or silver starting at \$52.95 for 15 snapdragons.

With recent endorsements and articles about Sweetfields in bride, food and drink publications, more bakers, chefs and bartenders are adding flowers to the menu, Johnson says.

With its patented process, Sweetfields can mass produce the crystallized flowers. They can be refrigerated or frozen and will not absorb moisture.

As Clemons focuses on growing quality flowers, Johnson works at marketing.

"It's a challenge to educate the public about eating flowers. It's a newer concept," she says. "But consumers are really starting to catch on."

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Sweetfields, Inc., 3264 Peg Leg Mine Rd., Jamul, Calif. 91935 (ph 877 987-9338; [www.sweetfields.com](http://www.sweetfields.com)).

## Everything You Need To Milk Goats

Whether you have a few dairy goats or a 500-head herd, the Coburn Company, Inc., can set you up with all the equipment you need to get them milked. The company sells everything from bucket milkers that milk two goats at a time to a double 32 parallel parlor that milks 64 goats at a time.

Pete Draeger, Midwest sales manager, says Coburn supplies different models of milking clusters with four options of claw assemblies to fit different teat angles and sizes. Owners of a few goats can choose from basic stalls set up in multiples of six, while larger goat dairies can set up larger systems with rapid exit stalls to speed up milking.

"Being an after market supplier, we have more flexibility in what we offer. We can pull from suppliers worldwide to provide the best products available," Draeger says.

If milking goats was once a joke, that doesn't appear to be true anymore. He knows of older dairy farmers tearing out cattle stalls and downsizing with goat equipment.

Sales people at Coburn are happy to help



The Coburn Co. can set you up with all the equipment needed to milk dairy goats, no matter how big or small the herd.



callers determine what equipment they need and will direct customers to nearby dealers.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, The Coburn Company, Inc., P.O. Box 147, Whitewater, Wis. 53190 (ph 800 776-7042; [info@coburn.com](mailto:info@coburn.com); [www.coburn.com](http://www.coburn.com)).



Dale Mandeville's popular maze was constructed with 3,500 big and small wheat straw bales. He changes the 4 to 6-ft. tall walls mid-season to alter the path of the maze.

## Bales Make Better Maze

Repeat visitors to the Bozeman Maze are likely to find a different path every time they show up. Constructed with 3,500 big and little wheat straw bales, maze master Dale Mandeville changes the 4 to 6-ft. tall walls mid season.

"I can swing a few walls around and in 2 or 3 hrs. completely change the path of the maze," he says. "Doing that every couple weeks keeps people coming back."

Mandeville's mazes have proven popular since he built his first one in 1998. Each year the size and complexity have grown and so have the number of visitors. In recent years he has hosted between 6,000 and 7,000 visitors over a 4-week season. This year he expanded the season to 6 weeks.

For Mandeville, the bale maze has several advantages over corn mazes, besides the ability to change the design. "Corn mazes take up a lot of space," he says. "We have a few acres on the edge of Bozeman, Mont., with room for the maze, parking and more. The straw is local with little value, and the bales lend themselves to complex designs."

Mandeville's first maze consisted of 500 small square bales and 60 large round ones that he baled on his grandfather's farm. The next year the number of bales had tripled, and the design was more complex.

With the exception of a few years when he was starting a family and an engineering career, Mandeville has done one ever since, each bigger and more complex than before. He does the design and lays it out with large bales and the initial layer of small bales. As they became more complex a problem developed moving bales into the middle of the design.

"By 2008 we were using 2,500 bales, and my dad came up with the idea of sliding

them into the middle on 2 by 12's," recalls Mandeville. "Now we have a crew of 10 to 12 people who work 4 hrs. a day for 3 days. They put up all the second, third and fourth layers of small bales. We have a quad-copter with a camera that we use to see how we are coming."

In 2011, a fire broke out just ahead of the final weekend. Mandeville used a tractor and loader to create a firebreak around the burning bales as the fire department contained it. He lost about half the bales, but with the help of friends, rebuilt it and was open for business 30 hrs. later.

The uniqueness of the bale maze, the complexity of the design and rebuilding immediately after the fire has given Mandeville consistent media attention and promotion. He has also added attractions over the years, including cotton candy, popcorn concessions, a mini train, bungee trampoline and a corn bin (straw bale walls) for kids to play in. However, it's the maze with 4 check points people have to find that that keep them coming back. Mandeville warns that a maze shouldn't be too complex.

"Most people spend 20 to 40 min. finding their way through the maze," he says. "However, we've had people in there for an hour or more. Now we have a tower with a guide who can help people who get stuck or need to get out quickly."

Mandeville charges \$7 admission with extra charges for some attractions.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bozeman Maze, 1121 Mandeville Lane, Bozeman, Mont. 59715 (406 388-7818; toll free 800 688-2907; [info@bozemanmaze.com](mailto:info@bozemanmaze.com); [www.bozemanmaze.com](http://www.bozemanmaze.com)).



Bales lend themselves to complex designs. During construction a remote control quad-copter with a camera is used to see how things are going.