

Vacuum The Air In Your Shop

Welding smoke, diesel smoke, grinding and just about everything else you do in your shop puts dust particles into the air that you'd probably be better off not breathing.

Robert Hughes, owner of Air-Vac Systems, Cedar Falls, Iowa, can help keep your shop air clean. For 25 years, Hughes has been making and selling air cleaners to repair and body shops, factories, welding shops, diesel shops and other places of work. He has been selling to farmers for use in farm shops for several years.

Air-Vac air cleaners are housed in simple 16 gauge steel powder coated cabinets that measure 2 ft. square by 5 ft. long. An electric fan located at one end of the cabinet pulls the dirty air through two filter stages and exhausts the clean air back into the shop.

Air-Vac units use two types of filters. Air enters through a 4" thick pleated pre-filter and continues through an eight pocket 95% efficient bag type filter. The main filter need only be replaced once a year at a cost of \$75. The pleated pre-filter sells for \$12 and is replaced every month or two.

Installing the Air-Vac system is simple. Hughes says to mount it on a shelf or suspend it from the rafters using four chains. Air-Vac low maintenance air cleaners are equipped with a 10' power cord which plugs into any 110 volt receptacle. The unit weighs 160 lbs. and is shipped complete with filters.

The model M-25 Air-Vac will clean the air in a 2,000 sq. ft. building and sells for \$1,849. Simply add more units for larger sizes. This is important because the secret behind air cleaning equipment is having enough equipment to do the job.

Air-Vac Systems is offering a Special to all FARM SHOW readers. Regular price \$1,849. The reader's discount is \$200 so the FARM SHOW price is \$1,649.

"The Air-Vac M-30 5 stage is also available which" removes heavy odors, toxic



gases, chemical vapors and mold (see page 37) .

Air-Vac Systems accept VISA, Mastercard, Discover and American Express or personal check.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Robert Hughes, Air-Vac Systems, Inc., 1514 W. Lone Tree Rd., Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613 (ph 800 234-2473; cell ph 319 231-4711; fax 319 266-2524; rhughes@air-vacsystems.com; www.air-vacsystems.com).

Reader Inquiry No. 73

Cricket Farmer Says Consumers Developing Taste For Insects

Could crickets be coming to a grocery store near you? Maybe, says Kevin Bachhuber, owner of Big Cricket Farms in Youngstown, Ohio. While most of the producers who raise crickets sell them for bait and animal feed, Bachhuber raises crickets for human food.

With a flavor somewhere between cashews and corn, his food-grade crickets are sold to protein powder processors and restaurants. Bachhuber hopes to sell them whole to be eaten like the dry roasted crickets he ate during a month-long stay in Thailand in 2006. There they are served like pretzels at beachfront bars.

"I got used to it being in my diet very quickly," he says. Back in the states, the Wisconsin native realized no one in the U.S. was growing crickets for food, but there was demand for it in protein bars, with companies having to import the crickets.

In April 2014, he started his "farm" in a 5,000 sq. ft. cinder block warehouse in Youngstown, Ohio. He chose that area because of reasonable rent and availability of workers.

One disadvantage is the cost of winter heating, which means the operation scales back during the cold months.

"Crickets do best at 80 to 90 degrees and 80 percent humidity in the beginning," Bachhuber says.

Female crickets lay 100 eggs a day for 2 or 3 weeks. Eggs start out the size of specks and after going through 7 molts, inch-long crickets are ready to harvest in about 5 weeks. The crickets are raised in bins and fed fresh fruits, veggies and grain similar to organic chicken feed. When it's time for harvest, the crickets are chilled to dormancy similar to what wild crickets experience when the weather turns cold. Then they are flash frozen for shipment.

"Just 2 lbs. of food and 1 gal. of water is all that it takes to raise a pound of crickets," Bachhuber says. "Crickets have 1/3 of the fat and about as much protein as ground beef. A 1/4 cup serving has 50 calories and 6 g protein."

It takes about 1,000 crickets to make 1 lb., worth \$25 to \$30/lb. retail.

Demand for organic crickets is strong and helps the profit margin for Bachhuber and his four employees as they figure out the most efficient ways to raise them.

"I think it's going to be a slow adoption from the ag side. Producing insects is a lot



Big Cricket Farms in Youngstown, Ohio, raises crickets in bins for human food, selling them to protein powder processors and restaurants.



Crickets are fed fresh fruits, veggies and grain. They have a flavor somewhere between cashews and corn.

different from anything I've raised before," Bachhuber says.

The market is ahead of production.

"We're having a hard time keeping up with demand. We're producing a fraction of what we could be selling," Bachhuber says.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Big Cricket Farms, P.O. Box 1742, Youngstown, Ohio 44501 (ph 608 345-4567; www.big-cricketfarms.com).