

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).



Kim Curren grows fresh, organic vegetables in refrigerated freight containers. They're housed in an open-sided pole barn, with a roof covered in solar panels.

## Montana Container Farm Grows High-Tech Vegetables

Kim Curren, owner of Shaggy Bear Farms in Bozeman, Mont. says she's found a whole new angle on farming thanks to her containerized growing operation.

Curren purchased 2 turnkey "container farms" from Freight Farms, a Massachusetts company. It uses Agrotek Computer technologies, synchronized lighting, watering, and temperature controls to grow produce. Curren says it creates the perfect growing environment for plants inside the recycled refrigerated freight containers.

Setting up her farm involved more than just the space to do it. Curren says "The entire installation includes the two containers, a pole barn, and a solar array along with all of the electrical and plumbing. It cost about \$200,000." Curren was able to use grant money to fund part of the project.

Curren says leafy plants grow best in this environment, so she raises 15 varieties of lettuce, five varieties of kale, rainbow chard, a variety of Asian greens, arugula, wasabi arugula, red amaranth and sorrel. If she has room she also raises basil, oregano, German winter thyme and Italian parsley.

Each plant variety grows on a different timetable, but usually salable produce is ready within 2 months after planting. And Curren says the real beauty of the system is that fresh, organic produce is available any time of the year, regardless of the amount of sunshine or the weather outside.

Her two full-sized containers are housed in an open-sided pole barn with the roof covered in solar panels. About 4,000 plants are grown in each container. The plants grow horizontally, in 256 hydroponic rails arranged in 4 long rows



Plants grow out of hydroponic rails arranged in long rows that extend the length of each container.

that extend the length of each container. The tall vertical towers look somewhat like a wine glass hanger turned on end and filled with a growing medium. Energy efficient full-spectrum LEDs provide light for plant growth. The temperature inside the containers is maintained at 58 to 68 degrees year-around. A felt strip that runs down through the center of each tower keeps the 4,000 plants evenly moist, using only about 10-gal. of water a day.

Curren says she found her passion for ecologically-friendly farming when she bought produce from organic farms while in college. "I'd soak up as much information as possible from the farmers, and that ultimately led me to start a "farm-to-table" style café. I knew the difficulties of producing organic foods and decided to become a grower myself. The system I have now is extremely efficient and eco-friendly."

Curren's Shaggy Bear Farm has supplied "same-day-as-harvest" organic produce to local restaurants in and around the Bozeman area since 2015.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Shaggy Bear Farm, Bozeman, Montana 59718.

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American Miniature Harlequin sheep are small-to-medium in size with soft, multi-colored medium wool. They have a distinct black/brown and white spot pattern.

## Mini Harlequin Sheep Were "Made In America"

American Miniature Harlequin Sheep, developed by the late Kathleen Sterling from Virginia in the 1980's, can now be tracked by registry. For the past 10 years, Hope Bennett of Paradise Farm in Georgia, along with her associate Shauna Smith, has been registering all sheep bred from Sterling's Black Sheep Farm. "This young breed could have easily fallen apart without the registry work, and all the years of breeding would be lost," says Smith. "It's an important source of accountability."

There are currently about 600 sheep on the registry that meet the American Miniature Harlequin Sheep requirements. About 15 of them are American Purebreds and Bennett says their goal is to reach 200 purebreds in the next five years and then close the registry to foundation-level sheep.

American Miniature Harlequins are small to medium in size with soft, multi-colored medium wool. They're very even-tempered sheep and can produce two litters a year, especially in cooler weather. They are polled, have a distinct black/brown and white spot

pattern and carry the gene for blue eyes.

"Raising Harlequin sheep is similar to raising other breeds, and they're gaining in popularity," says Smith. "Yearling breeding lambs can bring from \$600 to \$1,500, depending on their generation, blood line and coloring."

Harlequin sheep produce rich, multi-colored wool. They're excellent 4-H project animals, although there aren't many show rings that include their category. Smith says the breed can currently be found in about half of the typical U.S. sheep production areas.

"Kathleen Sterling kept amazing records while creating this breed and we owe it to her to keep this breed growing," says Smith.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Hope Bennett, Miniature Harlequin Sheep Registry, P.O. Box 2237, Cleveland, Ga. 30528 (ph 706 348-7279; [www.harlequinsheep.info](http://www.harlequinsheep.info); [registry@minilivestock.com](http://registry@minilivestock.com)).

## His Hobby Is Restoring Steamer Trunks

When Harold Heil rescued an old steamer trunk that his wife's family was going to burn, he had no idea it would be the first of many. Decades later, at almost 90 years of age, the Zearing, Iowa, retired farmer figures he has restored 30 to 40 trunks.

"It's a tedious job. Some have to be almost completely rebuilt," he notes. "But they are pretty nice when I get done with them."

Heil finds most of the trunks at auctions and flea markets, and says he pays no more than \$40 for them. He prefers to keep the more than 100-year-old trunks as original as possible.

Though they are typically made of hardwoods, some have decayed and need to be repaired with plywood. The inside paper covering usually needs to be removed.

"I take them outside and soak them to get the paper off. Sometimes I take the trunk to the car wash in the back of my pickup," Heil explains.

After the trunk dries, he restores the necessary wood parts and removes rust with a rust removal product. He replaces the old paper with cotton cloth glued onto paper before gluing it to the inside of the trunk. If salvageable, he oils the leather strapping and handles several times to soften them up. If they are rotted, he purchases new 1/4-in. thick leather from a local Amish man. His daughter orders hinges, locks and other parts from an online store.



Harold Heil restores old steamer trunks like this one, keeping them as original as possible.

"The biggest challenge is painting them," Heil says. He bleaches the wood and cleans it with a steel brush before topping it with a clear sealant. He paints other parts of the trunk that were originally painted. He makes new trays to go inside.

"Some trunks are big enough to crawl in and curl up. I haven't had two that were alike," he says. Heil has given away most of the trunks he has restored to family and friends, who use them as decorative furniture.

At his age, Heil notes he has no plans to restore trunks as a business. But he has eight of them that still need restoring, and with the help of his daughter, Dee, he will work on them at his own pace.

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