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## Custom On-Farm Slaughter Service

Lee Boyles travels to farms to provide his custom slaughter and processing. His on-farm service eliminates stress on the animal and its meat. It also eliminates the need for small farmers to hire out transport.

"Animals get stressed when loaded and trucked to a slaughter plant," says Boyles. "I go to the pasture and take the animal with no added stress. They are looking at me as happy as can be."

A few minutes after Boyles shoots the animal, he lifts the carcass into the air with his crane-equipped truck. As it bleeds out, he removes the hide, disembowels the animal and places it in a former stainless steel bulk milk tank, also on the truck. The customer can also request removal of the offal and hide.

"I have a 3,500-lb. crane and a 600-gal. bulk tank," says Boyles. "I can pick up an entire carcass and put it in the tank without quartering it. The stainless steel tank gets cleaned and disinfected after every use."

Boyles started doing on-farm slaughter by accident while doing custom metal fabrication. A local butcher asked him to build a trailer to use for mobile slaughter.

"He had a few animals get away from him and asked me to come and dispatch them," says Boyles. "Before I knew it, I was doing the dispatching and halving and quartering the animals. He still took care of the processing. After six years I bought his butcher shop."

With the purchase, Boyles has little time for metal fabrication. In addition to selling a wide variety of federally inspected cuts of fresh meat at The Meat Smyth shop, Boyles and his wife, Ellen, also provide full custom processing of beef, hogs, goats, sheep, bear and other wild game.

The on-farm slaughter business exploded as COVID-19 hit. "In previous years I would do four to six beef animals a month," says Boyles. "Last summer I was doing that many each week."

Boyles thinks enhanced meat quality plays a role in business growth. "I am 36, and even I remember when beef tasted better," he says. "I think a lot of people remember the flavor and are coming back for it."

Boyles has a license from the state of Wis. that lets him do on-farm slaughter. His normal service area is within an hour or so of his shop, but he has gone farther.

"Recently I drove 2 1/2 hrs. to slaughter an animal, as there was no one offering the service in that area," says Boyles. "I charge a flat fee of \$100 for a beef animal or \$50 for a hog in our regular service area but add a mileage charge beyond it."

Boyles is limited to working only in Wis., as other states have their own regulations.

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## Goat Milk Used In Baby Formula

Medical doctor and author Dr. Nikos Linardakis teamed up with dentist and farmer Dr. James Esselman to produce what might be the first-ever goat-based baby formula.

Together they formed the Bène (pronounced ba-nay) Baby Company in 2019, headquartered near Nekoosa, Wis.

Although there's no perfect substitute for mother's milk, Dr. Nikos says their formula uses goat milk because its composition is much closer to breast milk than cow milk. "It has smaller fat molecules, less beta-casein, and more vitamins, minerals and proteins needed for optimal development. The whey protein in goat milk also makes our formula more easily digestible for a toddler. The Bène Baby formula uses natural lactose to promote healthy childhood weight management."

Dr. Nikos says even though it takes 10 goats to produce the amount of milk that one cow does, which makes it more expensive, goat milk is becoming more readily available because more farmers are adding goats to their herds or changing over completely to goats.

The company's original goal was to produce an infant formula for babies up to 12 months, but the pandemic meant that the clinical trials required by the FDA couldn't be completed. Currently, the company's



**New goat milk formula is closer in composition to breast milk than cow milk and is more digestible for toddlers.**

profits are now being put into research, so when the pandemic lessens, Dr. Nikos will ramp up their infant formula approval process. In the meantime, Bène Baby Company continues to provide its toddler formula for ages 12 months and older, a new market for Wisconsin's dairy industry.

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Dairy containers can be customized. This 45-ft. unit shows pasteurizers, coolers and a bottle filler.

## Milking Parlor, Creamery "In A Box"

Don's Dairy Supply is building dairies in shipping containers. Whether a milking parlor, milk house or dairy processing plant, each is customized to the needs and goals of the buyer. The company has been building them for about seven years and has shipped them to 17 states, from Fla. to Colo.

"Our first one was a milking parlor for goats," says Brook White, Don's Dairy Supply. "The customer had bought a herd of goats but had no buildings or equipment. The week after the container arrived at his farm, he ordered a creamery to process the milk."

Since then, the company has built around 30 systems in 20-ft., 40-ft. and 45-ft. containers. Containers can be single-use, such as for butter, cheese or ice cream. Or they can be multi-purpose, such as a goat milking parlor and milk house in a single 45-ft. container. Prices vary from \$50,000 to \$150,000, depending on size and equipment.

Containers are retrofitted to the same features used in building housed installations. Interiors include concrete floors, stainless drains, pvc paneling for walls and ceilings, and filtered air.

She notes that products to be made and the scale of the operation are the biggest factors in designing a system. However, goals and budget are equally important.

"We like to have a conversation about

where the customer wants to start and where they want to be in a few years," says White. "There are many ways to start small and grow as you go. You don't want to outgrow your container in six months."

The company works with the dairy inspector of the customer's home state to design an acceptable system. White points out that rules differ from state to state, or even from region to region in N. Y. state.

Containerized milking parlors tend to be designed for milking goats and sheep. However, the creameries are used for any kind of milk.

"For a lot of people, they are a good option for getting started," says White. "Benefits include portability, which is important when renting a property. It is not taxed as a new building and is easier to clean than a large plant."

"Some people get into dairying and then decide they don't like making cheese or whatever," says White. "Our containerized systems can be resold as a complete unit. We've had two customers put their systems up for sale, and they have sold quickly."

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## Her Feed Sack Handbags Are A Big Hit

From the minute she saw a stack of feed sacks at an Iowa farm auction, Selina Seet envisioned them made into handbags.

"The graphics, colors and durable cotton that's easy to sew. It's fun. It's happy. You can't replicate them," she says.

With a couple of decades' experience designing and making high-end bags in Singapore, then a line of bags made from Japanese kimonos, Seet started collecting feed, seed and flour sacks made 70 to 80 years ago. At her first show in Los Angeles, she sold her first bag to a woman who lived on an Iowa farm.

But rural folks aren't her only fans. "Urban people love the nostalgia part of it. And those doing backyard chickens like the chicken feed sacks. In LA, customers just like them for the images," Seet says.

Small bags range from \$39 to \$65 and other bags start at \$130. She sells them on Etsy and at shows and fairs. For example, she has a line of bags for Case IH and creates new canvas bag designs each year for large state fairs such as Minn. and Iowa. Best sellers in each state tend to follow the type of seed sold in each state - from Pioneer to Dekalb to Funk Farms.

Finding bags that were made into the 1950's is getting more challenging, but she buys them from antique dealers, private collectors, and others who find sacks for her.



**Vintage feed and flour sacks are used to create fashionable bags.**

Sacks with pictures of horses and dogs are the hardest to find.

"I work with all types of things - seed and feed sacks, ammo bags, vintage hankies, aprons, mechanic rags - whatever I can cut," she says.

"It's just so satisfying to transform a product that would otherwise be stored away in a barn for years and never taken out," she says on her Etsy description.

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