

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.

Custom Feedlot Makes "Humus" From Manure

Olsen Custom Farms of Hendricks, Minn. has invested nearly \$1 million in a composting system that promises a more efficient and profitable way of converting cattle manure from their 3,500-head feedlot into crop fertilizer. The system produces "humus compost" with 40 percent less moisture than wet manure. When applied to cropland at rates as low as 1/2 to 1 ton/acre, it can provide benefits similar to uncomposted manure applied at much higher rates.

Manure from the feedlot is hauled to a nearby 14-acre, clay-lined composting site. It's piled in 36 separate windrows, each measuring 14 ft. wide at the base, 6 1/2 ft. high and 160 ft. long. Windrows start as pairs, then are combined after 6 weeks

when volume is reduced by half. Rows are checked daily for temperature, moisture and CO₂, then turned, sometimes daily, using an Aeromaster PT-170 compost turner.

The turner is pulled through the windrow at a snail's pace speed of just 1/3 mph. The turner aerates and blends the material and adds water, clay and inoculant microbes. The turner drum rotates at 150 to 300 rpm. Material temperature is monitored daily with the goal of maintaining it at 130 to 160 degrees.

"The inoculants, along with 10 to 15 percent added clay by volume, help transform the material into humus, the dark organic material that forms in soil when plant and animal matter decays," says Kurt Dagele, the lead agronomist at Olsen Custom Farms. He



Olsen Farms turns feedlot manure into "humus compost" that has 40 percent less moisture than wet manure. Its benefits are similar to uncomposted manure applied at much higher rates.

says they've obtained a research grant to study the nutrient benefits of the humus compost on various crops. Since the composting system is new, they'll be spreading the finished product for the first time on seed oats and soybean fields following harvest this summer and fall. Over time, Dagele says they'll be able to determine optimum humus-compost application rates for different crops. He expects that optimum application rates may range from 1/2 to 2 tons/acre.

Dagele is excited by the nutrient profile of the finished humus product, which will be rich in micronutrients and will deliver 900 lbs. of carbon per ton to the soil. "By adding that much carbon to the soil, we will

improve the cation-exchange capacity and also improve the soil's moisture-holding capacity," he says. "We're building up the soil so much more than the standard practice of simply applying N-P-K in mineral form."

Their current plan is to apply the humus compost to 25 to 30 percent of Olsen Custom Farms' crop acres. At the same time, the company will be researching other markets for the humus-compost finished product, including marketing the product to the horticultural industry.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Olsen Custom Farms, 1355 300th St., Hendricks, Minn. 56136 (www.olsencustomfarms.com).

Home-Grown Spreadsheets Grew Into Profitable Farm Business

Chris Barron's farm consulting business got its start on his family's farm when he started doing cost analysis spread sheets for his father. "My spreadsheets for crops and hog production were on one page, because my dad said they had to be easy to explain and understand," Barron says. Eventually he started sharing his ideas with neighbors and the family's seed customers, who quickly realized how valuable they were.

"Our focus is on spreadsheet tools and consulting services that help determine the real profitability of crops, livestock and equipment investments," says Chris Barron of Ag View Solutions. Barron's clients farm a few hundred to several thousand acres and

like his approach because it's based on their own data, not generalized information from wide-ranging historical sources.

One example is the Equipment Analysis spreadsheet, which Barron says provides extremely accurate costs/acre because the farmer enters the exact value of his machinery and how much it costs to operate each year. The spreadsheet helps determine efficiencies, cost management, and if he should trade for newer, more productive machinery. Other spreadsheets range from a cover crop calculator to a cost-of-production breakdown for all crops that a farmer grows. "Knowing costs per acre and by crop helps a farmer make informed decisions based



"Our spreadsheet tools and consulting services help determine the real profitability of crops, livestock and equipment investments," says Chris Barron of Ag View Solutions.

on facts rather than just generalizations," Barron says. "We have more than 25 years of experience, input and analysis built into these user-friendly tools. They're built by farmers for farmers."

The Ag Vision staff includes Barron, his wife Alissa, and Shay Foulke. In addition to farming and developing the management

tools, Ag Vision produces safety podcasts and blogs on various topics. Barron and Foulke are frequent speakers at ag seminars.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Ag View Solutions, 3238 Jamestown Ave., Rowley, Iowa 52329 (ph 319 533-5703; www.agviewsolutions.com).

Experts Offer On-Farm Grain Drill Repair

Need service and repair of your Deere air seeder or box drill? Call No Till Drill Services and Repair (NTD). The Minnesota-based firm has crews on the road in a growing number of states and ships parts throughout the country.

"On any given day, we can have our guys as far west as Montana and as far south as Arkansas," says Karen Dukek, co-founder of NTD with her husband Jimmy. "We started small in 2016 with just my husband and son. We now have salesmen/consultants and a team of technicians who are on the road nearly all the time. They all drive Ford F-350 diesels, pull into the farm, and go to work."

The company prides itself on not only servicing equipment on-farm, but also in helping operators achieve better performance with a reduced cost of ownership. Instead of transporting equipment to a dealership, an NTD representative visits the farm, consults on options for better performance and prolonged maintenance intervals, and provides a free inspection of the air seeder. Once needs are determined, mechanics

are scheduled for service and rebuilding the air seeder. NTD works on Deere 750, 1850, 1860, 1900, and 1995 to 1990 models as well as providing extended-wear quality parts for the CCS drill.

By early March, requests for NTD teams to visit farms were already scheduled a month and a half out. While late winter and spring are NTD's busiest time, Dukek says the crew stays busy year-round.

"A lot of farmers want to get their equipment work done over the winter," says Dukek. "We have a flat rate, charging by the row unit and depending on what the drill needs. There is no mileage fee."

The young company stays busy with parts as well. While they use extended-wear aftermarket vendor and OEM parts, NTD is making a growing number of parts themselves.

"My husband wanted the best for the machines he worked on, so he started designing his own parts," says Dukek. "He and his team of engineers have developed a number of reliable parts. We offer a 3-year, 30,000-acre warranty on parts and labor."



No Till Drill Services And Repair specializes in improved parts for closing wheel and press wheel pivots. Photo shows a Deere 1900 box drill rebuild.

The company specializes in improved parts for the closing wheel and press wheel pivots. A common problem stems from cavities housing the pin and bushings not being well sealed. Dust penetrates the pivot cavity, mixes with the grease, and causes the factory-installed seals to break down, letting in more dust.

NTD's solution is a heavy-duty, extended-wear pivot kit with hardened steel pins, bushings and poly seals designed with grease overflow channels. The bushing has a step down on the end that faces the outside of the cavity. Once the bushing and pin are installed, the poly seal is seated inside the cavity, but over the bushing, to keep dust and dirt from mixing with the grease. This reduces the need to grease to once a year or every 5,000

to 7,000 acres.

Other NTD products include a boot kit to reduce slop in the boot pivot and provide extended life, thanks to the stainless steel bushing. The NTD heavy-duty, universal adjuster shaft fork is half the cost of OEM depth handles and is powder coated for better rust prevention. The company also offers alternative gauge wheels, cruising closer wheels and more.

"We've shipped parts as far as Maryland and continue to branch out. We go wherever we need to go," says Dukek.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, No Till Drill, Gonvick, Minn. 56644 (ph 218 308-5593; karenntd97@gmail.com; www.nottilldrill.com).