

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.

Student Turns His Hobby Into A Part Time Business

Blake Larson is like many high school and college-age students who use their FFA experiences to build leadership and life skills for a productive future. As a South Dakota high school senior, Larson uses his FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE) project to plan, document, and manage a part-time taxidermy business.

Larson has hunted since he was 12. After he harvested his first deer, his dad showed him how to de-flesh a deer skull and make a European mount. After the following deer season, he was doing the work himself and soon had friends and relatives asking him to do their deer skulls. The word-of-mouth promotion earned him work on 21 skulls over that second winter. Since then, he's done mostly deer with an occasional elk or antelope.

Though he'd been doing European mounts for several years, it wasn't until his FFA supervisor suggested it that Larson's taxidermy became his SAE project. Like others in FFA, his project is a supervised, work-based experience done outside of school hours to help develop industry and career-based competencies. He documents all aspects of his work, including procuring registered animal heads. He details his process for producing the European mounts and all the time and costs associated with



Larson uses his taxidermy skills in an FFA Supervised Ag Experience project to document and manage his part-time hobby.

the work. After the skulls are cleaned and whitened, he'll return them to his customers or mount them on custom plaques. He wants to do everything legally, so keeping track of his work has been a great experience. "I could get into a lot of trouble if I'm not doing it right," he says.

Larson's supervisor says he's doing a great job on his SAE, and it's been a good learning experience for him. Larson says he's interested in learning to preserve and mount fish and pheasants, but he probably won't do full head and shoulder deer mounts. He plans to attend college in 2024 to major in ag business or education.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Blake Larson, Wessington Springs, S.D.

He Specializes In Magnetos

If you have a magneto that needs fixing or need a magneto core, Leroy Blank says he can help you. At 32, he's younger than many magneto experts, but he's had enough work to keep his business, Quality Magneto Service, full-time for the last 2 years.

While his background is working with hit-and-miss engines, he also works with magnetos on tractors, old vehicles, and pre-1915 Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

"I make all the parts and manufacture John Deere magnetos. And I do repairs, rebuilds, and make parts for unavailable older parts," Blank says.

His rural Lititz, Penn., shop is stocked with thousands of magneto cores, and he knows how to work on older magnetos with coils in the armature.

"I have a full line of machining equipment and can make parts in-house, so I don't have to outsource. And all my rebuilds have new coils," Blank says about his work.

Except for aircraft versions, he works on all types of magnetos. Blank ships and



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receives magnetos from all over the U.S. Turnaround is usually within 6 weeks but can be longer during show season when he attends swap meets.

Blank says to call and leave a message about what you need, and he'll get back to you.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Leroy Blank, 250 E. Meadow Valley Rd., Lititz, Penn. 17543 (ph 717-442-4003).

On-Farm Distillery Develops Specialty Corn Hybrid

Whiskey Acres farm started in the 1930s as a corn and soybean operation. Fifth-generation farmer Jamie Walter returned to the property around 2000 when he left his law career to help his father, Jim, diversify operations. "We needed to figure out how to make more money on less acreage because Chicago sprawl was taking up nearby farmland," Jamie says. "So, in 2012, we investigated products with higher value, such as popcorn and a bakery. Neither felt right."

Jamie found his answer through experience in the wine industry. He noticed the growing demand for artisan wines produced from unique grape varieties. "This raised a central question for me. Could we use corn varieties in the same way to affect whiskey's flavor profile?" He decided to find out, and the Whiskey Acres Distilling Co. was born.

The Walters hired Dave Pickerell, former master distiller for Maker's Mark, to teach them what he knew. By 2014, the farm was producing its own spirits. "Our focus has always been whiskey—specifically bourbon, which legally must contain at least 51 percent corn," says Jamie. Today, the Distillery manages a staff of 35 and sells its spirits in almost 1,000 locations nationwide, including Chicago-based bars and restaurants. Most weekends, the farm hosts tasting tours, live music, and a rotating collection of food trucks. It welcomes approximately 24,000 visitors a year, many of whom have never been on a farm. "We added the distillery to support the farm; now the farm supports the distillery," says Jamie. "It's grown far beyond our early expectations."

In the decade since its founding, Whiskey Acres Distillery has earned a reputation for unique flavor profiles, especially spirits made from specialty and heirloom corn. The farm is in the process of releasing the world's first hybrid seed corn bred specifically for whiskey. It's patent-pending, and the farm is rapidly scaling production. "We've experimented with glass gem, blue popcorn, and other varieties," Jamie says. "When we release these whiskeys, they tend to sell out in



Whiskey Acres farm is in the process of releasing the world's first hybrid seed corn bred specifically for whiskey. It's patent-pending, and the farm is rapidly scaling production.

hours. We're also about to release a maple crème bourbon, and I'm pretty excited about that one."

That's not to say managing a farm and distillery is easy. Regulations and taxes are abundant at the local, state, and federal levels. It's also been an adjustment for Jamie to manage so many employees. "I still get on the combine, but many more people are managing [the farm] these days."

Still, Whiskey Acres remains as close to its farm roots as ever. Everything distilled is grown right on the farm—including corn, wheat, rye, and barley. "Unlike other large grain farms, we get to meet the people who consume our product," Jamie explains. "We find our sustainability story resonates with people, and it's crucial for us to tell it."

Shipping is available through www.seelbachs.com for a variety of states.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Whiskey Acres Distilling Co., 11504 Keslinger Rd., DeKalb, Ill. 60115 (ph 844-494-4753; info@whiskeyacres.com; www.whiskeyacres.com).

Handy Online Storefront For Sellers

Airmart is an online selling tool designed to help farmers and other small businesses sell directly within their communities. Branded as "the best E-commerce platform for food vendors," Airmart offers options for creating a pop-up selling front or a full store that stays available long term. Airmart is available across all 50 U.S. states and hosts over 6,000 merchants, leading to over \$100 million in transactions.

The platform eliminates the need for a standalone website, and vendors can begin selling immediately after setup. All that's necessary is to give your store a name and then a limitless number of photos, product details, and prices per unit, all of which can be edited at any time. It's also possible to generate a shop using AI within seconds. Store options include "pop-up stores" with just a store title and products or "full stores," allowing payment options and pickup/delivery methods.

Signing up for a storefront is free, as Airmart only collects a percentage of successful sales. Paid features are optional and include customer messaging, marketing promotions, and delivery and route planning tools. Pricing varies but starts at \$16 a month for extra features like ten additional



App is used by food vendors and offers fast and easy setup.

store themes, an analytics dashboard, a customer database, and more. Those in the San Francisco Bay area also get access to Airmart's Delivery Network and route planning through integration with Onfleet. This service radius is expected to expand in the future.

Customer reviews highlight how easy Airmart is to use, especially on mobile devices. Many appreciate the flexibility of allowing clients to pay via PayPal, Venmo, or Zelle, along with credit cards.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Airmart (support@goairmart.com; www.goairmart.com).