



Wells plants dandelions in rows and then harvests them with a machine that cuts them off just above the ground. He harvests just the greens.

"THEY'RE ABSOLUTELY DELICIOUS"

This Farm Family Raises Dandelions

Most people think of dandelions as stubborn weeds, but Adrian R. Wells, Wilton, Maine, considers cultivated dandelion greens a delicacy.

Wells, with the help of his family, grows dandelions and then cans them in a small factory for shipment to nationwide chain stores. They sell the dandelions under the "Belle of Maine" label.

"Dandelion greens are one of the best-tasting vegetables you can grow," says Wells. "They taste like spinach but are a little more bitter. They're great with butter, vinegar, or cheese sauce. Other producers raise dandelions for the fresh market, but as far as I know we're the only ones who can them."

Wells is proof that one person's weed can be another's livelihood. His company, W.S. Wells & Son, was founded in 1896 by his grandfather. Wells and his son Adrian, Jr., represent the third and fourth generations. "As far as we know we're the only company in the world that cans dandelion greens," says Wells, noting that the company also cans fiddleheads, a gourmet vegetable that grows wild, and beet greens. From 1911 to 1929, the cannery discontinued dandelions because of a diminishing wild supply in nearby regions.

Through years of trial and error, Wells learned how to grow dandelions domestically. Every year he uses a 1-row planter to seed 1 1/2 to 2 acres of Italian Thick-leaved dandelions, a hybrid, in long, straight rows.

He buys the seed from a New Jersey company which imports it from Holland. He harvests the crop with a machine that cuts the dandelions off just above the ground. "We harvest them when they're 10 in. tall. They grow right back so we get four or five crops per season," says Wells. "The harvested dandelion greens are quick steamed and packed by hand into cans. The key to growing dandelions is lots of moisture, with warm days and cool nights. Growing dandelions takes a lot of manpower because we have to hand weed everything, and because we irrigate as much as possible. We don't harvest the yellow blossoms but they're absolutely delicious when dipped in batter and deep fried. They also make wonderful jelly and wine."

He sells more than 100,000 cans of the "Belle of Maine" dandelions annually. The label on each can reads simply: "Ingredients: Dandelions, Water". Wells says sales have held fairly steady over the years.

The Wells family has sold out its 1989 production and won't have any more dandelion greens to sell until next June. A brochure offering dandelion recipes, including such delicacies as dandelion spoonbread and dandelion quiche, is available. Send a pre-addressed stamped envelope.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, W.S. Wells & Son, High St., P.O. Box 109, Wilton, Maine 04294 (ph 207 645-2117).



When Eberhardt butchers one of her goats, she "harvests" the fat for soap.

NECK BENDS 180° AND LEGS GO OUT AT RIGHT ANGLES

She Raises The World's Rarest Breed Of Dog

"It's the rarest dog in the world - there are only about 500 in the world - and it has a number of traits that aren't found in any other breed," says Stephanie Stober, Goodrich, N. Dak., one of only a handful of "Lundehund" breeders in the world.

The Lundehund is a small dog, standing only 13 in. high and weighing 12 to 15 lbs. It's an old dog breed that was noted in written accounts as early as 1432 by Italian fishermen, and some people think it survived the last ice age. Years ago in Norway, an owner's wealth could be judged by how many Lundehunds he possessed. The breed nearly became extinct several times - in 1963 there were only 6 left in the world. The breed is now on the road to recovery. "The Lundehund is a friendly, lovable, gentle, and playful dog that's good with children," says Stephanie. "Its coat is dense but quite short and easy to maintain."

The dog takes its name from the Norwegian word "lunde", which means puffin bird. The puffin, a penguin-like bird, breeds in large colonies in caves and underground passages in steep mountain hills on the coast of Norway. Among the old Norsemen puffins were considered a delicacy, but it was a difficult bird to catch. The Lundehund was bred to get into narrow passages and caves, pull out the birds, and deliver them alive to its master.

The Lundehund is able to get into small passageways because it has an extremely flexible neck joint which enables it to bend its head 180° right down onto its back. It also has a very moveable shoulder-joint,



Stober says Lundehund dogs make friendly, playful pets for children.

which allows it to stretch its front legs out at right angles to its sides. Other distinguishing features include very strong legs with at least 6 toes on each foot, and the ability to shut its ears to protect against dust and moisture.

Stober has no Lundehunds for sale but she does sell limited numbers of llamas, miniature sheep, and other exotic animals.

Contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Stephanie Stober, Rt. 1, Box 5, Goodrich, N. Dak. 58444.

CONTAINS LANOLIN

Goat Raiser Makes Soap From Goat Fat

By Wally E. Schulz

"When I butcher a goat for table use, I save the fat for soap-making," says Jo Eberhardt, who raises a herd of Saanen goats near Elkhorn, Wis. "Goat fat contains lanolin, an ingredient that is much sought after for making soap. It brings a high price on the commercial market."

Here's how Eberhardt goes about making soap from goat fat:

First, she selects a pot for cooking the goat fat, along with beef fat "extender", on the stove. Half of the total poundage is goat fat and other is beef. She uses 6 lbs. of fat for a standard batch.

"You must use a stainless steel or enamel pot. Never use aluminum since it will react to the lye. I use a big wooden spoon or paddle to stir the solution."

In a separate enamel pan, Eberhardt mixes 6 cuts of goat's milk with a 13-oz. can of lye, plus five heaping teaspoons of Borax. "I also add a cup of sugar or a cup of honey and two cups of coarse oatmeal. The goat's milk gives the soap a brown color and the oatmeal gives it a flaky appearance. If you

want white soap, use water instead of milk."

When the fat is melted on the stove, she takes it off and lets it cool until it is the same temperature as the mixture in the enamel pan. Then she adds the entire 6 lbs. of goat fat to the mix, along with about 2 oz. of glycerine. She stirs the mixture for about 15 min., until it feels like jelly.

"When it begins to form a scum around the sides of the container, it's ready to put into a mold or container. I pour it into molds made of cardboard. The molds must be lined with thin, wet cloth to keep the soap from sticking. Or you can pour the mix into a stainless steel pan coated with mineral oil. I cut the bars after the molds have set for 6 hrs."

Eberhardt figures it costs about 6 cents a bar to make the soap. "You pay 50 cents or more to buy soap this good in a store. The lanolin and oatmeal make it a real beauty soap since both ingredients are widely used in cosmetics," she says, noting that she sells or gives much of the soap to friends and neighbors.