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MG8A.1

This game bird enterprise budget is based on a Kansas farm operation involving two partners who are friends. They are both large crop farmers with a love for the outdoors. As a secondary enterprise, they operate a commercial game bird service with 3,200 acres permitted as a controlled shooting area. They offer release hunts of quail, pheasant and chuckars, a mountain grouse that is very challenging to hunt. By operating a controlled shooting area they can legally operate from mid October (they don't start before this because of farming conflict) through March 31st. They also offer wild bird hunts on additional acres.

They are in their third year of operation and their customers have increased dramatically through this time. The first year they had twenty hunters. By the second year they had 140 hunters and this past year they had 260 hunters.

Services and Prices

They offer guided full day hunts (8:30 AM to 3:30 PM) with two coffee breaks and lunch. The client has the choice of using either their own dogs or the service will supply the dogs for them. Birds are cleaned for the client as part of the base charge. Transportation from the farm to the hunting locations is also provided. No overnight or other services are offered. For this hunt \$200 per gun per day is charged. Half-day hunts are \$140.

Advertising

They have brochures, a web site, and attend outdoor shows promoting their service. But they attribute most of their increase in numbers to word of mouth from satisfied clients. Their web site cost \$500 and it has received 10,000 hits. This averages 5 cents per contact. They also belong to the Kansas Sport Hunting Association as well as advertise in other publications. "Basically," they say, "it's all in who you know!"

Investment in the Operation

	Example Farm	Your Farm
(6) heaters @ \$300 per heater	\$ 1,800	_____
(4) 150'x100' bird pens and construction	\$28,000	_____
(2) 150'x30' bird pens and construction	\$ 8,000	_____
(3) 50'x100' bird pens and construction	\$10,500	_____
Waterers	\$ 500	_____
Bird dogs	\$ 4,500	_____
Total investment to date	\$53,700	_____

The above figures do not include pickups, and other normal farm equipment.

Production Costs

Labor hours for raising the birds are calculated at .05 hours per bird. They value a raised pheasant at \$8.50, chuckar at \$5.50, and quail at \$2.75. To plan their bird needs, they estimate 10 live birds per hunter.

Pheasant chicks cost 88 cents each. They will eat \$4 of feed, and death loss runs about 10%. They are started 8 months before they intend to use the birds for hunting. (On an interesting side note, “peepers” are placed on each pheasant in the outdoor pens. These “peepers” are plastic clips that snap onto the beak and block the bird from seeing straight ahead. This prevents the birds from pecking each other to death, something that is a real threat. But the pens look really, really cool with these birds walking around with what appears to be multi-colored sunglasses on!)

Chuckars chicks cost 68 cents each. They will eat \$3 of feed and death loss runs 40%. They are also started 8 months before release.

Quail chicks cost 30 cents each. They will eat \$1 of feed and death loss runs 40%. Quail are started 8 months before release.

Producer Comments

To be successful in this enterprise, a person needs to have a knack for managing wildlife and he or she needs to be there every day. That’s what works good about a partnership such as the farm in this example. Someone can always be there.

They seem to find new diseases every year. They have found only about three veterinarians in the United States who work with game birds. In their experience managing the birds takes a lot of hours.

The farmers in this game bird enterprise have found tips really improve profitability. They also discovered they meet really great people.

You have to really like what you are doing conclude these farmers. One of them said, “I always loved hunting but after 3 months of guiding every day it gets to the point that I can’t hardly go out there. The last thing I want to do now is go out and hunt on my own for recreation.”

Enterprise Budget

Income

	Example Farm	Your Farm
250 guns @ \$200 each	\$50,000	_____

Cash Bird Sales

3000 pheasants @ \$8.50	\$25,500	_____
1000 chuckars @ \$5.50	\$ 5,500	_____
3000 quail @ \$2.75	\$ 8,250	_____

Total Income	\$89,250	_____
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Bird Expenses

Breeder permit	\$ 100	_____
Purchased birds (6,000 pheasants, 2,000 chuckars, 5,500 quail) ...	\$ 8,290	_____
Peepers for pheasants (6,000 @ .60)	\$ 3,600	_____
Purchased feed	\$28,500	_____
Wood chips	\$ 250	_____
Electricity	\$ 600	_____
Propane	\$ 500	_____
Repairs	\$ 1,000	_____

Total Expenses	\$42,840	_____
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Guided Hunting Expenses

KDWP controlled shooting area permits 7 @ \$200 each	\$ 1,400	_____
Guide permit 3 @ \$100	\$ 300	_____
Liability insurance	\$ 1,200	_____
Meals 250 @ \$7 per gun	\$ 1,750	_____
Dog maintenance	\$ 2,400	_____
Supplies	\$ 1,000	_____
Repairs for guide hunts	\$ 2,000	_____
Advertising	\$ 2,000	_____
Web site expense	\$ 500	_____
Gasoline	\$ 2,000	_____

Total hunting expenses	\$14,550	_____
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Net profit over variable expenses	\$31,860	_____
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Investment Dollar Use Value

\$53,700 over 7 years @ 8%	\$10,314	_____
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Net after investment dollar use value	\$21,546	_____
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The labor hours are calculated at 1,250 hours. The net return of \$21,546 divided into an estimated 1,250 hours of labor equals \$17.24 per hour.

The large amount of bird sales in the budget reflects a growing operation. Last year they hosted 250 guns, which was twice the previous year. They want to be prepared if the guns would double again. If this projection proves to not happen, there are other game bird hunting operations in the area who will buy their birds.

This enterprise budget was developed by Donn Teske. Donn is a farmer and FINPACK analyst. Funding for this management guide came from USDA's Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program.