

Starting a Goat Milk Soap and Lotion Business

By: Manning and Stratton Puska, Red House Dairy Goats

After our last kidding season, we were milking twice a day and our family was enjoying all the raw goat milk. We knew about the benefits of drinking goat milk and have spent a lot of time researching other uses for it. We wanted to start a business and decided goat milk soaps and lotions were something we could do from our farm. With the support and guidance of our parents we began coming up with recipes and test products; trying them on friends and family. Once we believed we had a couple of great products we wrote our business plan with our parents and began to put our ideas into action.

Our first steps were to get all the legal and accounting to-do's set up. We set up a DBA under our farm as Red House Dairy Goats. Our farm, Red House Farm, LLC, was already registered with the State of Texas and we already had a Tax ID.

We sent in our Sales and Use Tax Resale and Exemption Certificates to the companies we would be buying supplies from. We use QuickBooks to track all our sales and expenses so that we know if we are profitable and it helps when we file our income taxes as part of our farm.

We also researched how soaps and lotions are regulated in the United States. Soaps are regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission if it is true soap. Lotions are regulated by the Federal Drug Administration under the cosmetics laws. The FDA says that if lotions are just to moisturize the skin it is considered a cosmetic but if you advertise it to treat any disease than it is a drug and has a lot more regulations that must be followed.



Stratton, left, and Manning Puska put their excess goat milk plan into action.



Once we started making our first batches of soaps and lotions, we were ready to make our first sales. We set up a booth at our local school co-op and my dad had a few people at his work interested. We were excited to find out other people really liked our products and we had our first sales just before Thanksgiving. People were excited to give them as Christmas gifts. We received positive feedback but the biggest take away was that we needed a store online and a website to tell customers about our farm and our products. You can now find us online at redhousedairygoats.com.



Manning and Stratton Puska at Red House Dairy Goats

Our next step was to build out space to work. We quickly ran out of room in our kitchen and with the help of family we turn our milk room into a production room. This was expensive, but we all agreed that if we were going to build our business it would take some investment. We bought stainless steel sinks, tables, and shelves. We closed in, insulated, heated, and air conditioned the new milk room because we spend a lot of time in there.

Our most challenging areas were packaging and shipping. A lot of time and money was invested in design and printing of labels and packaging. Shipping is expensive but we found



The most popular Red House scents are lavender, peppermint, warm flannel and comfort run.

several online services that offered postage and shipping labels that were 30-40 percent cheaper than USPS counter rates.

Now that Christmas has passed, we are focusing on marketing our soaps and lotions to a larger market. We are starting locally and hope to expand. We are targeting farmer's markets, local stores and fairs. We would love to find a local retailer that would display our products. We are also on Facebook and Instagram where we share information about our soaps and lotions as well as our farm life.

Our short-term goals are to reinvest and grow our business and add new products to our store. We also want to get more involved in milk testing and showing our goats. Our long-term goals are to one day hand down our business to our brothers and sisters when we start college.

Manning & Stratton Puska

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