

WORLD OF WORK

Website to Visit:

<http://www.nebraskacentrepreneur.com/>

Explore, Become Educated on Alternative Agriculture Opportunities

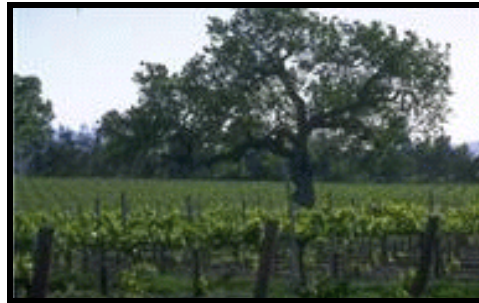
In this economy, more people are looking into alternative agricultural opportunities.

Alternative agriculture in this venture includes non-traditional agriculture crops, such as woody florals, grapes, market vegetables, hazelnuts and more. Even flowers and other ornamental products have become a viable option for producers, not just edible products. These crops require intense labor, most done by hand, including weeding, watering and other necessary production tasks. There are hopes for increased mechanization suited for many of these crops in the future. There has only been one mechanical grape harvester brought into the state to help reduce the manual harvest labor.

This new venture into alternative agriculture has gained momentum in urban settings with people who came from the rural areas who want to go back to their rural roots and produce a high-valued crop that can help defray costs and bolster their income. Traditional agriculture producers are doing this, too, for themselves or even providing the opportunity for their spouse, children, or grandchildren.

However, markets have not been established for these alternatives just yet. Those interested in taking on a new endeavor should do their homework, realize it is an emerging endeavor, and create relationships with people already involved in alternative agriculture. The key to success is education and

planning. It is recommended the first money people spend toward an alternative crop should go toward education about that crop. By doing so, they will get a better idea



of issues relating to production and decide if it is right for them.

Create a game plan by being educated about the crop, production, how to market and associate with professional groups that support the industries already. If aspiring alternative agriculture producers do just that, they have a better chance of being successful.

Source: Vaughn Hammond, Extension Specialty Crops Educator

"The important thing is not being afraid to take a chance. Remember, the greatest failure is to not try. Once you find something you love to do, be the best at doing it."

- Debbi Fields, founder of Mrs. Fields Cookies