

Sunflower Barn Quilt Brightens Johnson Barn Near Cecil

Since Reed and Mary Lee Johnson began their wholesale cut flower business in 2001, sunflowers have been their biggest seller. So it made sense that, when they decided to put a barn quilt on their barn at Windswept Acres, N5502 Highway 117 near Cecil, the pattern they chose for their quilt was of a group of sunflowers. The brightly-colored quilt, which is the 132nd on display in Shawano County, is on the south side of the barn that was built in 1904.

The Johnsons purchased the 120-acre farm in 1998. It was originally homesteaded by H.B. Bublitz and family in the late 1800s, one of the founding families of the Town of Washington. The farm was owned by a Starks family from 1994 to 1998. Before the farm was purchased by the Johnsons, it was always a dairy operation.

More than 300 varieties of flowers are grown at Windswept Acres for the Johnsons' cut flower business. About 35 acres are in production of cut flowers, supplemented with four greenhouses that allow the Johnsons to grow flowers not normally found in this area. Their flowers are sold to florists from Green Bay to the Fox Valley to the Lakeshore on down to Milwaukee. Flowers are delivered Monday through Thursday.

The Johnsons now have two quilts on their barn, the first of which is on the north side of the barn that was sponsored by the Shawano Woman's Club. "The barn quilt project is a great idea," Reed Johnson said. "Lots of our friends from other parts of the state and Midwest have come to see them and we've noticed lots of drivers slow down as they approach our farm so they can either look at the quilts or stop and take pictures."

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