



The Carleton County Junior Farmers started placing the plastic barrel holsteins around the Manotick, Ottawa area as a fundraiser to help a local farm that lost its herd to a fire.

Plastic Holsteins Built To Help A Family In Need

After a devastating spring barn fire in the Ottawa, Ontario suburb of Manotick destroyed a building and an entire herd of dairy cows, the local Carleton County Junior Farmers decided they needed to do something to help their suffering neighbors.

The nonprofit group consists of youth aged 15 to 30 who learn leadership skills while working on a variety of agricultural initiatives. Since the affected family was Junior Farmer alumni, helping them was a no-brainer.

"Pre-covid we would have had more traditional fundraisers to help the family but with things as they are, our organization decided to try something a little different from a socially distanced perspective," says Sharon Ruitter, Junior Farmer treasurer and lead organizer of the "Keep the Cows Moooving" fundraising initiative.

The club's young adults wanted the theme based on dairy cows, so they gathered up some farmyard scraps and built three cows consisting of plastic barrels with 2 by 4's for legs and painted black and white.

Members quietly placed the manufactured cows, along with a set of instructions, on a neighbor's lawn who they believed had a

healthy sense of humor. Recipients would then donate to the cause if they so wished and get the chance to select where the next stop should be for the fake bovines.

"We moved them every few days depending on when people replied," Ruitter says. "They visited a wide variety of sites including many farms across the county, businesses and sales barns, plus inner-city homes with no ties to the family or farming. They saw a lot of country and traveled many miles."

Initially, the group hoped to raise two thousand dollars for the family in need, but when the "Keep the Cows Moooving" fundraiser wrapped up in September, they finished with approximately \$15,000 to be donated to the family.

Ruitter says it's likely one of the plastic cows will permanently end its travels at the site of the fire. The other two will hang out at the Ruitter's farm as the Junior Farmers plan to use them again when other local families need assistance.

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Try Ghee, A Healthy Butter Option

If you love butter, there's a good chance you'll love ghee. The clarified butter has a long history and several health benefits.

"It tastes like butter, handles high heat and it's shelf-stable," says Sandeep Agarwal, who sells ghee through his family business Pure Indian Foods.

He and his wife, Nalini, were reminded of that when their young son had digestive issues. In seeking a dietary solution, they found local New Jersey dairies that sold raw milk from organic-raised, grass-fed cows. Nalini began making ghee, following a 400-year-old tradition of ghee makers in Sandeep's family in India.

Ghee is made by heating unsalted butter and separating out the water and lactose/casein from the butter leaving just the fat. By removing the solids, people with dairy sensitivities can usually handle ghee. It's also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, Vitamin A and other nutrients.

Ghee is similar to coconut oil as it can be solid or liquid depending on room temperature. When opened, its shelf life is about a year if refrigerated. Because the solids have been removed it has a much higher smoke point than butter, and so it is good for cooking as well as deep fat frying or just as a spread.

When the Agarwals started making ghee



Ghee is a clarified butter that is made by separating out the water and lactose from butter leaving just the fat.

in 2008, their first customers were from the Indian community, but interest has grown across all cultures as people learn more about ghee, Sandeep says.

"People at farmers' markets are curious about it and they understand the place for fat in our diet in small quantities," he says. "People also believe in local agriculture."

Besides making plain ghee, Nalini adds spices for flavored ghee. A 7.8 oz. jar of ghee sells for \$11.99 at the company website.

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Barbed Wire Gives Life To Amazing Sculptures

By Dee Goerge, Contributing Editor

When Jeff Best helped string barbed wire growing up, he never imagined he'd end up using it to create art as an adult. But thanks to a roll of old rusted barbed wire he discovered on a 40-acre homestead he and his wife purchased in Clare, Mich., his full-size prancing horses, bugling elk, and tabletop sculptures can be found all over the U.S.

"I thought it would be cool to make a deer head, so I put it in the barn," Best says about the barbed wire. He'd always had a talent for drawing, but life and work as a feed and farm store salesman delayed his plan. He finally got around to making the deer head the winter of 2003. Someone saw it, wanted one and he made another. Then a sporting goods store owner asked him to make a full-body elk to go over the entrance of a new store he was building.

"That was my first big piece about eight years ago, and it steamrolled from there," Best says. He entered art shows, earned recognition and sold pieces.

For longevity and value on his large sculptures, Best purchases new 12 1/2-ga. wire with two barbs that are just on one wire. That allows him to unbraided the bare wire and use it to tie the sculpture together. For most public art, the barbless wire is on the outside of the sculpture.

He starts with a frame of 1/2-in. black metal pipe and adds layers of barbed wire to create the curves and proportion he needs.

"My main criteria is that it be in motion," Best says. Raising a leg and twisting the body and head are nuances that add difficulty - and life - to his sculptures.

Though he is naturally good with proportions, he typically projects the image he wants on the wall of his workshop. An 8-in. needle nose plier, thin leather gloves, safety glasses, old clothes and a leather apron are his main "tools" for sculpting.

"Barbed wire has a way of reminding you that you are working with it," he says with a laugh, noting he's been slapped with the end of the wire more than a few times.

All of Best's sculptures are custom-made, from tabletop sculptures (18 to 24-in.) of chickens and bison to full-size wildlife and

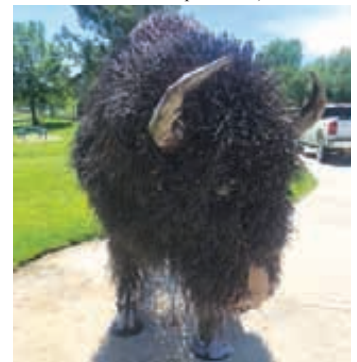


Jeff Best makes sculptures from 12 1/2-ga. barbed wire and 1/2-in. black metal pipe

his most popular item - horses. Costs range from \$2,000 for tabletop sculptures to \$5,000 for deer to \$10,000 to \$15,000 for elk and moose to \$14,000 to \$18,000 for horses.

Some customers want rusted wire which Best coats with a protective polyurethane. Most pieces are powder-coated to preserve them for years. While about 75 percent are private sales, Best is also commissioned by municipalities and corporations. He has more than 20 sculptures on permanent display in 10 states.

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Sculptures can sell for as much as \$18,000 depending on size.



Jeff Annis was inspired by FARM SHOW projects he had seen to restore this 3-prong cultivator.

Restored Cultivator A "Work Of Pride"

FARM SHOW subscriber Jeff Annis of Gaithersburg, Md., lives in the suburbs and he doesn't have a lot of practical experience with tractor engines or hydraulics. But he's been inspired by other FARM SHOW readers who take on all kinds of restoration projects. So, he decided to tackle something a little simpler, restoring a single wheel, "spouse-powered" 3-prong cultivator that was used by his wife in her garden.

He completely disassembled the cultivator, wire brushing metal parts and repainting them. He replaced the badly weathered wood handles with new ones made out of a chunk of oak he had in his shop.

The biggest problem he had was reassembling the 12 pieces of the cultivator. "I figured there was only one way to put the pieces back together, so I didn't take a photo or make a sketch. Big mistake. It took me a while to get it right," says Annis.

The project cost less than \$25 and took 3 days, which was mostly "waiting for paint to dry". When finished, his wife said it was too nice to use so her garden is now "no-till". She said to put it on display some place where she wouldn't have to mow around it.

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