



A Wisconsin couple converted this old dairy barn into big, comfortable living quarters for their family. The face on the end of the barn makes it a local tourist attraction.

## SHINES LIKE A "JACK O' LANTERN" AT NIGHT

# Their Barn-Turned-House Smiles At Passers-By

Drivers passing through Thorp, Wis., often stop to stare at the barn-turned-home built by Bill and Janet Sopiartz that shines with a "Jack O' Lantern" face by night and by day shows a face with a huge, happy grin.

According to a recent report in *The Country Today*, a regionally distributed farm newspaper, the rural couple built their living quarters in the barn's hay mow and cut out windows in the south end of the barn to look like a face. During the day, viewers see two windows with blue stained-glass centers that represent the face's eyes, a triangular window that represents the nose, and large patio doors that represent the mouth. White siding covers the south end of the barn except for a margin of brown siding along the roofline that gives the appearance of hair. At night, the white of the face and the "hair" aren't visible, but special lights inside the house give the face a jack o' lantern appearance.

Steps lead to the east side of what was the barn's haymow. The 2,200 sq. ft. of living space is highlighted by a 36 by 25-ft. room that uses the round roof for a ceiling and has an open loft overhanging it. One corner of the room is carpeted and used as a living room area. The rest of the room is divided between kitchen and dining areas.

Four bedrooms (one downstairs and three upstairs), two full bathrooms and a utility room make up the other half of the home. Rafters serve as bases for built-in desks in



At night, special lights inside house give it the look of a jack o' lantern.

the girls' bedrooms. The entire living area was sketched on a few scraps of paper, with no design blueprints ever drafted. "Working with a 36-ft. wide structure added to some of the ease in planning the layout," says Bill, a siding contractor. "Most homes are 30 ft. wide or less. The extra 6 ft. gives us a lot of extra space."

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Bill and Janet Sopiartz, Rt. 2, Box 263, Thorp, Wis. 54771 (ph 715 669-3045).



There's 2,200 sq. ft. of finished living area inside barn, including this modern kitchen.

# FARM SHOW

# Ag World

**Editor's Note:** Most of what goes into *Ag World* stems from story ideas sent to us by readers. This special section of *FARM SHOW* touches on the lighter side of farming and ranching - everything from human interest stories, to unusual hobbies, to unique things farm families are doing for fun or profit. If you've read or heard a good *Ag World* type story you'd like to share with others, send it to: *FARM SHOW*, Box 1029, Lakeville, Minn. 55044.

## "BLOOD RANCH" MARKETS PLASMA FROM FARM ANIMALS TO RESEARCHERS

# They "Milk" Blood From Farm Animals

By Roberta Donovan

The Quad Five Ranch north of Ryegate, Montana, is one of only a handful of farm operations in the world that makes its living by "milking" blood from farm animals to sell to researchers and medical laboratories.

The ranch, which gets its name from its 5,555-acre size, is licensed by the USDA as a veterinary biological facility. Its primary operation is selling blood serum and plasma from sheep, cattle and horses raised on the ranch. The blood is used in many ways, including the diagnosis of illness in humans and animals.

There are about 1,600 head of sheep on the ranch, 1,200 of which are used for the blood serum operation. The ones that are "milked" for blood are kept penned up to assure that they remain disease-free. Donor cows and horses are also kept isolated in confinement.

Wiley Micks, operations manager of the ranch, which is owned by L. Herman Wessel, says that if one of the donor animals becomes ill and has to be given antibiotics or other medication, that animal is immediately moved to a separate area for a sufficient length of time to be sure that neither the disease nor the drugs are still in his system.

The blood drawn from animals is used in many ways. A primary use for the blood of sheep is to manufacture blood diagnosis plates used by hospitals and labs to detect human ailments. Quad Five sells whole blood, serum and plasma, as well as various other components of blood. It is also starting to market a component used in vaccines.

"We are being asked to provide new things all the time," Micks says. "Sometimes we take out certain proteins or other

factors. Sometimes we have to do a strictly male or strictly female serum for various companies."

Maintaining consistency and high quality is the prime concern, according to Micks. In the past most blood products have been provided by slaughter houses but he says the quality was often poor and the medical profession has been demanding higher standards.

Sheep can give blood about every three weeks. The usual amount taken is one liter. The amount drawn from a cow is about one liter per 100 lbs.

Donor horses are all draft horses, primarily Belgians and Percherons. The amount drawn from a horse is 9 liters, or about 2 gal. The bleeding takes 10 to 15 min. A horse's blood can be drawn about every two weeks if cell volume is acceptable.

Whole blood is shipped the same day it is drawn or the day following. Sterile filtered serum and plasma is frozen after processing and must complete a month of quality assurance before being offered for sale. It is usually shipped by UPS next-day service or air freight. Micks says the ranch's clients are all over the country. None of them are in Montana but Micks says that doesn't matter.

"We can compete from here just as well as we could in Chicago or New York or California," he says.

Micks sees a bright future for the ranch. He predicts that the greatest area of growth in the future will be producing vaccines.

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