



# The Marvelous Maze and More

*Woolfolk Farms offers the public a glimpse at farm life through its corn maze and other activities each fall.*

*by Sara Gugelmeyer*

For those of us with an ag background, “another day at the farm” sounds like work. But for many, a trip to the farm is a rare novelty, and Scott Woolfolk, along with his family, is capitalizing on the public’s desire to spend a day in the country. Since 2000 Woolfolk Farms has made a business of offering a “marvelous” corn maze and other fun activities to the public.

Twelve years ago, Scott Woolfolk and his wife, Cher, were faced with a tough decision. She already worked as an elementary school teacher in town, but her job and the farm and cattle operations were still not big enough to support their growing family. Scott would either have to go job hunting or find a way to gather some more revenue from the farm. They asked themselves, “If we build it, will they come?”

Well, they built a corn maze, and yes, they came.

The Woolfolks cut a corn maze and began charging the public admission to come out to the farm near Jackson, Tenn. As it turned out, Jackson, with a population of around 65,000 people, was full of folks looking for family fun on the farm.

Although the Woolfolks’ Hereford and farming operations have grown since that first year, the maze has become a popular attraction and important added revenue for the family.



Since 2000 the Woolfolk family has hosted thousands at its Marvelous Maze. The maze and related activities has been a great way for the Woolfolk family to share ag’s story as well as a source of revenue to complement their farming operation.





Visitors can feed animals in a petting zoo and kids can enjoy taking a ride in the barrel train.



“We do a lot of field trips to the farm so it’s educational too,” Scott says.

“On the weekend it’s open to the public, but in today’s world and the area we’re in it’s still pretty educational. We don’t sit around and teach them on the weekends but just being on the farm is educational to a lot of them.”

Cher, their two sons — John Thomas, 13, and Russ, 5 — along with other friends and family, help out with various jobs at the maze, but Scott says he tries to make himself available to answer questions.

“That’s pretty much all I do on a Saturday is float around and answer questions. The public is just full of questions, and we talk a lot about cattle. So I just float around the farmyard and try to inform them about the farming and cattle industries. We’re talking about people



The Woolfolk family — Cher, Scott, John Thomas and Russ.

Scott explains, “It started out as a corn maze but now we do hay mazes and a pumpkin patch, along with a petting zoo. We try to add something new every year within the agricultural theme.”

It’s dubbed “Woolfolk Farms’ Marvelous Maze” for the original corn maze, but the Woolfolks also now offer two hay mazes, a petting zoo of horses, cattle and goats, and a pick-your-own pumpkin patch accessible by hay rack ride. A concession stand also accommodates the visitors.

The maze is open during the month of October only, because, Scott says, “September is still too hot and November can get pretty messy.”

On the weekends, the maze is open to the public, but during the week, it is often filled with eager students.

that can get the wrong idea about things pretty fast if somebody is not there to answer their questions.”

Scott says although most visitors are not likely to know the difference between a Hereford and an Angus, they always keep a friendly Hereford in the petting zoo. “We always have a cow-calf pair or bottle calf for them

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Along with the corn maze there are two bale mazes and a slide for the families to enjoy.

to see. We've taken some of the kids' ex-show heifers up there before and they'll stand there and let 5,000 people rub on them and they never get excited. They can stand there for several days in a row and never get tired of people petting them."

John Thomas also helps with answering questions, thanks to the skills the National Junior Hereford Association has taught him. "He helps out quite a bit," Scott says. "He's shown cattle since he was old enough to walk and he knows the livestock industry and likes to hang



out with the animals and tell people about them."

Woolfolk Farms is truly a family business. Scott and his family and his parents, John and Pat, are all partners in all that goes on there. The farm has been in the family since 1865, and they raise Hereford cattle and Bermuda hay mostly, along with cotton, corn and soybeans.

Farming, raising cattle and hosting the public through the maze — all

work together well, Scott says. "A lot of the getting ready part of it, cutting out the corn maze and stuff like that is in the summertime when we've already got the equipment out."

During the month of October, though, things can become extremely hectic. "Probably 75% of our calves are born in October and November," Scott explains. "So the maze doesn't happen during a downtime. You'd think we'd consider changing our calving season around that, but our best growth rates come out of our fall calves. So we start every morning about daylight checking cows and then we go to the corn maze, then we wind up at dark checking cows again."

The Woolfolks' connections through the farm have come in handy with the corn maze. "We work real close with a lot of ag industries, like chemical companies and feed companies," Scott says. "The local John Deere dealer is one of the biggest supporters we've got. Those kinds of companies are willing to put their machinery and advertising out there because they want to help educate the public too. They're aware that the odds of them selling a tractor to people coming out there are pretty slim. They do it to help educate the public about what's going on in the agriculture industry as much as anything. They recognize educating the public benefits them too."

The Marvelous Maze helps inform thousands of people each year about farming and the cattle industry, but also, and maybe more importantly, the added revenue it created has allowed Scott to raise another generation of Woolfolks on the farm. **HW**



Visitors can take a hay rack ride to the corn maze or pumpkin patch.