

Abel Dairy Farm

Location: Eden, Wisconsin
Application: Free Stall Dairy Barns
Building Series: TITAN
Building Sizes: 140' x 460' & 140' x 380'
Dealer: Cover-All of Wisconsin



Cover-All Re-builds Large Free Stall Barns in 25 days

On the evening of September 2nd - 2002, Green Bay television stations were televising emergency weather reports of severe tornado warnings in the Fond du Lac County. While monitoring the reports, Allen Abel contacted his son Bill who was working on the farm to warn him of the threat. The warning allowed Bill Abel and three employees the crucial necessary time to seek safety. Ten minutes later, Abel Dairy Farm was hit by an F2 tornado.

Seeking shelter in the basement of the milking parlor, the tornado tore through the farm with winds exceeding 158 miles per hour. Within the span of five minutes the tornado passed, no one was injured but the two large Cover-All® TITAN™ free stall barns (64,400 square feet and 53,200 square feet) experienced damages exceeding \$750,000 dollars.

"What is remarkable is that none of the 1450 cow herd were lost. As soon as the tornado passed, it was a beautiful star lit night. When Bill stepped out of the milking parlor basement, hundreds of cows were still in the damaged barns chewing cud like nothing happened. These buildings saved the lives of 100's of cows," says Allen Abel. "Even though the steel trusses of the buildings were twisted and crushed to the ground, the building held together. If we had built large pole barns for free stall barns, I know that hundreds of cows would have been killed and severely wounded by flying wood debris. The tornado tore the roof off of one of our pole barns and threw it into the 140' by 460' Cover-All®. Pole barns are designed to withstand 90 mile per hour winds while the Cover-All buildings are designed to withstand 120 mile per hour winds. No building is guaranteed to withstand a tornado," says Abel.

Learning of the disaster, Cover-All Buildings of Wisconsin and the Cover-All Building Systems manufacturer assembled a team of install professionals to disassemble the 140' by 460' and 140' by 360' TITAN™ buildings. Two new Cover-All® TITAN™ buildings were manufactured and delivered to the Abel Dairy Farm site in eight days. Install of the buildings was completed in just 17 days!

"We were fortunate that the milking parlor wasn't damaged, so we were still able to milk cows," says Abel. "The next ten days after the tornado we had temperatures of 95 degrees and we were losing 8.5 pounds of milk per cow a day, (normal milk production is 85 pounds per cow per day). The rapid delivery and install of these buildings is greatly appreciated. We've got our cows back in the new barns and our milk production is back to normal."

Abel Dairy Farm Cover-All® TITAN™ Building Features:

- An additional 20' was added onto one of the free stall barns to increase the length to 380'
- New designed dairy eaves and adjustments to the end wall entrance ways were provided
- One of the DuraWeave™ fabric bays on the Cover-All® TITAN™ buildings (20' wide by 140' long), will safely support 30 tons of weight

Abel Dairy Farm History:

- Abel Dairy Farms is the largest dairy farm in the Fond du Lac County
- The dairy farm operation started with 23 cows in 1970 - presently Abel Dairy Farm has 1450 head
- Abel Dairy Farm operates 3000 acres
- The farm was the site for the 2000 Wisconsin Farm Progress Days



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"The one benefit we didn't plan on is that these structures would protect our animals from a tornado!" - Allen Abel