

“Why June 22nd?”

by Country Roads Family Fun Farm, LLC.

This is our sixth year to host what has become an infamous event across the four-states, known as Sunflower Festival. While we aren't the only farm in the Ozarks to grow sunflowers, we certainly have built a reputation on offering the largest variety of sunflowers in the largest area. I mean, go big or go home, right?

When we first launched Sunflower Festival in 2019, it was in August. In 2021 it slipped into the tail end of July a little bit. In 2023 we offered a Fall oriented Sunflower Festival in September. And now, the 2024 calendar is inviting people in on June 22nd. This has some people asking a very good question, “Why does the date for Sunflower Festival change so much?”

In order to answer this question, we first have to understand the reality of our business. We are Country Roads Family Fun FARM. We are a farm. As a real working farm, our goal is to maximize the productivity of our land by increasing the yield of each precious acre.

In all actuality, this involves a ton of market research. You may not think so, but farmers are constantly sending off soil samples to analyze the strengths and weaknesses already present in the soil. They are constantly researching new planting techniques and fertilizer alternatives to lessen overhead and maximize crop production. And, if you have ever known a farmer, they are always checking the weather! Farmers pay close attention to forecasts for long-term weather trends and cycles which may alter when seeds can be planted, growth patterns, and when fields can be harvested.

Farmers may wear old denim and boots, but they are sharp as tacks and steeped in science. They use all the aforementioned tools to decide which crops will bring more revenue at harvest and mixed in ancient land and soil conservation practices – such as crop rotation – to orchestrate plantings and harvests in such a way that no piece of ground goes to waste.

Sunflowers and corn are two crops that – when rotated effectively – leave beneficial nutrients in the soil for the other which support their growth. This is why farmers will alternate early crops of sunflowers for late crops of corn, bringing not only a double crop yield for the ground, but also maintaining the highest nutrient levels in the soil possible.

So, this year we are planting sunflowers as early as possible to allow time for another to be planted behind them. Ground temperatures have to be warm enough to germinate seeds. Combine that with the fact that it takes a sunflower 57 days to reach peak bloom, and we arrive at a Sunflower Festival date of June 22nd!

There! That's all there is to it. Just a whole lot of research, agricultural science, and lifetimes of planting experience put together to bring you this year's Sunflower Festival on June 22nd! We sure hope you can come see the beauty for yourself.