

The California sunshine and sunny cheerleaders looked good. The game was exciting and I hated to leave it behind.

But as the bands marched out to the field at halftime, it was time for me to march forward and press the button which turned the TV set off and thrust me back into the real world.

It was New Year's Day - the traditional day for college football bowl games. The one I was watching was the classic contest in Pasadena, Calif., the Rose Bowl.

The real world I had to get back into was that of a dairyman on a Pennsylvania farm during a cold wintry day. Watching a football game in the farm comfort of the living room during the middle of the afternoon just doesn't mix too well with milking me.

Pulling my boots, jacket, and hat to place, I marched out the back door into a brisk wind which was laden with tiny particles of snow from nearby drifts. It enveloped my face in refreshing, yet somehow rude



manner, as it worked its way down my collar and up sleeves. The reality of the day became more pronounced and thoughts of football soon vanished.

Everything was calm in the barn, with just a few swirls of snow blowing in through cracks in a window or

door. It was a comfortable 55 degrees, just right for working. The cows contentedly pushed the silage around with their noses in order to find a few more kernels of corn. Their neck chains jingled in the process and miniature clouds of breath rose from their nostrils. The

pleasant aroma of a cow stable filled the air.

Before long, the cows were grained, the milking machines were hauled out of the milk house, and strainers were perched on top of the bulk tank.

For the next 90 minutes I'd be carrying one milk bucket after another for long yardage. Once in a great while a cow would try for an extra point of a field goal, using the suspended milker for a ball. This was reality.

Once done, there were calves to be taken care of, cows to be bedded, buckets to wash, and hay to be fed. Then came a short hike through snow and wind and another visit to the bowl games - until I became too tired to watch. And the button thrusting me into the real world had to be pressed again.

Nonetheless, many pleasant memories accumulated over the years I spent on the farm and I wouldn't trade any of those experiences away if that were possible.

Have a New Year filled with happiness, success, and good health.

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**Thoughts  
 in Passing**



A recent government survey indicates that almost two-thirds of American kitchens are potential sources of food poisoning because of unsafe practices in preparing or storing food. The risks are higher if the cook is under 50, better educated, and a member of a family whose income is at least \$15,000 a year.

In a recent report by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which surveyed a scientifically-selected sample of over 2,000 households, researchers applied a high-risk designation to 63 per cent of the households because of the chance of sickness due to food contamination or spoilage.

Up to 10 million cases of food poisoning occur each year in the U.S., according to the Agriculture Department.

Consumer trust in government inspection is an indirect cause of carelessness in the kitchen, the researchers found. Many homemakers mistakenly believe that government inspection prevents contamination of raw meat and poultry. This is impossible, since food-poisoning bacteria exist in the environment and in the human body.

The survey revealed other unsafe practices in

American kitchens. Among them: eating rare hamburger; allowing cooked foods to cool on the counter before refrigerating; letting meats, creamed salads, casseroles, hors d'oeuvres, and brown bag lunches stand at room temperature for more than two hours; tasting

food that is suspected of being spoiled.

One reason for the apparently safer kitchens among older, less-educated, low-income families is that they buy fewer large cuts of meat, such as turkeys and roasts.

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