



On being a farm wife

—And other hazards

By **JOYCE BUPP**

A check came in our mail recently. It represented a grand total of \$8.40. For a calf. Less commission.

That's wasn't too great a return on a several hundred dollar investment in a dairy cow. And the more I

reflected on what the tiny check meant, the angrier I got.

Then, just a few days later, the big farmer came back from the machinery "supermarket" grumbling about a belt...for the combine...that cost \$99. How many of those calves does that represent?

Just to satisfy a morbid curiosity and rising indignation over the worsening battle between costs and income, I dug out our farm files from 1964, our first full year in business. Guess what I found?

In 1964, four per cent first-class milk was bringing \$6.48. Today, that same butterfat test returns about \$10.70 per hundred pounds,

not nearly doubled in price. Butcher cows sent to market are selling for close to the same price per hundred as they were 13 years ago. And an auction receipt for a calf quite similar to the one recently sold told me that the animal had brought us a return of \$13.39.

Some progress, huh? But then the expenses comparison got worse.

The 1964 electric bills came to about \$44 monthly; today they regularly read at \$135, served by our local electric cooperative. But that's not as bad as the statement from the public utility that services the second farm; last winter that account frequently ran over the \$200/monthly mark, and there we operated considerably fewer electric devices than here at home.

Gasoline was once delivered to the farm tank for 27.5 cents per gallon; last month's statements were for 58.9 cents per gallon. And diesel fuel comparisons are even worse. Today we pay 45.4 cents per gallon, while in 1964 we paid 14.9 cents per gallon, for the privilege of operating our tractors.

While the coverage has been notably increased, those farmowner insurance premiums are still terrifyingly inflated. We send off a check for \$900 to cover annual costs, when it was once the seemingly high figure of \$170.

A faded seed corn bill showed charges of \$12.60 for a bushel weighing 56 pounds. Today, that bag of golden grain has been renamed a "unit", weighs only 50 pounds, and represents a \$40 to \$50 chunk of investment.

A tractor, medium sized at 130 horsepower, sits near the door of our machinery dealer. The price on the side reads \$28,000. There are a lot of farmers around who didn't even pay that for their farm 20 years ago. And then they received \$2 and up per bushel of corn grown on that land. Today they might be paid \$1.85 for their trouble.

The most sickening bill I can recall, however, came

last Fall when we needed a new combine tire to finish corn harvest. I doubt that I'll ever forget that statement for \$816.72.

So the darkening clouds of inflation continue looming on the farm horizon, only one faint ray of hope shines through to help you weather the cost-price storm:

Take your banker to lunch.

DHIA dinner slated

CHAMBERSBURG - The Annual Meeting and Awards Banquet of the Franklin County DHIA will be held Thursday, November 10, at the Lemasters Community Center. The dinner will get underway at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting will feature the election of five new directors for 3-year terms, and presentation of awards and trophies to deserving dairy herd owners.

Dr. Norman F. Reber, editor emeritus of The Pennsylvania Farmer magazine, will address the group on "Food and Freedom".

County Agent John Z. Shearer urges all Association members to attend; but he also invites others who are interested in the Franklin County dairy industry - a 60-million-dollar-a-year business in Franklin County.



Twila takes Farm-City tour

LANCASTER - Twila Brubaker, reigning Lancaster County dairy princess, is framed in the above picture by half-gallon bags of fresh milk at Pine View Acres Dairy Farm located one mile South of New Danville on New Danville Pike. The farm-to-consumer dairy store hosted the dairy princess as part of the preparation for Farm-City Week tour days scheduled Saturday and Sunday, November 19 and 20 from 1 to 5 p.m. each day.

The farm tour is sponsored by the 1300 member Lancaster County Farmers Association. The tours are part of the Farm-City Week activities intended to open community understanding between the agricultural and urban segments of the county.

Pine View Acres produces about 4500 gallons of milk each for their customers and is one of 11 farms opening their doors to the public for the two-day event.

Other farms on the visitation include: the Dennis Sangrey farm, Conestoga R2; J. Mowery Frey, Jr., farm, Willow Street; Richard and Robert Neff farm, Millersville; Abram and Clifford Charles farm, Lancaster R2; Roy Charles farm, Lancaster R2; Noah Wenger farm, Stevens R1; John M. Weaver, Ephrata R1; Jay Rohrer, farm, Manheim R7; David L. Landis farm, Lancaster; and the Jacob Fisher farm, Manheim R1

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