

A farm boy never forgets Christmas on the farm

By **JERRY WEBB**
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Christmas on the farm is something a farm boy never forgets. He may be years and miles away from those boyhood remembrances, but the first snow of December or the sound of the first Christmas carol will take him back in time to a special Christmas—or maybe it's a lot of Christmases all merged into one great Yuletide that can be relived with each new season.

An old memory gets a little fuzzy but Christmas on the farm seemed bigger and better than those since. Perhaps it's the open space that is part of rural living that adds a special dimension to Christmas. There's room and time to reflect on its true meaning without the harshness of neon lights, city traffic, or barling commercialism.

A walk to the top of a hill on a snowy night before Christmas can leave a

memory that will last a small boy a lifetime. As you look down at the farmstead, you see the Christmas tree lights in the window, smell the wood smoke from the fireplace and feel the quietness of a snow-covered countryside. Maybe a cow is mooing in the stable and far away you hear a dog howl, and for miles in any direction all you see are snowy fields, an occasional light from a neighboring farm house, a sky full of stars and a blue-white moon with a strange glowing ring around it. You start to feel what that first Christmas must have been like.

Fireplace seemed bigger back then, and perhaps they were. The Christmas tree cut from the farm woodlot and dragged to the house behind a horse-seemed bigger also, and maybe it was. That old farm house had 10 to 12 feet ceilings and the rooms were large enough for a big tree. Even then, the tree seemed to fill half the

room. The greenery started right at the floor and went all the way to the ceiling.

Decorations weren't as plentiful or gaudy as they are today; maybe a couple of sets of lights and lots of popcorn strings, paper rings and lanterns made at school.

Christmas gifts on the farm weren't fancy either, usually warm clothes, new mittens, a pair of boots. A cowboy six-shooter was a big deal and a genuine cowboy lasso was the ultimate gift.

There was always plenty of food at Christmastime. Maybe it just seemed that way because so much time was spent in the kitchen, but Grandmother was forever cooking something. And Mom was always shoeing people out of it. There was peanut brittle and homemade doughnuts, and good boys got to eat the

centers that resulted from the doughnut cutter. Minced meat and pumpkin pies were important and an enormous turkey was standard fare.

Farm kids hung their stockings "with care" even if they didn't believe in Santa. It was a tradition. After a long night of trying to listen to what was going on downstairs, get a little sleep and still be up by at least 5 a.m., the stuffed stockings were a real joy. They'd be filled with nuts and hard candy, and maybe a tangerine. And way down in the toe would be a Barlow knife or some other valuable.

Christmas day meant city relatives would visit—sissy cousins who were afraid to go up in the barn loft. It also meant second tables for the kids, and that stuffed feeling

that comes with too much turkey, pumpkin pie, hard candy and pecans.

It's easy to save a Christmas like that for a lot of years and relive it as you prepare for your own family Christmas.

You can't help wishing everyone could climb a hill somewhere in rural America this Christmas Eve and try to grasp the feeling of a farm Christmas. Or maybe they should sit around a farm kitchen with the fireplace blazing and mince pies in the

oven and talk to farm people about Christmas in the country.

Things have changed during the 30 years since a lot of farm boys experienced their last farm Christmas. But the traditions and their memories live on. And wherever they are, the reminders of Christmas will take them back to those hills and farm houses of their boyhood. Life will seem a little brighter to them after they make that mental journey.

Acorn man graduated

STEVENS POINT, Wis. — Robert Guhl, Pennsylvania district manager for Acorn Automated Agri-Systems recently completed four days of training in the company's service school, here, according to a company news spokesman.

Guhl, who makes his home at 123 Wellington Road, Lancaster, reports that the training sessions included the actual assembly of Acorn products.

The training program covers all aspects of the installation and maintenance of the Acorn line of barn equipment, ventilation systems, silo unloaders, manure and feed handling systems.

In addition to routine

maintenance, preventive maintenance and trouble shooting were covered in depth.

Meeting set

HUMMELSTOWN — The January meeting of the Lower Dauphin Young Farmers organization will be held January 2, 1978 at 7:30 p.m. in the agriculture room at the Lower Dauphin High School.

Dieter Krieg, editor of Lancaster Farming will be the guest speaker. His topic will be the 1978 outlook for agriculture.

The members of the Lower Dauphin Young Farmers invite the public to attend this meeting.

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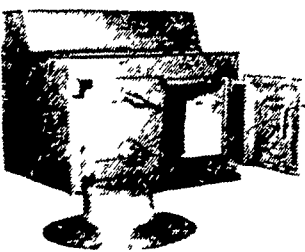
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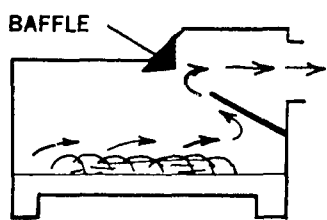
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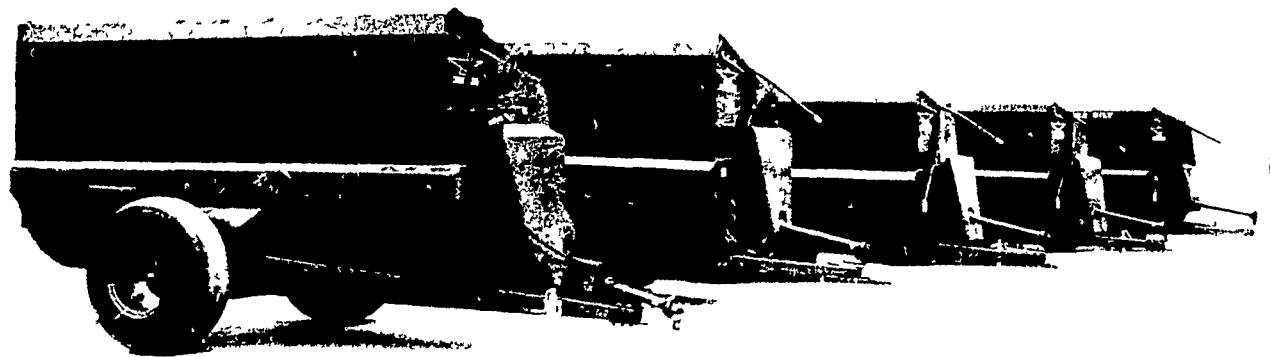
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