

## Ida's Notebook



Ida Risser

We've received several seed catalogs in the mail recently and they certainly are colorful. Especially so, when one looks out the window and across snow covered fields to a woods beyond. The tendency in new plants seems to lean toward dwarf varieties in flowers and bush varieties in vegetables. The convenience of this is easily understood, as I well remember four and

five foot zinnias leaning against the meadow fence.

Nowadays, you not only can buy any kind of plants but also "animals" from a garden catalog. What I mean is advertisements for earthworms — "which can be released directly into the garden without handling," or praying mantis egg cases or even ladybugs to eat other destructive insects. Each year we try new and dif-

ferent plants and this year will be no exception.

XXXX

I've just refreshed my memory of the early years of our farming venture. And it really was a venture as there was danger of loss as well as chance for profit. You see, the first year that we began to farm with one cow, one heifer, one tractor, one plow and one wagon, we lost our barn in a fire. So in the middle of summer, we planted some cash crops. These included a field of sweetcorn, one of cabbage and another of cauliflower. There also was a patch of watermelons and canteloupes to weed and spray.

When it was time to sell these back-breaking crops, my husband attended several markets each week and got very little sleep. We also peddled potatoes and celery. Besides helping to prepare these crops for sale, I also was tending a new baby and making butter to sell.

In looking back on this

busy, busy life of near poverty, I wonder how we ever managed. But gradually our herd grew and a new barn was built to house a dairy. Machinery was added over the years and sons and daughters grew strong and helped in the farm operation. However, now after almost 30 years, we are back again to having two people struggle to run a farm.

## Dauphin Co. FHA take top window display

**HARRISBURG** -- Harrisburg High School FHA Chapter, Harrisburg, placed first and received a cash prize of \$75 for their window exhibit entitled, "Help your Child Get Hooked on Books," in last week's school window exhibit contest held at the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

The top ranking exhibit suggested ideas to help preschool children learn to enjoy and respect books.

Second prize with a stipend of \$65 went to Red Lion Senior High School, Red Lion, York County. The exhibit entitled, "Beautify Homes With House Plants", showed a variety of common, easy to grow houseplants, various potting materials, and the procedure for using them in potting plants.

On exhibit entitled, "A Cornucopia of Goodies", featuring drying as a method of food preservation, placed third and received a cash prize of \$55. Students of Garden Spot High School, New Holland, entered the exhibit which showed a variety of home dried foods, and the steps to follow in preparing them for processing.



## On being a farm wife

—And other hazards

By JOYCE BUPP

Do you ever get the feeling you've been "kept in the dark" about something?

That oft-used phrase took on new meaning for me the other day as I attended an agronomy meeting. I went, all prepared to learn about alfalfa so that someday I can helpfully tell the big farmer what he's doing wrong when supposedly green fields turn golden with dandelion and yellow rocket, or develop chronic cases of leaf-munching creepy-crawlies.

There I sat amidst the gathering of interested, knowledgeable farmers, my ears forward, pen poised and a brand-spanking new tablet on which to record my newly gained learning.

But then, the speaker made an announcement that left me feeling like the fox who just lost her rabbit: "And now I have a few slides to show you..."

The whole world went pitch black. Where was my pen? Where was my carefully lined new tablet? How was I going to write down all this deluge of details? What were they trying to do to me, anyway?

Boy—I needed a "bright" idea—and fast. Maybe a flick

of my Bic would help. Except that I don't smoke. And I've never owned a lighter. So much for that possibility. I did have a camera flash, but my pen wouldn't write that fast. One of those miners' hats, or the kind that cave explorers' use, might do it. Even a trouble light would be appropriate—I certainly was having trouble.

Suddenly, a bright-background slide came on the screen, shedding just enough glow on the paper to show me where I had blindly scribbled the last sentence. If enough of those kept flipping onto the screen, maybe I could at least avoid accidentally taking notes across the tabletop.

Fate was on my side. When the lights finally came back on, what appeared to be a crossbreed between shorthand and chicken scratches was faintly readable, with a hard-working imagination. I snatched an Agronomy Guide as I left and hoped I could fake it.

Please don't let me get put in the dark again. Won't someone hurry and invent a pen with a headlight?

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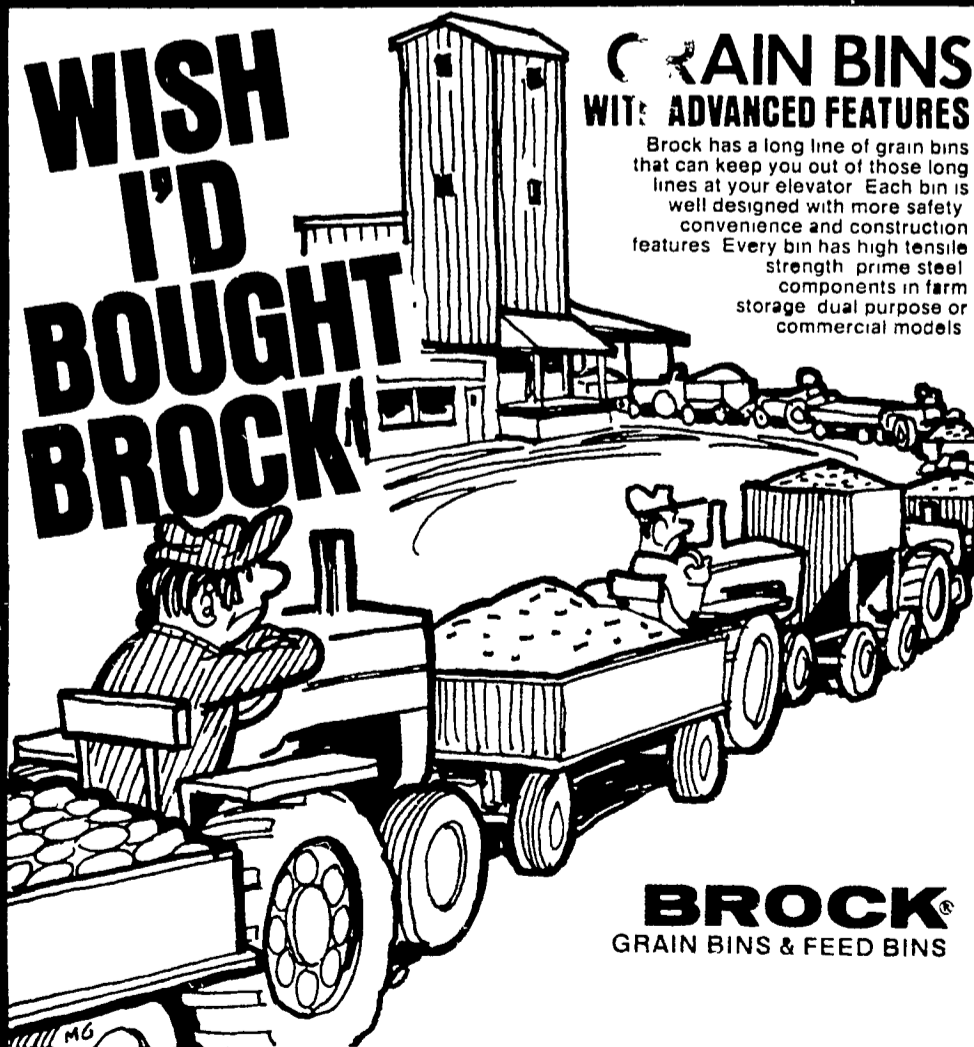


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