



Brief answers
to short questions
**Sheila's
Shorts**
By Sheila Miller

A matter of respect?
This week, I've decided to study one of my own questions in my column—'Why do farmers always have to be men, and why are farm owners always the husbands?'

You're probably wondering what prompted that kind of question. Well, to make a long story short, I began to formulate this question in my mind while sitting through countless Extension and other meetings on estate planning and farm business management.

Long winter evenings were spent listening to experts tell me how a father can be sure to pass his farm to his son through proper estate planning (funny how there never was any thought given to a farmer passing her farm on to her daughter—that would have been too shocking).

In order to bone-up on the facts before writing my series on estate planning, I started reading Penn State's informative circular called 'Estate Planning for Pennsylvania Families'. Here again, but this time in black and white, I learned that farm owners were considered to be of the male gender.

Circular 567 directed all of its information to the main character called 'You'. How did I determine 'you' was a man? Well, tacked on to 'you' in most every section were three little words—'and your wife'.
I didn't have to take a

short course in Nancy Drew to figure that one out.

Even more obvious is a booklet published by Penn State which blatantly promotes discrimination. Boldly printed on its front cover is the title "Father and Son Partnerships". Do they also print a brochure entitled "Mother and Daughter Partnerships?" Hah!

Let's not hang all the blame on Penn State. There are many other violators in the private sector.

Take for instance the May 1980 newsletter put out by Commonwealth National Bank (serving the agricultural community of South Central Pennsylvania). In an article on the family farm, the bank openly showed its bias, and stereotyped a farm owner as being necessarily a male, and the only one possibly interested in farming the land had to be the son or son-in-law.

If they were going to stretch things to bring in a son-in-law, why didn't they mention the infamous farmer's daughter or even daughter-in-law?

The farm business management specialists who speak at mixed-company meetings find it especially hard to get out of the rut of thinking farm ownership is a father or husband affair. To them, there is no other kind of partnership other than father-son.

Would it be so hard for them to say 'parent-child' partnership instead?

Most people cling to their old prejudices and try to back them up with

East Towne Mall to kick off dairy month

LANCASTER — Dairy month will be launched for the county at East Towne Mall on Wednesday, June 4. County Commissioner James Huber will cut the ribbon and officially declare June as Dairy Month for Lancaster County at 6:00 p.m. as part of a week long show.

The four day exhibit will include local juggers Pine View Acres, MapleHoff Dairy and Oregon Dairy with free samples of milk; Shenk Cheese Company of Lancaster with samples of their cup cheese, egg cheese and schmearcase; plus a yogurt demonstration and cheese samples from Hickory Farms of Ohio. On Friday and Saturday

Kreider Dairy Farms of Manheim will have sample ice cream cones.

Also on hand for the four days will be the present dairy princess, Lucinda Landis, as well as the dairy princess candidates for 1980. They will be making butter and handing out samples to shoppers.

The Magic Cow from the local dairy association will also be on hand to greet shoppers at the East Towne Mall. Other surprises are planned to kick off this special month to honor today's dairy farmer. The activities are at the East Towne Mall, Route 30 East of Lancaster. Mall hours are 10:00 a.m. to 9:30 p.m.

arguments like 'That's the way most farms are run—the father owns them and the sons come in later.'

But where does that leave the women who have inherited or bought farms? Are they not considered farmers—why are their husbands more qualified to be the farm owners in most folks' minds?

There are also a lot of women who drive tractors, milk cows, keep the books and records at night, and manage the farm. Are these women farmers or farmers' wives? No one ever seems to discuss the pleasures of being a farmer's husband. What about the single woman who is farming—what in the world would she be called?

Now this might seem like I'm nit-picking at semantics, but this bias, no matter how harmless it might seem, grows into a monster when it comes to settling an estate or proving a woman's contribution to a farm.

When talking to several young women who are

members of the FFA, I asked them what they thought of when someone asks them to describe a farmer. Both said 'someone outstanding in their field'.

Unfortunately, they both thought of a farmer as a father or husband. One sported a tee-shirt saying 'I'm glad to be a farmer's wife.'

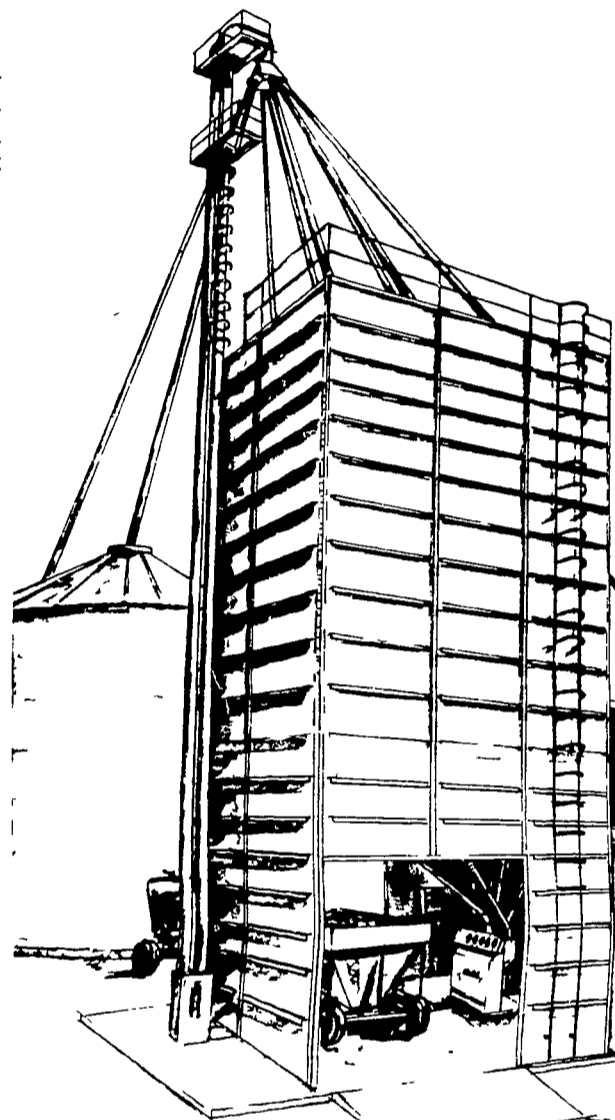
These young women are active farmers, milking, feeding hogs, doing field work, right next to their fathers, husbands, and brothers. In addition, they also tend the kids, make the supper, do the wash and other household chores, most of the time with little help.

Now, don't get me wrong. I am not one to run out and burn items of clothing, but I also don't like how the contribution of women on the farm can be so easily overlooked.

Let's not be so quick to stereotype farm owners and partners as was done by Penn State, Commonwealth Bank, and many more.

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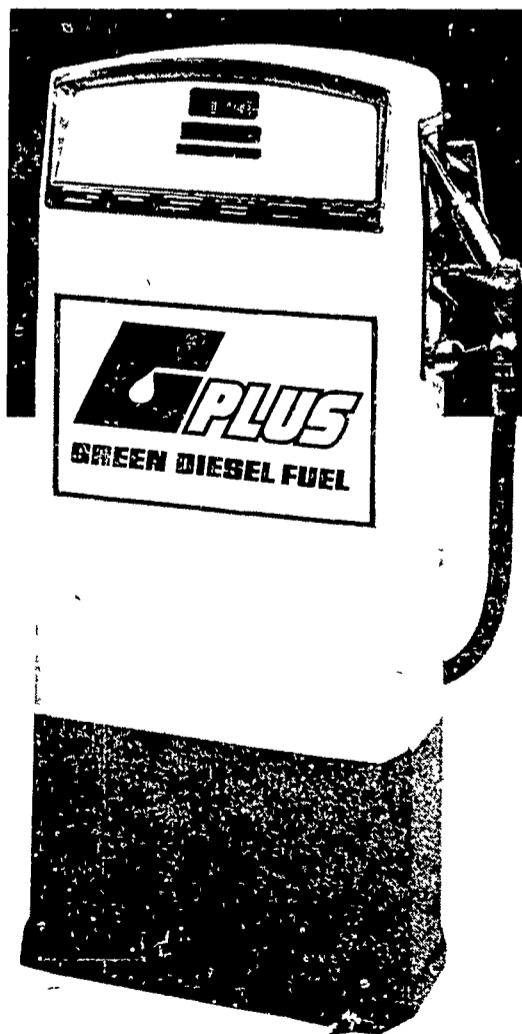
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