

Tribute to pastures and their stewards

BY DICK ANGLESTEIN
LANCASTER COUNTY —
Pastures are a pictorial panacea.

Of all the land devoted to agriculture, pastures are the least spoiled. They have escaped the tell-tale touch of man and his mechanization and in their natural originality lies the curative powers for mind and soul.

A stroll in a pasture is to worry what aspirin is to a headache.

I prefer pasture fenced by post and rail — even if it has to be combined with more modern man-made barriers of wire. If what is spawned by nature must be restricted, then it should be confined in a natural way.

Wood fencing — lined, grayed and split by age — has character. It relates history. Wire is just there in mute, deadly silence. It is the metallic plastic of pastureland.

Every pasture should have a regal arboreal monarch — its limbs reaching out to protect its realm.

Reaching toward the heavens, it provides cooling protection to generations of grazing inhabitants of every pasture.

Pastures are countryside quilts of varied vegetation.

Wild flowers abound despite the threat of hoof and foot. They compete valiantly with the meadow grass, providing splashes of color as if haphazardly dabbed by an anxious artist.

A pasture is cleansed by moving water; much in the manner in which a walk through a pasture wipes clear one's mind.

If the wild flowers are the products of a natural artist, then pastoral brooks or streams are carved and chiseled by a similar sculptor. These waterways and their myriad of tributaries are the molders of pastures.

While man practices his stewardship on cultivated farmland, there are separate stewards of pasture.

Among them are the stewards with cloven hooves. They continually groom, nourish and care for their pasture homes.

As Dairy Month approaches it is appropriate in picture and word to pay tribute to these stewards of the pastures.

