

**On being
a farm wife
- And other
hazards
Joyce Bupp**

Everyone's familiar with those classic Western movies with the plot that centers on the battle for grazing rights between the cattlemen and shepherders.

Here - for the first time - we can reveal the true story behind that epic conflict.

It was not pasture grass, nor water access, that caused the

shedding of blood in the sheep-cattle squirmishes.

What happened was that those dainty-hoofed sheep marched across western ranches gobbling up the ranch wives' flowers.

Don't look so skeptical.

I have living, breathing, munching proof that this was the probable cause.

Remember Scooter, that baby lamb that arrived several weeks ago to be bottle-raised? She's multiplied her birth weight and size several times, is covered with a thickening crop of creamy curls and now sports a "hay belly" resembling a helium-filled balloon.

Her appetite is insatiable - and therein lies the problem.

Not content to graze the yard or pastures, lush grass liberally sprinkled with white clover patches, Scooter had instead become a four-footed vegetative destruction derby with a taste for the forbidden fruits of the flower and a garden plantings.

Our red climbing roses along the yard fence top Scooter's menu favorites. She's stripped the blooms and leaves as high as her fuzzy, stubby neck can stretch.

From the roses, she plods on down to the bank near the dairy barn, newly planted with several dozen strawberry plants which were to give us a productive, erosion-resistant ground cover.

Are strawberry leaves conducive to the good health of lambs?

The marigold sections were ignored and are apparently bad-tasting, but Scooter made up for skipping them when she arrived next at the salvia section, where she munched the dozen plants to bare-stem nakedness.

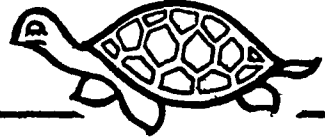
Letting her trot along to the vegetable garden was my biggest mistake. Scooter discovered the

small row of sweet potato plants, which were just beginning to sprout credible - and edible - growth. They are no longer credible - nor edible - following Scooter's latest in lamb lunches.

So this cattle raiser has renewed the ancient cow-sheep conflict.

However, this war is finally being won, not with a six-gun, but brand-new collar and ample length of chain.

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