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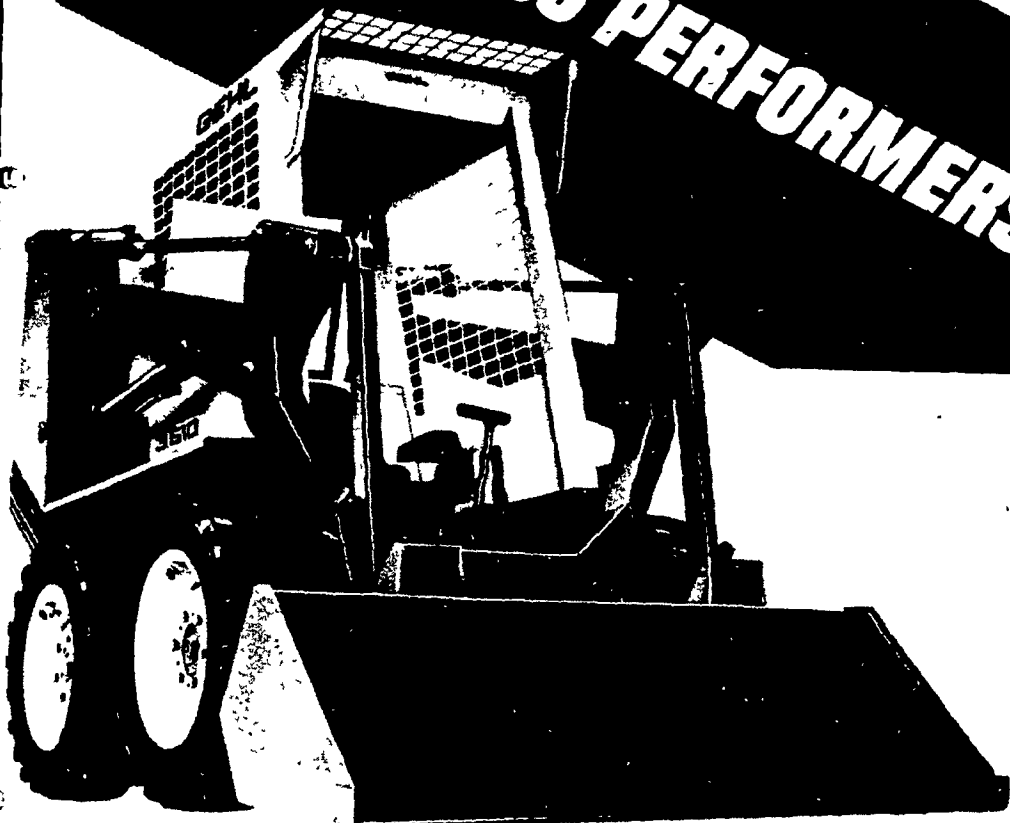
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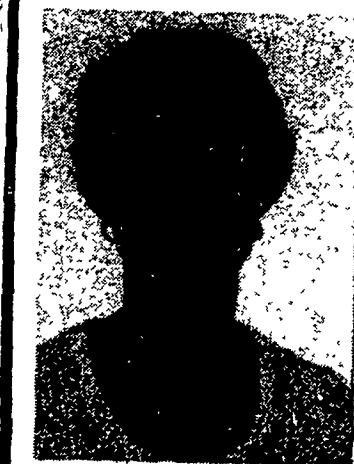
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**On being  
a farm wife  
- And other  
hazards**

**Joyce Bupp**

Just as summer's finished chapter now flips to the unwritten pages of fall, so the harvest season replaces the attention recently lavished by so many of us on the winding-up fair and show season.

Soon forgotten are those long, dirty hours of grooming and washing off-reluctant animals and the constant commuting between home and show, trying to keep chores done at two places.

Instead, we remember the late-night rap sessions with their stories and fellowship, the thrill of competition, the water battles and practical jokes, and the rosettes and ribbons that remain as souvenirs of our 25-hour days.

But, in those inevitable rap sessions that take place throughout shows, more and more I've been hearing some discontent. It's an undercurrent of complaint dealing with just a tiny percentage of show participants. The consequences, though, could touch each of us.

Most of us are getting pretty fed up with alcohol consumption at shows by that small percentage of exhibitors or helpers.

While most fair and show sites spell out specific rules banning alcohol use, enforcement is pretty non-existent. Though most drinking is done with no brother or danger to other exhibitors, there are those occasional incidents whispered about that scare the dickens out of "show mothers" like me.

I can get really "hyper" when I

hear of youth exhibitors in drinking bouts. Seems there's a small group here and there that sees such illicit partying with beer or booze at barns as the highlight of the show. Seeing adults doing the same thing at shows only reinforces that it's the "thing to do."

Careless smoking at barns is another panic-button subject. Who wants their husband or wife, their kids, or their beloved show animals sleeping in a wooden barn with hay and straw stacked up while one smouldering butt slowing flames to life in some unwatched corner.

If exhibitors, fair boards, breed organizations, show committees, and 4-H and FFA leaders join together to demand that even isolated incidents cannot be tolerated, I'd sure feel safer having my kids sleeping at shows with their 4-H heifers.

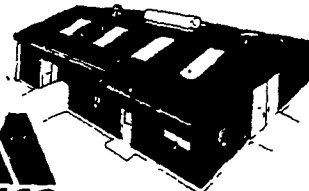
You can bet that cancelling prize money, together with a year's ban—or maybe permanent for repeated offenses—of offending exhibitors would go a long way toward eliminating dangerous and unacceptable behaviour.

Rushing searing flames, dense smoke, animals burned in stalls—or the unthinkable, the death of an exhibitor—from careless smoking and drinking, is one story I never want to read much less write about.

Let's make our shows safer before a tragedy occurs.

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