

On being a farm wife —And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



One of the least appreciated, but most valuable tools on a farm is a flashlight.

A working, full-of-fresh batteries flashlight is about as rare on this farm as a never-broken fence, clean pickup truck, or day without someone having a meeting somewhere.

While I can't claim it as fact, I've long suspected that the concept of a throw-away flashlight originated right here on our farm, long before hardware or dime stores had even heard of the disposable jobs. A new one seems to rarely ever hang around longer than a fresh-baked plate of brownies. We've never proven it, but something about the farm environment caused flashlights to disappear after a brief period of service to self-

destruct, like lemmings into the sea.

If you can manage to keep one around, these handy battery-lights service a farm's needs in an endless list of ways.

They're unbeatable of locating leaks in water pipes hidden in dark, dingy places, for seeking out the tell-tale shining eyes of heifers in the cornfield at 2 a.m., and for farm wives to hold up under a greasy piece of machinery while hubby replaces some miniscule, but vital, broken part.

That's just the beginning, though. Flashlights have shown the way late at night to the non-electrified attic of the house, where the all-important cattle sale catalog archives, filled with animal pedigrees, are housed.

And, I once stood, breathless, beaming the point of light to the high rooftop of our old farmhouse, where my dad was finishing up a rehabilitation mission on the chimney.

When it comes to kids, few toys hold the fascination of a flashlight. Signalling messages from house to barn provides hours of Morse Code fun, while rendering the batteries totally useless when you will need it for a crisis later on.

They're also irreplaceable for hunting kittens by some super-smart mother cat way, way back in a dark tunnel in the hay mow.

Among our super crew of farm employees is a retired York city policeman. Repeatedly, over the past eight years, he has drilled into us the necessity of keeping a working flashlight in the car and truck, especially on extended trips.

His insistence became a blessing a few weeks ago, as we hauled a bull home from 'upstate. The normally enjoyable trip along the river turned harrowing as a snowstorm made roads slippery and slushy and we glimpsed a tractor-trailer that had nose-dived down a steep bank.

After repeated soakings with the road slush, wiring on the cattle trailer shorted out, and our lights blacked out in the middle of a four-lane in the driving snow. Eventually, the farmer had to crawl under the rig and emergency wire a hookup, taking an extra soaking when a snowplow roared past

clearing the accumulation on the highway.

Our flashlight held steady, shining a saving beam for the repair job. I've avoided meditating much on how we might have spent the night without that light.

So, believe me, when it comes to flashlights, our motto is now one borrowed from that popular traveler's credit card often advertised on TV.

Don't leave home without it.

Pies for pleasin'

(Continued from Page B6)

IMPOSSIBLE PIE

4 eggs
1/2 c. flour
2 c. milk
6 T. butter
3/4 c. sugar
1 c. coconut
1 t. vanilla

Mix all ingredients in blender on high speed for one minute. Put in 10-inch greased and floured pie pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes.

Suzanne Diehl, Bedford

SHEPHERD'S PIE

(A different type pie)

Line a greased casserole with mashed potatoes.

Fill with leftover vegetables and cubes of meat.

Add bread crumbs and gravy and seasoning.

Cover with mashed potatoes and bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes.

If you have no leftover gravy, beat an egg and add to 1 cup milk and pour over meat and vegetables before putting mashed potatoes on top.

Marie Martin, Ephrata

RICE KRISPY PIE

Beat 2 eggs. Add:

2/3 c. sugar
1/2 c. molasses
1/4 c. water
1/4 t. salt
1 t. vanilla
3 t. butter

1 c. Rice Krispies
Bake at 350 degrees for about 40 minutes. Makes a small pie.

Katie King, Leola

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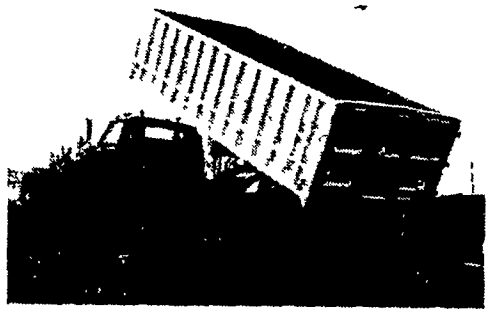
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