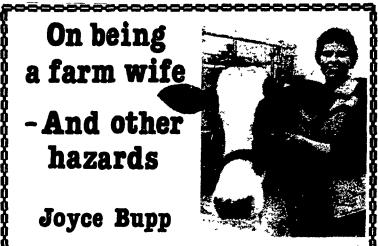
B12—Lancaster Farming, Saturday, June 4, 1983



What is it that takes fresh green grass, fermented-smelling silage, long, stemmy hay, golden corn, mixes it with such assorted goodies as protein concentrates, sugar beet or citrus pult, cotton seed, alfalfa cubes, sloshes it up with gallons and gallons of water, chews it all up, runs it through four stomachs and then gives it back in fresh, - sweet, nutritious milk?

Why, of course you know. A cow. "It's a miracle," I recently overheard a dairy princess say, in explanation to one puzzled youngster over how the above could ever take place.

Sometimes I'm inclined to believe that, not only is a cow a miracle, but the characters who spend their lives devoted to cows are more than a bit miraculous as well.

Then there are other days when there's no doubt in my mind that they are, instead, a bit flaky."

To the dyed-in-the-wool (er, hide) dairyman, the mooing of a cow is a siren song that sings forever on the wind, an elusive magical charm that draws him on in a restless search. It stirs in fullgrown, seemingly-sensible human beings a relentless quest and a downright willingness to give up the nine-to-five, weekends-off, lifestyle in search for that most desirable beast: the perfect bovine.

A cow can cause an owner to shed tears of frustration as she lays stretched and rigid on the ground, battling mightily to deliver a big bull calf, stuck midway in birth.

Rest and relaxation are sacrificed uncomplainingly, while a worried owner keeps pacing vigil and administers bottles of medication and prayer against a case of milk fever that just won't respond.

Tons of feed are carried lovingly to each cow in a year's time, carefully weighed and balanced. and then in turn must be carried back out in the form of nutrientrich wastes that will enrich the soil, and enable her two-legged "slaves" to grow yet more feed so that Bossy may never know hunger.

And, in a moment of pique because of a single loose place in the fence, as the cows head, heels high, over the hill and into the

waving cornfield, the dairyman may curse the day he ever heard of this four-legged dictator.

Fortunes have been won — and lost — because of cows. Fame, friendship, and partners have

risen and fallen, all over the lure of the dairy cow.

She has brought countless families closer together in the common bond of working together in caring for her, and split others because of her incessant demands on time and financial resources.

Only the Lord can make a cow. And then He made dairymen to look after her.



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