

Holidays and Farming: Two Family Traditions

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QUARRYVILLE — It's that time of year again when families and friends gather together to share the holiday season.

For many, it is a time when families travel from far and wide to be with their parents or brothers and sisters for Christmas and New Year's Day, but for the Clair DeLong family, the distance traveled is a lot less.

It simply means driving down a lane, or, in nice weather, walking across a field, at least for Clair and Miriam's three sons, Jim, Ken and Gerald.

All three of the DeLong sons now farm land which adjoins their parents' farm. The DeLongs own about 450 acres and rent an ad-

ditional 100. They own the real estate and their sons do the farming. Their operation consists of dairy cows and farrow to finish hogs.

So, while the holidays are still a special family time for the DeLongs, every day sees the family working together.

"As we bought the land, the boys expressed a desire to keep farming," Clair said. "This is another reason why we bought the land when it came available."

Clair and Miriam explained that they bought their first farm one year after they were married. Then in 1966, they bought a neighboring farm of 125 acres. Two years later, according to Clair, they bought another neighboring

farm of 109 acres. Within one year, 30 additional acres were added. And then in 1974, they bought the farm Clair and Miriam now live on, which was Miriam's home as a child. "I lived her until I was 21," she said.

Clair explained why he encouraged all three of his sons to continue in farming.

"I think it's a good way of life," Clair said of farming. "It takes skill to be a farmer and you have to be able to make do for yourself."

With the high cost of operating, equipment and land, I think it is the only way young couples can get started in farming today, with the support of their parents," Clair said.

And Miriam explained how having the boys on the neighboring farms has helped their whole farming operation.

"With farming the way it is today, we can utilize all their (her sons) skills," she said.

But, regardless of how close the family is there are always differences of opinion.

"It takes a lot of giving and taking, being able to cooperate with each other," Clair said.

Even their family Christmas celebration requires planning and cooperation.

The DeLongs plan it so that Miriam has Christmas Day dinner every other year, and during alternate years the family gets together for Christmas Eve at one of the children's houses.

During the holidays, there is only one member of the family that has to do more than walk to the next farm. Clair and Miriam's daughter, Susan DeLong Stoltzfus, lives in Cochranville with her husband, Marvin, and their two sons, Chad and Devin.

A Christmas Day at the DeLong household starts out with doing the milking and "necessary chores," according to Clair. Then, everyone gathers at the large table in Miriam's kitchen for a dinner of capons. And this Christmas, dinner was followed by some presentations from the grandchildren.

Jenny, age eight, who is the daughter of Jim and Martha DeLong, gave a reading, while Chad, age four, recited a poem he had learned in church. Then three-year-old Jonathan, Ken and Eleanor DeLong's son, and Devin, age two, joined in to sing Christmas carols.

"This is a tradition I want to keep doing," Miriam said.



Clair and Miriam DeLong have made farming a family tradition. Their three sons farm land that borders their farm.



Miriam's kitchen table is the scene of another family tradition during the holidays. Every other year, she has her family over for Christmas dinner. During alternate years, the family gathers on Christmas Eve.



Miriam DeLong always accompanies husband, Clair, on hunting trips. While he's hunting she does handcrafts. Shown above are some of her handmade quilts and a knitted Christmas stocking.

BACK HOME

By Michelle S. Rodgers



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Resulting In Better Resolutions!

Well, the new year is dawning. This year it really seemed to sneak up on me — I think the fact that it comes on a Sunday makes it seem earlier.

This time of year, the traditional greetings include, "Are you ready for the New Year?" or "Are you ready to make your resolutions for 1984?" Well, what improvements have you made from last years resolutions? Quite honestly, I can't even remember what mine were. I guess that's some indication of my success.

It is traditional to spend some time at the close of each year looking over the past twelve month's events and making some plans for the coming year. This might be especially enjoyable as a family time activity. Try recalling some special events and family times that occurred during the past year.

I'm sure that New Year's resolutions started out as a very noble deed. It is really not a bad idea to evaluate oneself and make some concrete plans for change in the new year. But, alas, all is for naught, if your New Year's Resolutions are like mine. They never seem to last through the month of January, let alone the next eleven months.

In evaluation, I realize that much of my problem is in the scope of my resolutions. My latest resolution is to make a better list! If your list of resolutions is longer than two typed pages or resembles an instruction manual, it is the

time to prioritize the list. "I will never be late", is one resolution I would eliminate. I haven't achieved that yet, and it's doubtful that one more listing this year will help!

Another shortcoming in resolution writing is when we make them so vague that it is impossible to feel any success. One such example is, "I will not get uptight as much." As much as what? Of course you mean you will feel less stress than last year, but do you have electrodes monitoring your stress level?

Then the other extreme is making resolutions too specific. "I will do the laundry every Thursday," Terrific! You now have 52 chances to blow it. That's not very good odds. Realistically, every so often would be more practical for me.

Try to set achievable goals and make room for mid-year amendments. If you are planning to save \$500.00 this year, you should probably amend that if you receive a \$4,000 raise in July.

So with the coming year, 1984, our New Year's Resolutions should be ones that are concrete, measurable, realistic, achievable and amendable.

Does this sound like too much bother? Well, if we really want a new year of prosperous personal growth, we need to set some goals. Whether we set our goals on December 31, June 5, or October 30 makes no difference. But what else would we do this New Year's Eve?

Have a Happy 1984!



This caribou from Quebec hangs in the DeLong's family room. Clair explained that the only way he could take a vacation was to get away from the farm. He explained that his main hobby was hunting.

Other traditions include getting together with Clair's family the night after Christmas. There are usually about 40 family members in attendance, and everybody brings a food dish of some kind.

When New Year's Day rolls around, the DeLongs do not have the traditional Lancaster County pork and sauerkraut. Instead, Miriam usually makes fried oysters, fish and shrimp. How do the DeLongs celebrate the first day of the new year?

"Some go hunting, some watch football games," Clair laughed.

While New Year's Day is a time for family members to do what each of them enjoy doing, most of the year sees the family working together.

"All things work together for good," Miriam said, quoting Romans 8:28 from the Bible. This and Psalms 46, which reads "God is our refuge and strength," are verses that Miriam and her family live by.