

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



When they became a rural institution, I'm not sure anyone knows. But farm sales are as familiar a part of this season as the greening up of pastures.

Farm sales, while serving the purpose of disposing of material goods, run the whole gamut of human emotion in what they actually represent. Some are a joy to all involved, perhaps a family of livestock breeders offering their best while cutting back on the work for awhile. Many, though, are brushed with the tragedy of death, divorce, financial disaster or legal dispute.

Still, while a proven successful merchandising maneuver, farm sales unfailingly have an air of social event about them. Strangers strike up conversation as they lean against a barn wall and eye the auctioneer. Neighbors josh at each other. Friends who haven't seen one another for a long time renew acquaintances.

More often than not, a certain percentage of the crowd is paying no attention to what's happening on the auction block or the auctioneer's coaxing calls. Propped against a fence, they'll gather in two's, three's or four's, sharing crop notes, production averages, or equipment woes.

"How's that new combine working for you?"

"I hear you're renting the place next to you this year?"

"What'd pigs (cows, sheep, eggs, etc.) bring last week?"

Farm sales are a great human equalizer, since no one cares how you dress for this social event. Garb is dictated by the weather, not high fashion. In a typical farm crowd you'll find anything from quality, checkered wool hunting

coats to ragged, manure-spattered heavy sweatshirts, to a rainbow of insulated coveralls in muted shades of blue, green and grey. Needless to say, blue jeans are standard, too, as are sturdy boots to do battle with the inevitable mud that blesses seasonal sales.

Hats. Always there are hats. Feed company hats, milk cooperative hats, feed hats, and even sometimes the more dressy wool or felt hats, if weather demands.

If bidding is the prime reason to attend a farm sale, I've long suspected that eating plays a close second.

While urban social events may revolve around silver trays of dainty hors d'oeuvres, farm sales are fueled by soup and pie. Generally it's prepared by some of the best cooks in the area, lovingly donating their time and talent to the benefit of ag, church fire company or other community group in charge of the food concession.

Vegetable, bean, chicken corn will probably be on the soup list — we won't suggest a favorite since we'd probably start an argument.

Hot dogs never taste better than

when simmered for a couple of hours with six dozen others on the back of a hot plate set up in the corner of someone's farm machine shed. Same goes for another favorite, hamburg barbecue, heaped up on a bun so thickly the abundance tumbles off the side into the paper plate and has to be nibbled from the fingers.

Hot and cold drinks abound, the most popular dependent on the temperature and wind whipping around the barn corners. Hot chocolate and coffee win hands down in cold weather, surpassed by chocolate milk and soft drinks as temperatures grow more balmy.

And back to that pie. Blueberry, immediately says the farmer. No way, I'll argue, seeking out the biggest piece of coconut cream, topped this high with lightly-browned meringue.

Machinery models come and go. Crop techniques evolve and change. Computers may soon make even yesterday's farm techniques ancient history.

But the institution of the rural farm sale will likely be with us for a long time.

## Davidsburg 4-H

The March meeting of the Davidsburg 4-H was held at the 4-H center.

Nicoweelm, an exchange student from West Germany, provided the program. He showed slides and talked about some cities.

An egg hunt will be held at the Salem church parking lot or recreation area.



## day out

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tours are needed and contributions for the effort are welcomed.

On the lighter side, the women's committee formed their own unique band to entertain after lunch. With homemade instruments, band members lead the singing of many old favorite melodies.

An astrologist, Lenora Hill,

Birdsboro, rounded out the day and assisted ladies in seeing their "inner selves". An astrologer for eight years, Hill said, "I use astrology as a counselling tool." Saying that she was honest when dealing with people who ask her to "read their signs", Hill viewed several personalities of "volunteers" and ended the day with light-hearted entertainment.



Astrologer, Lenora Hill, Birdsboro, entertained with her reading of personalities. Her astrology guide is in the background.

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