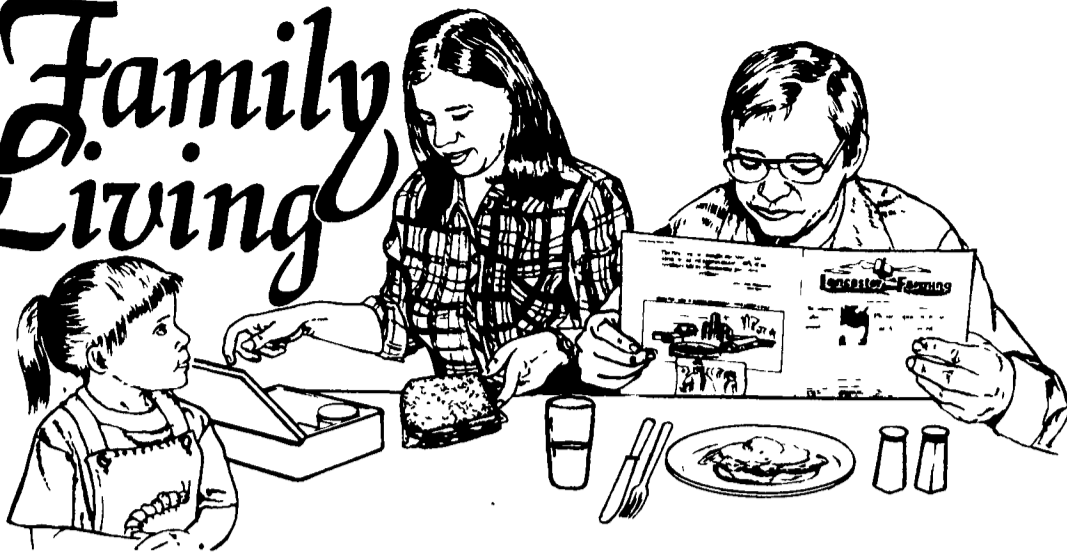


# Family Living



## Barbara Mummert: a woman making it in a man's world

BY DONNA McCONAUGHEY  
Staff Correspondent

YORK — We all face crises at one time or another. Sometimes it seems that farm folks face more than the "normal" share of crises. Many times people come away much stronger for having to face a difficult situation; other times they walk away broken and defeated.

One crisis that many farm women across the nation must face is widowhood. It is never easy. But, consider what you would do as a farm wife in your early thirties facing widowhood with four children from age 16 to one year old.

That is exactly what Barbara Mummert of York County confronted eight years ago. Barbara is a survivor. She and her family have not only survived, they have grown strong and close together.

Today, they do not regret their decision to keep the farm. In fact, if Barbara had any doubts, they have been erased when her two oldest sons said to this reporter: "Where would we be today if mom had not kept the farm? We wouldn't be able to start out on our own today. That would be real hard since we liked it so much as teenagers."

The Mummert family has continued the reputation their father earned as a breeder of prize-winning Landrace and Duroc hogs. Harold "Butch" Mummert began

raising hogs with a few Berkshire sows. He purchased his first Landrace when he went to a consignment sale with Barbara's uncle. Barbara liked the hogs, but "wasn't that excited about them."

Butch was determined to get her in the hog business, though. One year after he began raising Landrace he took the truck to work with him and came home late. He came in the house and was "being real nice" to her.

He said, "Guess what I got you on the way home from work?" Like most farm wives she pictured furniture or appliances that she needed. But as is often the case, Barbara found instead that the truck contained livestock. Butch had bought her a Landrace gilt and registered it in her name. But it worked; she was hooked on hogs.

Butch worked away from the farm during the day and left Barbara in charge of the operation. She also peddled vegetables and meat when her two oldest children were small to supplement their income. Through this hard work they were able to purchase a small farm and eventually build a new home.

When they first moved to the farm, they lived in a house trailer they owned and the first building to go up on the farm was a hog barn. The house was built almost entirely by Butch and Barbara. They moved in on Christmas eve.

Barbara remembers that Christmas well. They were laying carpet on Christmas eve and she fell asleep while trying to put the carpet down. She awoke to find that the carpet still needed finished, and they had toys to assemble before morning.

Although their hog operation was not large in size, it was high in quality. They have won awards at the Landrace Winter Conference in North Carolina, including champion and reserve champion bred gilts. They also showed the champion bred gilt at the National Summer Conference in Springfield, Ill.

It was at the Summer Conference that Butch was first sick. He was so ill that he could not stand for part of the show. When they returned home, he was diagnosed with cancer and given six months to live.

Butch lived only three months after he learned of the cancer. That three months was spent at home trying to help his family plan for the future. Butch insisted on going to all the county fairs he had shown at to say good-bye to his friends and colleagues.

However, there was one area that Butch never could bring himself to turn over to the family. His hogs. He transferred property, the truck, and everything else, but he could not face giving up his hogs. His family accepted this but had to deal with their lack of knowledge after his death.

Although they knew how to care for the hogs, they had no idea how to do the paperwork necessary to maintain a purebred herd. John, the oldest son, learned how to register the hogs by calling people to ask questions and by reading books.

At the time Butch died they had over 200 hogs. Barbara's first action after the funeral was to call her family to the kitchen, where they sat down together and looked at what they had. "I laid it all out in front of them. They knew what we had financially, what it would take for us to keep the farm going, and that we had to work together if we were to do this."

They had always worked together as a family and the children had each had their own chores. Barbara recommends that other families faced with this decision make it a family decision. This encourages everyone to work together for the best of the family. The Mummerts decided to cut their hog herd to about 100 head, a size they felt they could manage.

Barbara then faced the decision of returning to work off the farm. With a small child, she didn't feel she could leave her family. So they determined to live on the social security the family would get. This is another decision Barbara does not regret. She feels her presence

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Barbara Mummert has led her family to become a strong farm family as they have continued their purebred hog operation after the death of her husband. The Mummert family consists of Todd and Barbara Sue (on table) and Harold and John (in back).

## BACK HOME

By Michelle S. Rodgers



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### Carbon Copies

Creativity! I was reminded of this as I sat down with four children (ages 4-13) to decorate pumpkin cookies. I had prepared the cookies and icing and prepared the decorator bags so everything would be just right for the project. However, before I got a sample cookie decorated the way I thought it should be done, the children were well under way, creating their own versions of decorated pumpkin cookies. Each child had his own creative energies to bestow on this project. Instead of four dozen "carbon copies," we had an interesting display of creativity. (And they tasted good, too!)

All individuals, no matter the age, have creative energies. You may know someone who you consider to be very creative. Sometimes in comparing ourselves to these individuals we feel that we do not have any creativity. Actually, we are all unique individuals and we all have unique ways of expressing our creativity. The purpose of creativity is to learn, grow, and enjoy, and to express love and beauty, to share with others.

I don't think anyone would knowingly swap an original in favor of a copy, yet adults can stifle the original creativity in their children in favor of a "carbon copy" of their own interpretations of life.

Parents have always had the responsibility to gently mold their children as they mature. Today's parents have an even greater responsibility to their children in

seeing to it that they remain flexible and capable of change to meet the challenges of the future. Here are some things that parents can do to encourage creativity.

First, provide materials or space. These do not have to be expensive. Homemade play dough and finger paints work as well as those you purchase. Secondly, have suggestions ready of activities. Action is the key word here as children learn by doing. Then, be interested. Too much guidance can be hampering. Children need freedom to express their ideas, but this doesn't mean complete freedom. Limitations and rules are needed, too.

Provide vivid experiences in your child's life. Take your child for a walk and talk about the things you see. Emphasize how different things feel: the sun, the wind, the grass. Also, talk about size, smell and color.

As children draw or paint they sometimes paint feelings or experiment to see what happens. If you are puzzled about the finished product, avoid the comment, "What is that?" Instead try asking your child to "tell me about your picture."

Unless we want carbon copies of ourselves, we need to encourage the natural creativity of each child by allowing him to think for himself and feel free to express his own ideas. As millions of snow flakes each have their own unique, incomparable beauty, so each expression of creativity — however small or simple — is a ray of love expressing its own unique beauty.



John, Harold, and Barbara look over the gilts they will enter in the 1985 Farm Show. They have won several championships there.