

## Just one mistake can change a life

BY MARTHA GEHRINGER  
Staff Correspondent

It was the first day of "coat weather," Nov. 3, 1984. Ray Helman of the Shippensburg area was out picking corn in a field near his house that afternoon, when the corn picker's chain began clogging with fodder.

Ray climbed down from the tractor to fix the problem, but as he was reaching down to pick up an ear of corn he got a little too close to the moving chain. Before he realized what was happening, the chain pulled his right arm in by the elbow. Ray had no time to react.

"The coat was just too good and didn't rip away," says Ray's wife, Mary.

Ray immediately began yelling for help and attracted the attention of a painter working on a house near the field. The painter ran over to help, shutting down the tractor and corn picker, then sending for an ambulance.

Back at the home barn, Ray's son Wayne had been grinding corn and was on his way out to the field to report that the grinder had broken down.

Wayne arrived at the field shortly before the ambulance and attempted to loosen the rolls on the picker, but to no avail. When the ambulance arrived, the rescuers used air jaws known as the "jaws of life" to spread the machine and free Ray.

During the time he was caught in the corn picker, numerous things raced through Ray's mind. He recalls thinking that he would bleed to death, but surprisingly, there was little blood.

Once he was free, the paramedics took him to the Chambersburg hospital about a half hour away. From there, he was flown to Union Memorial Hospital in Baltimore, where his arm was amputated above the elbow.

By 11:30 p.m., eight and a half hours after the ordeal began, Ray was resting comfortably in his hospital room.

Throughout the day of the accident, Ray never doubted that he would farm again. He was discharged from the Union Memorial Hospital in ten days and "has been on the go ever since," he says.

Ray did have a period of adjustment, but he never felt sorry for himself. He said he accepted the fact of the accident and was determined to go on with his life.

Ray says he considers himself fortunate that the accident wasn't more serious. And, when he compares himself to a young boy who suffered a more serious accident, he notes that at least he has lived a greater portion of his life with all his limbs.

During his hospital stay, he didn't require a blood transfusion, and he took only the minimum amount of the medication. And, while he was conscious throughout the ordeal, his only pain was at the corn picker.

Because the accident occurred in November, he was able to recuperate during the slower season. During his recuperation period, Ray says his sons were "a very big help," making the transition period relatively smooth.

By late March, the arm was healed enough for Ray to be fitted with an artificial arm. He had little trouble adjusting to the new limb, but it took time to become accustomed to using it.

Now he can be found doing virtually everything from driving tractor, milking, prepping or feeding cows. If he isn't on the farm, he may be attending a school board meeting or a local ballgame.

Ray is the second generation to live on Rowe Spring Farm, where they milk about 80 registered cows

and farm about 450 acres. His plans for the future are simple and in keeping with his positive attitude. He says he'll "work as long as he can work."

**Norman Morrison**

Norman Morrison's accident occurred in the fall of 1959, a year without a killing frost. The corn stayed green into October.

Norm decided it was time to get the corn picked, so he went out with his mounted corn picker and started to work. The corn picker was an old M type and wasn't made for the type of corn Norm was working on — his corn was denser and thicker.

Because the corn was too thick for the picker to accommodate, the trash rolls were clogging up. When this happened, Norm simply reached down, pulled back on the stalk, and released it to send it through. But on Oct. 12, he didn't release quite soon enough and the rolls caught the glove and thumb on his right hand and pulled it into the trash rolls. Although he shut the machine down as quickly as possible, he wasn't fast enough.

A number of factors made it impossible for him to free his hand. The springs on the trash rolls had been tightened to pull the corn in faster, so there was little space between the rolls. His tool box was within reach of his left hand, but it was of no use since the rolls had been double nutted.

The accident occurred in the field furthest from the barn. The day was waning, and everything was becoming quiet, Norm recalls. He could hear the clicking of the elevator that the boys helping him were using to unload the wagons.

He knew that once the elevator stopped, they'd be coming out to get the other wagon, but the clicking continued.

During this quiet time, Norm had ample opportunity to think, and one of his thoughts, he recalls, was "Lord, I got myself into this, but I'm sure going to need your help to get out of it."

While the elevator continued clicking, Norm started yelling for help and was able to alert a neighbor, who told the boys helping Norm she thought something was wrong. They went out to the field and found Norm caught in the picker.

The whole family was understandably upset by the accident, but Norm was "just mad at myself for being so stupid as to let something like that happen." He brooded about it for several weeks before he finally accepted what had happened.

Now his outlook on life is very positive and he has decided it is better to make life as pleasant as possible.

His arm was amputated two inches above the hand and he stayed in the hospital five days, experiencing pain only on the third morning. Ever since then, with the possible exception of during cold weather, Norm's injury has been virtually pain free.

Norm says he has had to adapt, but notes that there is nothing he has done drastically different. A lot of the adapting has been mental adjusting and simple rearranging of routines. Some things, such as releasing the PTO on the tractor, are now better done with his left hand.

One of the problems he faced after the loss of his hand was the possibility of losing his job with the railroad. Prior to the accident, he farmed part time and worked in the signal department of the railroad full time.

After he had his artificial arm and proved to the chief surgeon he could indeed work, he was permitted to return to the railroad.

However he was unable to climb poles with hooks and belts and had to return as a helper. But the various department heads didn't



Even though Ray has only one arm, he can do the milking by grabbing the loop on the back of the milkers and attaching the teat cups with his left hand.

want a handicapped person in their departments because they were afraid the work wouldn't get done as fast.

Eventually he did return to work and worked in various departments. The final position he held with the railroad was helper and he returned to farming full time when the position was eliminated in 1980.

The farm Norm runs in Transfer was originally a dairy farm, but due to the odd hours he worked, he sold the dairy cows and added a few beef cattle. Currently, he has

approximately 100 head of beef and farms about 140 acres. He grows hay, barley, oats, wheat and corn.

He says he doesn't regret returning to farming since he found a peace of mind he never had when he was working on the railroad.

Although it hasn't been easy, Norm still works hard and is always busy. He is also an avid hunter. He credits his friend and family for helping him with all their love and support following the accident.

These are just two accounts of farm accidents. Everyone knows of someone who has had a disabling accident. There's the guy who lost both legs, but continues to farm, or the fellow who was run over by a tractor and walked away unscathed. But there is also the individual who was killed in a tractor accident.

There are tales of courage and determination for those who overcame it, and tragic stories of those who couldn't. All it takes is just one mistake.

## Baer's Agricultural Almanac offers gardening advice

LANCASTER — Home gardeners are told how to have fresh vegetables and flowers after the arrival of killing frost, in the 1986 edition of Baer's Agricultural Almanac.

The Almanac, now in its 161st year, list "season stretchers" that can enhance autumn menus and brighten the appearance of the home.

Frost-resistant vegetables include beets, carrots, radishes, cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, brussels sprouts, lettuce and endive. On the flower list are calendula, pansies, marigolds and others.

Some of the vegetables can be sown in August and September.

Baer's Almanac, a colorful perennial blooming this summer as it has since 1825, offers a wealth of garden advice, and contains many other beguiling articles.

It notes that 1986 will be the 50th anniversary of Margaret Mitchell's best-seller, "Gone With the Wind," and of King Edward VIII's abdication of the British crown for "the woman I love." It recalls that Davy Crockett and other heroes died at the Alamo in 1836. Harvard, America's oldest university, will be 350 years old.

Farmers are counseled to get their hay in during July, and not later. The year should be good for turnips and grapes; prunes should be very abundant.

Weatherwise, 1986 shapes up as cold and unpleasant. The first two weeks of January are to be very cold, with heavy snow in the West and mid-nation. For Jan. 28-31 the forecast is "Terrible weather!"

Easter will arrive March 30, very early, with much chill and rain, the Almanac says. Showers are forecast for most of the nation on Labor Day, Sept. 1, the earliest it can fall. A cold white Christmas is foreseen. New Year's Eve weather prediction follows: "New England and mid-Atlantic states will remember this one!"

"You may not like our forecasts," says Gerald S. Lestz, 71-year-old editor, "but don't say you weren't warned. Be a good Scout: Be prepared."

The bread recipe in the 1986 edition has a touching story. It is

printed as a memorial to the late Dorothy Spalding, whose husband, Keith Spalding, is retired president of Franklin and Marshall College. Mrs. Spalding baked hundreds of loaves of the bread as gifts for friends.

Guidance is offered on all sorts of subjects: The secret of a green thumb is having brown knees...To see the world's tallest cabbage, up to 15 feet high, visit the Isle of Jersey in the English Canal...To

kill noxious weeds, zap them under the sign of Leo in the old of the moon in August...Herbs properly stored can last a year.

The 1986 issue is replete with moon's phases, jokes, poetry, a fishing calendar, planting time schedules, brief stories of famous men and women, pertinent quotations, and much more. It is on sale at news stands and book shops. To order direct, send \$2 to John Baer's Sons, Box 328, Lancaster, PA 17603.

## Delina Kibbe is new Erie Co. dairy princess

ERIE — Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Lynette Loper, first named Erie County's dairy princess, crowned her county successor Friday evening, June 28th at the Millcreek Mall in Erie.

Delina Kibbe, the 16-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. John Kibbe of Waterford, received the title of Erie County dairy princess.

Delina will be a senior at Fort LeBoeuf High School where she is active in track, student council and future homemakers. She is also studying cosmetology at the area Vo-Tech school.

Theresa Titus, a senior at Seneca High School is the new alternate dairy princess for Erie County. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Titus of Northeast.

The judges who made the final

decision were Robin Dile, a news reporter for the Erie Times; James Barney, a Chataqua County dairy farmer; and Ray Kennerknecht, Crawford County Extension agent.

Lynette Loper bid her farewell as the Erie Co. dairy princess and relayed a few of her experiences. Nancy Jo Mitrich, the Pennsylvania 1st alternate dairy princess, was a guest at the pageant. The newly-crowned Crawford County dairy princess Jill Hyde and her alternate, Wendy Proper, were among the visiting royalty.

Sharon Chapman, dairy princess committee member, said that the first event the girls attended was the "July Jubilee" Holstein sale July 5th at Waterford, Pa.

## Elizabethtown youth to travel to Japan with FFA

ELIZABETHTOWN — Tammy Yost of RD 2, Elizabethtown, will participate in the FFA Work Experience Abroad program beginning on July. The program is an international educational exchange between the Future Farmers of America and rural youth organizations in other countries.

Tammy will travel to Japan with the assistance of a grant from the President's Youth Exchange Initiative, an activity of the U.S. Information Agency. She will gain

agricultural/horticultural work experience for three months in one of the 25 exchange countries.

By living and working with a family, Tammy will have the opportunity to learn about their way of life, exchange ideas about agriculture and contribute to international understanding.

Tammy is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Yost of Hershey. Her Lower Dauphin FFA chapter advisor and vocational agriculture instructor in Mr. Yerger.