

**On being  
a farm wife  
- And other  
hazards**

**Joyce Bupp**



You've all heard that classic debate: which came first, the chicken or the egg? Here's another, related, debate for you to consider; this one deals strictly with mothers who also feed livestock.

Where do you first learn to referee: for the kids or for the animals?

How well I recall the scrapping when they were little.

"You got the biggest piece!"

"No! You got the biggest piece!"

And then a duo of voices. "Mom! Make (him)-(her) stop taking the biggest!"

This argument was equally applicable to pieces of pie, a spot in

the sandpile, or part of the back seat of the car. I only wish I could comfort young mothers by assuring them that, as the kids grow older, such territorial mania diminishes. It doesn't. They just argue louder.

Anyway, when it comes to dividing food, I once heard a wise approach to dealing with the "but his piece is bigger" hassle.

One kid was instructed to make the division: cut the pie, the cake, or pick out the cookies. Then...the other one got to pick his (her) selection first. It didn't take long for the individuals involved to learn to divide very equally or end up with the lesser choice.

If only calves could be so encouraged toward fairness. Or sheep, pigs, steers, turkeys, horses or whichever members of the animal kingdom you deal with on a regular basis.

When our baby calves are tiny, this is no problem. Each has an individual pen, complete with its own feed and water bowls, plus a hay rack. After just a couple of weeks growth though, the snitch-from-your-neighbor complex starts to rear its ugly head.

Regardless of the quality or volume of hay put in the rack, what's next door is inevitably softer, greener and more flavorful. Even if it means kinking a young neck at a ninety-degree angle and stretching the tongue two feet to reach the neighbor's coveted feed.

When calves are weaned and moved into group pens, this tendency assumes full-blown "hoggish" proportions. (Apologies to my pork-producing friends for the use of that term.)

Now comes the test of a feeder schooled in the fine art of "mother-refereeing." Just how do you keep the pushy, oversized bully of the pen from stealing all the feed the Mild, Meek Millie Milktoast? And what about poor little Shy Shellie, the bashful heifer who stands back behind the rest and refuses to shove her head between a pair dubbed Armytank and Bulldozer?

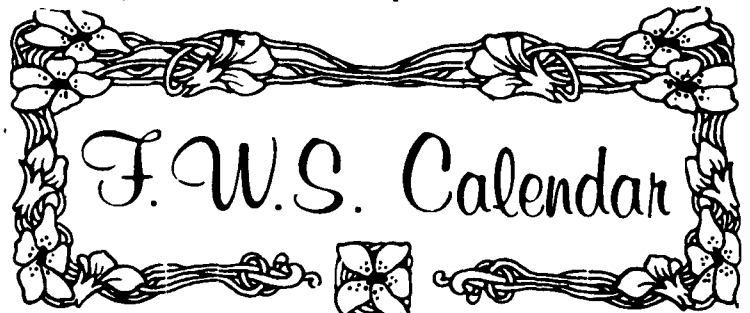
Back to cut-the-pie strategy. Armytank and Bulldozer must be tricked into believing that breakfast is served at only one corner of the feed trough. Then, while they're busy gulping down the goodies, the more backward girls can be coaxed to the other side for their share. This will last, maybe, until your back is turned, when Armytank and Bulldozer will level their shy penmates with the swipe of a head and devour the feed trough remnants. Sooner or

later, the only solution for such bullies is to move them into a pen of others more their size or the old dose-of-their-own-medicine approach.

Frequently, my belief is reaffirmed that kids are kids, be they two or four-legged.

Someone should issue mothers and farm wives who feed livestock regulation black and white-striped referee shirts.

Just call it the uniform of the profession.



**F.W.S. Calendar**

**Saturday, April 12**

Lancaster Society 7 meets at the home of Miriam Beane for a food and plant sale.

Lancaster Society 25 meets at the Farm and Home Center for the film Dolly's Cradle.

Lancaster Society 2 meets for a fun and games program.

Lancaster Society 19 meets at 12:30 p.m. to entertain Society 16 and county officers at

Hempfield Church of the Brethren.

**Tuesday, April 15**

Lancaster Society 9 sews at General Hospital.

Lancaster Society 6 meets at Widow Finney's at 10 a.m.

**Thursday, April 17**

Lancaster Society 15 meets at 1 p.m. for a program by State Rep. John Barley.

**Saturday, April 19**

Lancaster Society 3 entertains Society 35 at 12:30 p.m. at Zion UCC.

Lancaster Society 25 entertains Society 22 at the Farm and Home Center.

Lancaster Society 18 meets at 1:30 p.m. for a program by Mary Myers.

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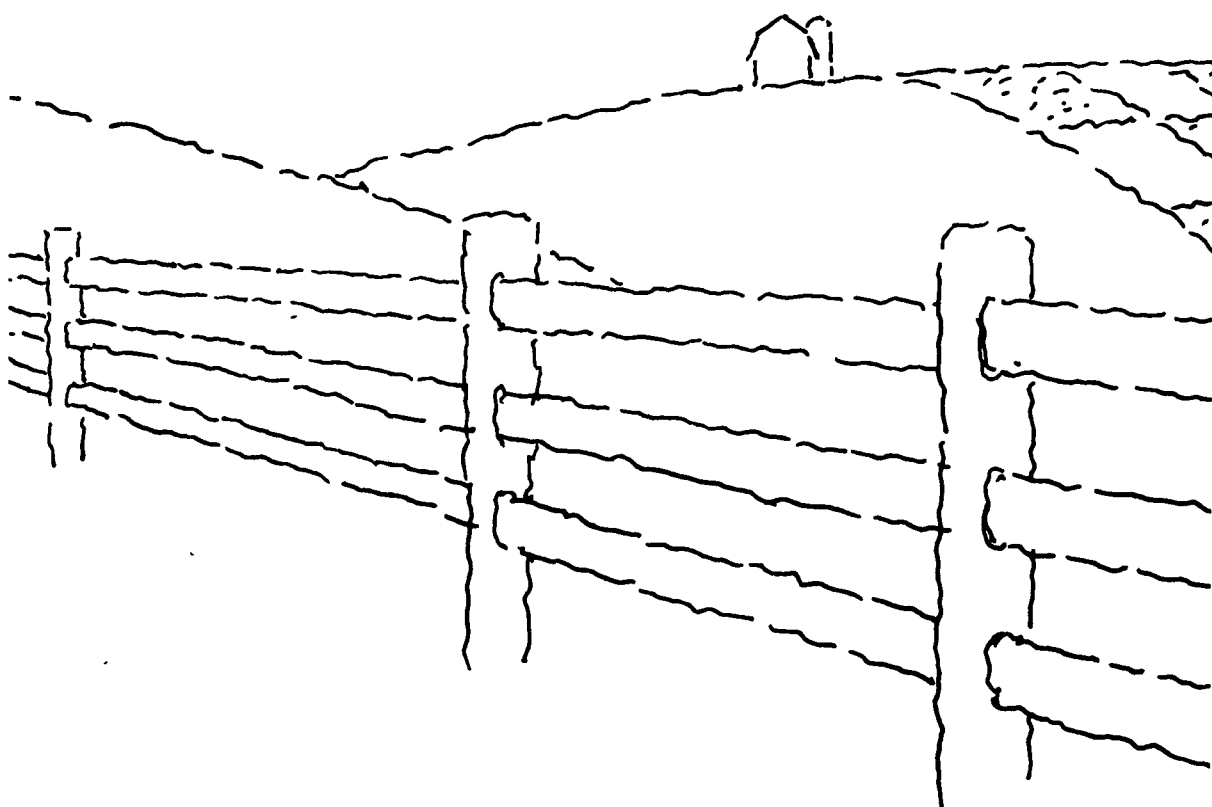
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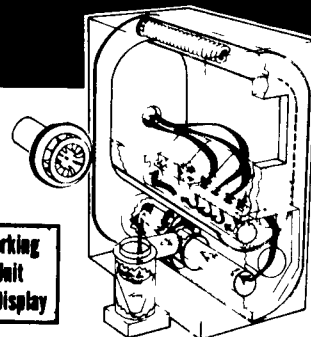
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