



June. National Dairy Month. And this year it's a month in which our family sees both beginnings and endings.

The eldest graduates from high school and starts summer college credit courses, all in the same week.

As one exits high school, the other slips in from middle school, having wrapped up that portion of his student years. Along with that we celebrate completion of his church confirmation studies.

Only yours truly is not likely to graduate from this "education" in which she is enrolled. Indeed, like farm wives everywhere, I fully expect to spend the rest of my life hanging around as a perpetual student. Of agriculture, that is.

My particular major happens to be in the field of Moology (pronounced "moo - ology"; i.e. a comprehensive study in the science of dealing with dairy cattle.)

Having been in this institution a considerable length of time, one would think by now I would have collected at least some sort of degree, a B.S. or B.A., with a little luck even a M.S. or M.A. A PhD is probably too much to hope for.

As it stands, the only letters I can attach to my name thus far came with a Certificate of Marriage, earning me a MRS.

Still, I knew when I enrolled what major this institution specialized in. I just didn't realize the variety of courses involved.

Right off the bat, I was introduced to intensive seminars in Bovine Biology I. This included case studies in heat detection and calf delivery. I also learned how to patiently stand holding high a bottle of calcium solution while it dripped into the vein of a milkfever stricken cow, so that she gained strength to get back on her feet. The course description neglected to mention the occasional test on being a human I.V. hanger.

I breezed through the nutrition courses, nodding with what I hoped were wise, intelligent looks as my instructor enlightened me on highfiber diets, TDN, bi-carb butterfat boosters, and hi-protein concentrates. I even learned the difference between hay and straw. Straw is what mice most often make tunnels through. Hay is the soft, slippery stuff that's easy to fall off of and onto the barn floor.

Agronomy was especially fun disking ground, raking hay, estimating how many bales would miss the wagon as I maneuvered the baler-ejector around the tricky field ends. I must have flunked, because this administration has me back on the freshman level: unloading hay wagons.

But it was in Early Childhood studies that I apparently made my best grades. Now into graduate work in calf-raising, they've given me a fellowship and my own research lab — they call it the Calf Nursery.

Of course, Moology being the comprehensive sort of field that it is, studies include other minor courses.

There's Phys-Ed, where we lift weights (50 to 100-pound bags of feed); do track events like the 440heifer chase and shotput, in which rocks of varying sizes and shapes are lobbed at the stupid pig rooting up the rose bed.

And Animal Behaviorial Psychology. Hands-on lessons deal with determining if a cow with a new calf will flatten you or just stomp nervously when you try to feed her baby; methods of coaxing loose heifers back inside the fence (I'd like to cut class on this one), and voice tones to use on cows snitching their neighbor's stall.

June Dairy Month seems an appropriate time to celebrate having earned at least my MRS in Moology. But graduate? Not likely.

