

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



"What shall I do — for I have nowhere to store my crops?"

That phrase simply leapt at me from the front page of our church bulletin Sunday morning. It came, of course, from the parable of the man who tore down his barns to build bigger, to store more, then died before he could enjoy his stockpile of abundance.

How ironic that this scriptural phrase would turn up now. For weeks we've been pleading from our sanctuary for rain to provide crops to farmers both close by and in distant states facing empty barns.

And what a strange twist of fate. For while stockpiles dry up in Georgia, cattle grow thinner in the Carolinas, and Maryland's stunted corn and beans shrivel into tighter curled-leaves under each day's baking heat, officials ponder where we will store the promised bumper harvest from other parts of the country.

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While officials ponder storage for surpluses, it is other farmers who are rushing to the rescue for those in need. From Indiana and Ohio, from the mid-and upper-mid West, from Canada, and from our fellow Pennsylvanians, help is flowing from generous hearts in

the form of tons of hay and transportation contributions.

Not building barns, these farmers blessed this year with more rain. Emptying them, instead, to help fellow producers.

Trains piled with hay head Southeast, racing professionals park their stock cars and load bales on their trailers, and 4-H groups in distant communities sweat in barns and mows to send hay supplies.

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Sad. Because, this year, even those farmers with bountiful harvest, with bin-buster yields, will get precious little return for their yields, due to the incredibly depressed prices.

How many "bigger barns" and higher grain piles outside elevators make sense, anyway, when animals are going hungry in neighboring states, and when we've already stockpiled enough to devastate prices?.....Why make continuous outright grants and donations to every foreign country that comes along with a hand out — and then give our own farmers low-interest loans. Why not take care of our own as we have so generously and historically befriended the rest of the world?

And, to our government's credit,

recently announced USDA emergency programs are pointed in that direction.

Farmers have stabilized and subsidized our cheap food economy for a long, long time. Abundant, inexpensive food has freed 97 percent of our population to explore space, make medical strides, educate our children, enjoy a standard of living and freedom still the envy of most of the world. Allowing a giant segment of farmers to wilt and fade away can only ultimately undermine the foundation of the country.

Guns to Nicaragua? Free food and grain to countless countries around the world? And only more debt to our own farmers?

Realistically, we cannot possibly bail out every farmer with dry pastures and skimpy hay supplies. But, in my simplistic, naive opinion, I'd sure sooner have my taxes go to send grain, hay, even those mountains of surplus milk powder, for use in livestock feeding, to fellow farmers, than to have it sitting rotting on ships waiting at some distant foreign port, where it may ultimately end

up fattening the pockets of a third-world dictator or terrorist structure.

To those of you who have, and who continue to generously share your hay mows, your trucks, your pocketbooks, and your hearts, God bless you. These kindnesses of farmer helping farmer make me teary-eyed, lumpy-throat proud to be a part of the ag community.

And, for others who might wish to help, an emergency hay fund is being handled by this newspaper and the Pennsylvania Farmers Association. Your contributions may be sent to: Summer Drought Hay Fund, and mailed in care of Lancaster Farming, Everett Newswanger, Editor, P.O. Box 366, Lititz, PA., 17543.

Certainly, "bigger barns" is no answer. Nor, in the long-run are emergency fund and feed programs, sharing farmers, generous truckers and hotlines.


Only a total, comprehensive, long-range agriculture policy aimed at making farming a profitable business will spell ultimate relief for the American farmer.

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Anne Granbery



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