

Berks County Executive Board

The Berks County Executive Board met Nov. 3 at the Ag Center and the new officers presided at the meeting. They are: Mary Fizz, president; Janet Schlegel, vice president; and Darlene Yost,

secretary.

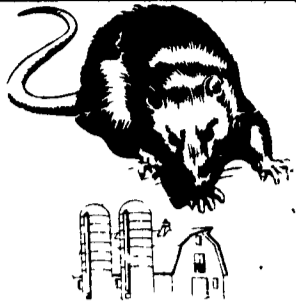
The State Farm Women Convention will be held Jan. 12 and 13 in conjunction with the Farm Show. June Beck of Group 12, Bernville, will be running for state

secretary

Total Farm Women membership in Berks County numbers 213.

The board will meet next on Jan 5.

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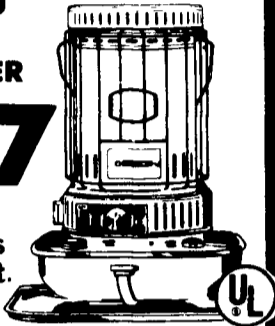
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On being a farm wife - And other hazards
Joyce Bupp



Because it's there.

That's the reason people often offer for attempting dangerous, challenging, exciting feats.

Why did you sail alone across the storm-tossed Pacific...swim the chilly English Channel...climb the jagged icy peaks of Mount Everest? Because it's there, of course.

The only thing I can safely sail is the frisbee, and my swim preference is poolside or Eastern shore beaches, and mountain climbing is for goats.

So why am I here, high atop the craggy cliffs of this jagged pile of hay? Because it's here. Wrong. Because I failed to con someone else into that chore we call getting down hay for the heifers.

This particular mow holds hay for our baby calves and weanlings. It's handily dropped through a hole in the floor to the feed ally below on the bank barn's ground floor. But first, someone must scale the hay heights and pry it loose.

I say "pry" because this mow — at least the top part — is randomly stacked with the balés stored pretty much just as they fall from the elevator and topple into a pile. This method saves someone from facing heat exhaustion by stacking bales neatly under a sun-baked tin roof in mid-August. But the retrieval process is like playing a giant game of pickup sticks with heavy bales for sticks.

Random stacked bales protrude unevenly from the pile in all directions, often squashed beyond bale-shape recognition, looking more like loosely-tied lumps. But rarely does a protruding edge offer a handy section of string for pulling the lump from the stack. And, grabbing a corner of the hay itself generally leaves one with little more than a sparse handful of dried stems.

Thus, one must scale the sides of the ragged pile, scamper to the tiptop with the pigeon residue and toss dusty bales down to the floor below. One law of random-stacked

hay mows is that the same bale which refused to budge with repeated tugs will suddenly let loose when used instead as a ladder. The resulting avalanche will effectively get down bales, but leave your body colorful with black and blue bruises.

And, like snow or glacial packs on lofty mountain peaks, a haymow climber must be ever aware of crevasses. It is not uncommon in random hay stacks to gingerly insert a foot between two mashed bales and have that entire leg totally disappear into a bottomless crevasse. This is not only painful and embarrassing, but somewhat scary. I have had nightmares of totally vanishing into a giant haymow crevasse and not being found until the last dusty bales are fed come spring.

Long ago, I learned not to take the clever shortcut of opening the hay hole and trying to throw the bales through it from the top. Even a bale jammed so tightly in the hole that the farmer couldn't pry it loose, will let go and fall through to the cement below under the weight of a farm wife scrambling over it to safety on the adjacent barn floor.

However, even neatly stacked haymows offer their own brand of adventure. On occasion, the entire exposed cliff-like face of a stack of bales has been known to let loose and crash to the floor, leaving behind smashed nests of bantam eggs, a terrified mouse or two, and likely one grumbling, hay-coated farm wife buried in the pile.

One only needs one such incident of carelessly being near the front of such a stack when it splits off like an iceberg calving off a glacier to remember that haymow lesson.

Perhaps farm wives' work contracts should include a "dangerous mission" clause which we could invoke to cover dangerous chores done out of necessity and not "just because they're there."

Jake, 1986 is coming to an end. I understand there's no Investment Tax Credit this year.

Don't you worry about that, Luke... **BINKLEY & HURST BROS.** are burning the midnight oil getting ready for their **ANNUAL DISCOUNT CASH & CARRY DAYS SALE.** Dec. 8th thru Dec. 31st. And CASE IH replaced the Tax Credit with up to \$10,000 in **CASH-BACK CHECKS!**

Ooh! You don't get ahead of them fellas for giving their customers the best buys! I can't wait to see that special yellow insert in the December 6th issue of Lancaster Farming.

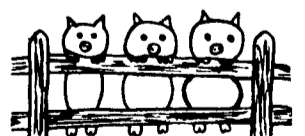
Luke, where else can you have food, fellowship and save money at the same time!



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