

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Remember Wicked Wanda?
Wicked Wanda is one of the more temperamental critters in our milking herd (right, that's 90 percent temper; 10 percent mental). She gallops everywhere but into her stall, is about the only cow ever to kick at anyone and really mean it, and boasts an appropriately devilish-looking, pointy, half-horn on one side of her head.

After a tirade in this column a few months ago about our chief herd rascal, she proceeded to make a complete fool of yours truly's rantings by setting a new herd per-day milk record. And she has topped all contenders since then.

While that may change her personality not a whiff, it does tend to make it a tad more tolerable. That also makes more palatable her tendency to toss out heifer calves, bearing her unique approach to life among the milking string.

Following Wicked Wanda into the herd, as you may recall, was her first daughter, Weird Wendy. Who is about to be renamed to Whining Wendy.

Ever heard of a pouting cow? Wendy pouts. She pouts because she's one of those Type A, workaholic personalities which experts warn are prone to heart attacks, ulcers, high blood pressure, strokes and similarly related afflictions of life in the competitive lane.

Now, Wendy gets to whining most about once a year — when she's turned dry for a stretch of rest and relaxation before calving and returning to the milking string. Like the classic Type A she is, Wendy wants only to go back to work. Badly. Or wants back with her friends, or her routine. Or maybe her feed. But she wants back.

We turned her dry last week and out into the heifer lot until she could be trucked over the hill to the

dry cow lot.

Wendy bawled. Bellowed. Screamed at the top of her lungs. Opened her mouth wide, wagged her big, long tongue with despair and hollered in ear-splitting, nerve-racking, endless protest. For hours. For days.

Screaming for admittance at the back end of the barn while we milked one night earned her nothing but our complaints. Tired of being ignored, she hopped the fence, trotted 220 feet to the other end and set up a noisy temper tirade. Imagine. A bawling cow in stereo.

That finally got her admittance to the barn. And prompt removal, to her dismay and disgust, right back out the other end. Where she stood and pouted. And bawled.

A night or two later, the youngest came clipping around the end of the bunk feeder on his way down from the feed room. In the dark. Wendy waited until he'd rounded the corner near her, and let loose with a shrill solo. Fastest trip he ever made back to the barn.

Last year, we dried Wendy off and promptly relocated her to the dry lot. An alert friend found her

some hours later, trotting out the road on the ridge above the farm, headed West. Only fate kept Wendy from further misadventure on her search to get back to work.

We've about given up on solutions for Whining Wendy. Either this cow will eventually go hoarse, or she may find her talents donated for the service of her country.

Perhaps the Coast Guard could use a loud foghorn, somewhere along the coast.

Preferably a coast far away. Very far away.

Delmarva Safety Seminar Set For Feb. 17

NEWARK, Del. — Methods of detecting and correcting unsafe working conditions and practices will be included in all six safety workshops at the tenth annual Delmarva Safety Seminar to be held Tuesday, Feb. 17, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Wicomico Youth and Civic Center, Salisbury, Md.

The seminar is planned for safety directors, supervisors, safety committee members, plant fire brigades, maintenance managers, plant nurses and other company operating personnel.

The cooperative extension systems of Delaware and Maryland, the Delmarva Safety Association and the Delmarva Poultry Industry, Inc., are sponsors of the annual event. The seminar's six workshops will cover

back injuries, workmen's compensation, safety incentive, occupational health update, medical emergencies and substance abuse in the workplace.

Guest speaker at lunch will be Buck Faucett of Cyclone International. The latest in occupational safety gear and other industry-related exhibits will be featured along with federal and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) consultation booths.

A registration fee of \$10 will include lunch, coffee and an educational packet. Deadline for registration is Feb. 13. In recognition of the tenth anniversary of the safety seminar, the first 500 registrants will receive a free desk folder with pen.

For further information or to register, contact Ron Jester, extension safety specialist at the University of Delaware Research and Education Center in Georgetown (856-7303).

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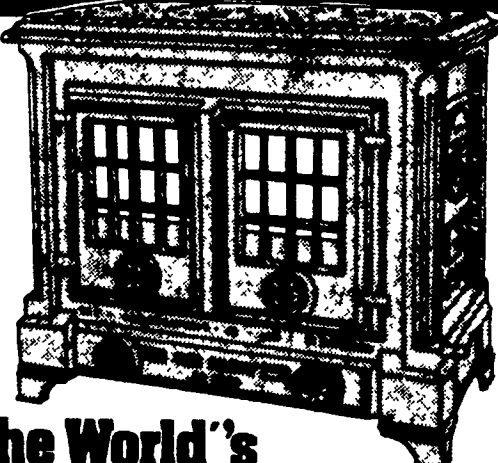
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