

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

Ah, mud. Sticky, gooey, clingy mud. And, wonderful, beautiful, terrific mud.

See, last year there was virtually no mud. Moisture must be present to concoct mud, and last spring, there was precious little water in the soil.

So, my vow for the season is to appreciate mud for its promise of water.

There will be no complaining about the telltale prints across the kitchen floor. Nor will I lament sweeping away the hunks of outside environment that turn up on the inside environment, shaped mysteriously like the deep cleats in the soles of certain males' barn boots.

None of the dairy cows seems to mind the squishy soil either. At least one per day appears to be giving herself a total mud-beauty-bath, with special emphasis of the therapeutic cosmetic treatment to the udder area. That takes an extra measure of pre-milking scrubbing with warm water and towels, until the "milking equipment" is properly cleaned and dried.

The cows most ticklish about being washed always manage to find the gooiest mudholes, and then dance a jig, like a toddler being tickled on the tummy, at cleanup time. Indeed, there are days when it would just be handy to run the herd through a car wash on its way into the barn.

Mud also thrives in our vegetable garden, low-lying and sometimes dotted with tiny springs. So, it's rare to be able to start planting there as early as a March, cabin-fever-mentality urges. Smoothing and raking a seed bed in muck that would hang up a bulldozer poses a slight problem.

Still, late last week, I simply couldn't stand it any longer. True, the vegetable patch was still squishy. But, the flower border had kissed the mud stage goodbye, and the soil was the perfect crumbly texture.

Like an addict, I was helpless against the magnetic lure of a couple of metal cans stashed away on a cool, dark windowsill in the basement. There would be no peace for me while the sun shone brightly, and a breeze teased the fluffy hairs of Goober the kitten rolling in the freshly-raked soil.

So down on my knees I went, paying tribute to the season in a timeless ritual.

With a small trowel, a tiny section of the border soil was loosened and miniature furrows — crooked as usual — traced in the damp richness. And into them went tiny seeds, radishes and spring onions and chard. Across another freshly-raked section leaf lettuce seed was broadcast.

Never mind that the honest-to-goodness spring is not yet even in its infancy. Or that a dusting or two



Lancaster Society 12

Lancaster Society 12 will meet March 17 at the home of Mrs. Emma Bleacher at 9 a.m. for a

pound auction. Members should also bring a craft to work on or to demonstrate.

Lancaster Society 20

Members of Lancaster Society 20 met March 5 at the home of Jane

Ferguson with Valaria Ferguson as co-hostess.

In the morning, members sewed 316 bed pads, then enjoyed a covered dish meal.

Following devotions by Valaria Ferguson, president Mary Shirk conducted the business meeting. The group made plans for a food sale at the Andrews Bridge Horse Show and Fox Hunt March 21.

The Sunshine Committee sent two sympathy cards, two baby congratulations cards and a basket of fruit for the month.

Society president Mary Shirk presented Sara Conroy with a pin honoring her 80th birthday and installed Martha Hart as a new member.

Members and their husbands will have a party March 14 at the home of Vera Herr.

The meeting concluded with a quiz on the by-laws of the Farm Women organization.

of snow is inevitable. Or even that four cats and 12 chickens kept vigil, laying plans to invade the loosened soil the very instant my back was turned.

As indeed they did. By the time I headed out to feed calves that evening, a freshly dug mound of soil made a tiny pyramid between the hoped-for-rows of radish and onion.

I covered part of the miniscule furrowed plot with a plastic feed bag, weighted it with flat stones, and turned the hose on the rest to settle the soil and discourage such enthusiastic invasions by little feet.

Perhaps the cats and the chickens, the whims of weather or weeds, and the inevitable heifers escaping to stomp through the plot will interfere with this mini-planting of promise.

But for now, the very first garden seeds are in the soil. Planting season is nearly here for real. And, once again, with the optimism that keeps farmers putting seeds into the ground year after year, hope for a bountiful season springs eternal.

And the mud? Just a temporary inconvenience for a more permanent improvement.



Lancaster Society 24

Members of Lancaster Society 24 met Feb. 24 at the home of Mrs. B. Roy Witmer, New Holland. President Carol Groff conducted the business meeting.

Inez Long, guest speaker, talked about retirement plans. Following the speaker, refreshments were served.

Lancaster Society 28

Members of Lancaster Society 28 met Feb. 26 in the home of Joyce Slaymaker. The January meeting was cancelled because of snow.

Program for the evening was by Moore Bears. For roll call, each member told about her first teddy bear.

Ether Meck led the devotional meditation. Joyce Slaymaker and Ruth Dean served refreshments.

The next meeting will be held March 26 at the home of Brenda Book.

Berks County Executive Board

The Berks County Farm Women Executive Board met recently in the 4-H room of the ag center.

State cookbooks are being published and will be ready for sale by the Spring Rally at Elizabethtown College May 20.

All Lancaster County Farm Women are invited to a luncheon/business meeting by Agri-Business at the Gilbertsville Fire Company March 19.

The group will purchase flannel nightgowns for the Hamburg Center and pictures for the walls at Berks Heim.

The next Executive Board meeting will be held May 4.



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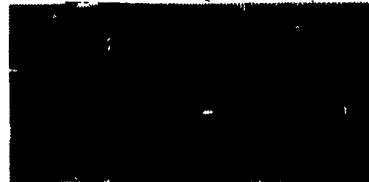


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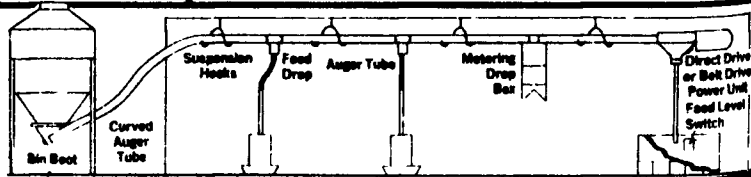
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