

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



It's been a berry good year. Strawberries were sweet and tasty, if a bit shortlived. A timely rain on the raspberries added plump juiciness to these favorites, too, before another heat wave wiped out the crop tailenders.

"Keep an eye out for the red raspberries," I asked the field crew. Red raspberries cook up into one of the most beautiful, ruby-colored jellies imaginable. But the heat grew super-intense, other responsibilities took priority and the red raspberries - frankly - were forgotten in the rush.

"Interested in seeing if there are any red raspberries left?" offered the farmer one sticky, humid, oppressive afternoon last week. Actually, the only thing that really sounded the slightest bit appealing after sweating through the evening chores was to hose down and sprawl across a piece of cool concrete.

But that wasn't getting us any berries.

And, almost as an afterthought, it was added that there just happened to be a bunch of hay bales which had missed the wagon in the angles and corners of newly-baled fields. Fields — how convenient — which were bordered by the fencerows in which the red raspberries hide.

By gosh, we could kill the proverbial two birds with one stone here — pick berries and pick bales. Besides, I've heard tales all summer about a whitetail doe which nibbles in these particular fields along about dusk.

The venture took us bumping along in the pickup, Fritz lounging on the back, up a long, dusty, field road along the interstate. There, hanging in among the sumac and multiflora rose at the bottom of the

steep highway bank was paydirt. Thick brambles weighted with clusters of blackberries. Not the subject of the search, but definitely a valuable bonus.

First, thought, it was on to the red raspberries. Not to mention the bales. The distinct advantage of such a ride-n-pick setup is that it's possible to cruise — make that bounce — along the edges of the fields until the familiar fuzzy-leaved canes and clusters of red make an appearance.

Only most of the clusters showed but bare stubs, apparently having provided feast for the plentiful bird population and kids who noted how good they had tasted during baling breaks.

Under heavy leaf cover and a couple of feet into the briars and brush, there were a few of the red treasures still hiding. And another memory fell into place: never, but never, go picking raspberries without heavy jeans and socks. That includes even when the temperature is 95 degrees at sundown, and the heat has suffocated your common sense.

The doe was nowhere in sight, but we did check out one of the early fields of soybeans going into delicate white blooms. Fritz checked out the groundhog potential. Giant briars checked out our bare legs.

Bales — about two dozen worth — dotted the multiple-field area of the raspberry haven. In first gear, we jounced across the hayfields, the farmer retrieving and stacking the bales, me behind the wheel, zigzagging like a candidate for D.W.I. arrest.

Fritz, tired and hot, alternated between sprawling over the seat and hopping back out in case he missed some four-legged wild

beast to terrorize.

Periodically, we did additional battle with the briars over the scarce remaining berries, then waited on the hound to decide if he'd ride or walk. We suspect the doe stayed just inside the woods, chuckling behind her whiskers.

It was near dark when the pickup creaked back down the grade, and we strained eyes to find the briars hung with blackberries — more berries than we'd found all evening in acres of field and fencerow. Straddling a yard-deep gutter from highway runoff, we picked the fat blackberries literally by feel as nightfall settled. Grabbed in a cluster, the ripe ones plopped into your palm, while their neighbors fell and rolled off bare knees, between more thorny brambles anchoring their way into the top layer of leg flesh.

Yes, it's been a berry good year. We have the scratches to prove it.

## Adams 4-H'ers Attend

### National Citizenship Program

GETTYSBURG — Three Adams County 4-H teens attended 4-H Citizenship Washington Focus, a week-long conference held recently at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Md. The 4-H members were: Scott Gibson, New Oxford; Kevin Powell, Aspers; and Kathleen Grim, East Berlin.


The Center, located just outside Washington, D.C., was the perfect place for the 4-H members to stay while learning about citizenship, the democratic form of government, and current issues facing the U.S. government.

Adams County 4-H teens along with 40 others from Pennsylvania

and members from five other states used the nation's capital as a classroom for a week. Meetings with congressmen and senators, along with visits to federal agencies, historical buildings, and cultural centers, allowed the 4-H members to participate as they learned.

Between visits to Washington, the 4-H members attended discussion and lecture workshops on what they experienced. They also explored ways to use the concepts for themselves and for their communities at home.

After a week at CWF, these 4-H members now have a better understanding of government for the people, by the people.



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