

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



How innocent and pastoral a scene the following always appears to be.

Sunshine washes over a pasture of green grass, picturesquely sliced by the mandatory gurgling brook. Somewhere in the picture is a row or cluster of oaks or poplars or hickories. And at the foot of the trees, a couple of dozen half-doing cows ruminates, meditates and rest the day away.

Brings a smile to your face just to think about a scene like that, doesn't it?

Unless you know the facts, ma'am. Then it's not so pretty.

What appears to be picturesque, pastoral rural artistry is actually a hotbed of bovine revolution in planning. For what passes for Bossy, Bessie and company licking and grooming one another's heads is in reality the passing from

muzzle to ear the secret orders of attack.

"Pssst, pass it on. Tonight we hit 'em."

Your clue is in the tails. (Just de-tails, ma'am, just de-tails.) Watch 'em carefully.

See 'em sway. See 'em swish. See 'em appear to delicately swoosh flies from the backs of one another. All just a coverup, ma'am.

Flies have nothing to do with this swaying and swishing. This is carefully choreographed, thoroughly rehearsed, battle attack plans for another round of De-Tail Wars.

The first volley is fired as the first milker is hung on the first cow in the lineup. With speed born of conviction and aim honed with practice, a sloppy tail whips around the face of the milking

farmwife, marking her check with brown slashes.

Veterans of De-Tail Wars enhance their weaponry with "hunks." Hunks are petrified balls of mud and manure, mixed in bogs under those oak or poplar or hickory trees, and applied liberally to tail switches. Repeated immersion of tail hairs in the bogs assure adequate size to the hunks, and sun-curing guarantees their indestructibility.

Hunks enhance brown, sloppy-tail-splashed cheeks with contrasting patterns of red welts at our place, one fighter in De-Tail Wars recently established a new level of tail-inflicted face pain by whipping a hunked tail smack at the mouth of the eldest offspring, newly fitted with dental braces.

Other known bovine battle plans utilize super-long, wispy tail hairs to pry loose contact lenses, and deposit them below in the manure gutter.

Some bovine warriors turn their past losses in De-Tail Wars into battle assets. One switch-less tail battler hereabouts, known as Hattie, uses her blunt, bald, bobbed-tail like a club. On the end of the tail bone, replacing the lost switch hairs, a protective armor has grown. Hattie has perfected the uncanny ability to rap her callused tail club on the soft spot just behind one's ear. After a fly, of course.

Likewise consider her herdmate Pearl. Pearl's tail sports a dandy kink about halfway to the switch, like the crooked nose of a boxer K.O.'ed once too often. A handicap? Not the slightest. Healed tail-bone breaks possess infinitely

more temper and hardness in the scar knot than that found in the original. Sort of like a set of brass knuckles on a fist. It leaves a similar effect upon the nose of anyone unfortunate enough to get bushwhacked by Pearl's tail kink.

Often stallmates team up during De-Tail skirmishes, either alternately whapping the face of the milker, or synchronizing movements to smack both sides of the head with precision timing.

Next time you're tempted to admire a scene of cows clustered under shade trees in a meadow, please keep one thought in mind.

Someone has to be responsible for all those little DeTails.

See this red welt here behind my ear.....

## Dairy Farm Mom

(Continued from Page B2)

being involved in other activities. She is 4-H organizational director for the South Mountain and Cedar Valley clubs which means she works with 60-70 kids. She leads a support group for widows, is a member of Lebanon Farm Women, county secretary for 4-H leaders, and active in church and many other community activities.

This busy family is currently involved in six 4-H clubs. About 25 kids are part of the tractor club that meets weekly at their farm.

During Lebanon's annual farm-

city week celebration, Fran exchanged a day in the country for a day in the country. That day she accompanied her city hostess in all her daily duties. In the morning she took an areobics class and then went out for lunch. During the afternoon, she helped write a column which her hostess completes weekly.

Fran enjoyed it, but she makes it no secret that she prefers her rural family lifestyle. And her whole family agrees that opening up your home and your heart to others brings satisfaction that can't be beat.

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