

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



A major breakthrough has recently been announced by scientists researching methods to safely dispose of toxic wastes.

University of California researchers have reportedly patented a process in which unique bacteria feast on PCB's. PCB's, or polychlorinated biphenyls, are substances which accumulate in the environment, and our own bodies, and do not degrade through natural processes of deterioration. These substances are generally

byproducts of modern technology. PCB's are found especially in insulation in such necessities as television sets, space heaters and electrical capacitors. Such stuff tossed in a dump or buried in a landfill may live for practically eternity, the residues gradually working their way into our bodies through the environment.

So, if microscopic organisms can now gobble up and render relatively harmless the PCB molecules, reducing a dangerous and

long-term environmental threat, a standing ovation for those researchers.

But, do you suppose we could find some bacteria to devour the molecular structure of some of the "toxic waste" which accumulates around the average American farmstead?

Like glass bottles tossed in a pasture or hayfield by thoughtless litterbugs, for instance.

Glass isn't toxic? It well might be to a cow, sheep, hog, or horse that steps on a broken piece and dies from the resulting infection. Or a farmer whose blood pressure shoots sky high when a bottle goes flying through a forage chopper, contaminating the entire load with glass slivers.

Metal cans pose similar threats, although they may eventually deteriorate faster than glass. They shred quite nicely -- and flatten fabulously -- when run through chopping and baling equipment.

So how about some bacteria that munch aluminum and steel cans? And others which fatten off piles of tires dumped in your woodlot by a sneak in the night? Or refrigera-

tors, dishwashers, stoves and related miscellaneous large appliances often "donated" to isolated areas and distant field corners?

There are a few other farm residues which would likewise benefit from methods of fast, tidy, bacterial-aided deterioration.

Aging, forgotten stretches of barbed wire top my list. These enter the environment due to heifers, like our Holly, who haven't yet found a fence they couldn't flatten. While barbed wire has long been discharged here in favor of safer fencing materials, ancient residues are still occasionally resurrected from weedy corners of old pastures.

These are generally only found by your best cows, recently fresh and milking about a hundred pounds a day. Discovery of the results of this "toxic residue" will come at milking time, when you're greeted with a slashed and bleed-

ing udder or sliced teats.

Some days I would opt to add baling twine to the list. Except that baling twine often self-destructs, usually an hour or two after it's used to tie a gate shut. Otherwise, the stuff lies in wait in the heifer feed alley to snag the foot of some farm wife in a great hurry to finish chores.

A need also exists for rubber-barn-boot-dissolving bacteria. Boots with gaps big enough for a cat to crawl through tend to accumulate around farms, just in case anyone ever has a need for foot protection on a dry day in a grassy field.

Ditto for barn sneakers with flapping soles, toe ventilation and well-cured coatings of feedlot residue.

And maybe farm shop grease rags. Or maybe not.

'Cause everyone knows that farm grease rags never die. They just frayed away.

PA Egg Recipe Contest

HARRISBURG — Ten Pennsylvanians have been chosen as finalists to compete for \$1,000 first prize in the 1987 Pennsylvania Egg Recipe Contest. The finalists were chosen by a panel of judges who rated each recipe on nutritional quality, ease of preparation, taste appeal and creativity.

The finalists are Rebecca Donovan, Hermitage (Mercer County); Tony DeSantis, Wilkes-Barre (Luzerne County); Marlene McCall, Baden (Beaver County); Gwendolyn Gray, Schellsburg (Bedford County); Blanche Kinch, Dillsburg (York County); Lissy Weirich, Carlisle (Cumberland County); William Wilson, Marysville (Perry County); Deborah Yandric, Middletown (Dauphin County); Margaret Bittner, Germansville (Lehigh County); and Gloria Bove, Bethlehem (Lehigh County).

The stage is now set to select the top egg dish in Pennsylvania for 1987, according to Ronald Gaskill, Director of the Bureau of Market Development, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The finals will take place on Saturday, September 12 at the Northern Lebanon High School, Fredericksburg, PA. Contestants will prepare their dishes for a panel of judges. The dishes will be judged on a staggered basis as they are finished. The winner will receive a check for \$1,000 and will be automatically entered in the National Contest sponsored by the American Egg Board. Prizes of \$4,000, \$2,000 and \$1,000 will be awarded to the top three National finalists.

The state 1987 Egg Recipe Contest is sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, the Pennsylvania Egg Marketing Association and the Pennsylvania Poultry Federation.

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