

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



**Joyce Bupp**

Construction in progress rarely presents an appealing picture. Especially on lush, rolling ground of high fertility.

Soil, denuded of protective grass, looks barren and vulnerable. Shattered skeletons of once-thriving trees and shrubs lie stacked in ragged piles of drying branches and exposed, lifeless roots.

For two seasons, our meadow, just below the farmstead buildings, has endured the ravages of "improvement."

Always an interesting part of the farm, this acre or so section of sometimes swampy, creek-split bottomland was a haven for small wildlife and intriguing wetland plant growth. Our dependable spring bubbled down through the swampy stretch, from its origin beneath the springhouse, having provided unknown numbers of inhabitants before us with cold, delicious water.

When they were younger, the kids built small dams here, sailed countless rafts of wooden origin, and cooled their heels and toes on blistering hot days. Periodically,

they'd catch and bring for inspection a favorite, fat frog named Frogricka, who lived in a four-inch pipe which drained the backyard underground springs into the creek near its springhouse source.

Then, during meadow remodeling for recommended livestock waste management facilities, the business end of a backhoe bit into our spring supply while digging a tile drainage line. Nearly overnight, in the midst of the worst drought in two decades, our total farm water source dried to a trickle. When the herd drank, there was almost no water for house use.

The counter attack plan decided upon was the addition of another, smaller, pond to the meadow, one which would back up into the springhouse and restore our water source.

Two days work with a bulldozer reshaped the former site of mini-dams, summertime toe dabbling, and Frogricka's pipe-shaped condo complete with fresh running water. As planned, with the timely aid of fall rains, the Little Pond filled, then backed up into the underground spring source, and

water has again become a commodity we don't worry over every moment.

It took yet another summer for the meadow construction area to dry enough for final leveling, smoothing and grass restoration.

This restoration of the plant and aquatic life has been fascinating to watch. Though the farmer gathered cattail seeds from Grandpa's pond, and scattered them over the waters, Mother Nature as usual bested him at her own game.

Before the fluffy seeds heads scattered by his hands could think about scuttling into the pond edge, slender shoots marked where a cattail was already making healthy growth. Other water-loving plants also quickly established themselves along the edge, and on the soil bottom.

Now, the cats often prowl along the trimmed bank of the Little Pond, apparently searching for dinners of the fat, succulent legs of Frogricka's relatives. Plump, silvery shadows dash from the shallow edge into deeper water, skittish tadpoles fleeing to the protection of deeper waters as man and beast stroll the grassy banks. On the first warm evenings of late March, the meadow sang at dusk with the high-pitched voices of the peeper frogs.

Even a maple tree, which has grown half-heartedly by the side of the springhouse for 25 years, seems to have a new outlook on life. One side of the tree had appeared to be dying during the past few summers. Having water backed up to its feet would no doubt finish it, we figured.

Instead, the maple is more symmetrical, thicker with leaf buds and blooms, and healthier looking

than it has been for a long time. It almost seems to be smiling as it stands guard pondside, tempting us on warmer afternoons to lean against its rough trunk and linger there in the sunshine. Or maybe have a picnic lunch by the sparkling water.

And, on occasion, a pair of wild mallards, dainty hen in muted browns and blacks, and drake gaudy with feathers of iridescent

green, quietly paddle the Little Pond and rest beside the growing cluster of cattail shoots.

Man can dig and destroy, dike, drain and dam, restructure, reshape and redo his environment. But sooner or later, Mother Nature will still have her way.

In the case of the Little Pond, we couldn't be happier about her having a hand in the end result.

**Cumberland Search**

- CARLISLE (Cumberland) — All single young women who have completed their junior year of High School and will not reach their 24th birthday by December 31, 1988, and from a dairy farm background are eligible to compete for the title of 1988 Cumberland County Dairy Princess, announces Roy Coover, chairperson of the Cumberland County Dairy Princess Committee.

The contest covers Cumberland County.

The winner of the Dairy Princess Pageant, to be held June 17, at 8 p.m., at the Embers Convention Center, 1700 Harrisburg Pike, Carlisle, will be eligible to vie, at the state level, for the title of Pennsylvania Dairy Princess.

Thirty state princesses and hundreds of county princesses have served as spokespersons for the dairy industry in Pennsylvania over the last thirty-one years. They appear in shopping malls, fairs, supermarkets and on radio and television to educate consumers about the dairy farmer's products.

Any single woman who has completed her junior year in high school, is not over 24 years of age, never married and whose parents

or guardians are engaged in dairy farming is eligible to compete for the title. A young lady is also eligible if she, herself, is a fulltime employee on an operating dairy farm or is the owner of at least two dairy animals in a bona fide 4-H or F.F.A. project prior to May 1, 1988.

The winner of the Pennsylvania Dairy Princess Pageant receives a \$1200 cash award. The first and second runner-up will receive a \$500 and \$400 cash award respectively. The winner and the two alternates will have the honor of reigning as Pennsylvania Dairy Royalty for the period of one year. The state title is honorary and there would be no interruption of school or regular employment plans.

Young women interested in entering the Cumberland County Dairy Princess Pageant should contact:

Roy Coover, 51 Appalachian Drive, Carlisle, Pa. 17013

Robert Berkheimer, 1319 W. Lisburn Road, Mechanicsburg, Pa. 17055

Margaret Smith, R.1, Box 193, Shippensburg, Pa. 17257, by May 16th, 1988.

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