

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



the probability of cold, snow, sleet, ice and freezing rain in January is pretty high.

One recent year, for instance, the water pipes in the dairy barn froze under the barn floor. This has happened only a few times in the eight years since the barn was built, and only when a certain, rare, combination of cold and wind direction combine. Farm Show week? Of course!

Then there was another year in which my absolutely faithful, not-even-a-hint-of-a-problem car battery died midway through Farm Show week.

Still, in fairness, the weather doesn't deserve all the blame.

One vivid non-weather-incident memory still sends shivers crawling up my spine. We had piled the truck high with supplies, to begin moving in for the week's duration. Bales of hay and straw were stacked tightly together on the back of the pickup and tied down securely for the 40-mile trip north.

For some unknown reason, a tie-down rope worked loose moments after we entered the right lane of the interstate and were getting up traveling speed. It took but a second for several bales

to tumble from the stack and land in both northbound lanes.

In one of those moments when you absolutely feel the sense of being guarded by a higher power, there were no vehicles in either lane traveling behind us. And, even in the few seconds it took us to halt and back up, an alert trucker had halted traffic and helped toss the bales - every one still unbroken - to the roadside.

But the "Year of the Pigs" remains as vivid a Farm Show week in my memory as any I can recall.

At age 12, our youngest had become intrigued with the hog business, and acquired for himself two gilts. Only in the vision of hindsight - which became painfully clear about early January that year - did we realize that their visit with a neighbor's boar had been incredibly ill-timed.

Those baby pigs were due late in Farm Show week.

Naturally, ahead of schedule,

on a cold, damp Sunday morning, piglets began labouring their way into the light of day. Unprepared, save for some hasty instructions given the day before, one young pig owner and his mother delivered, dried, tied cords, and begged heat lamps from dear farm-friends nearby.

By evening, the second litter of piglets was arriving. Confidence which came with the success of our first delivery lay shattered hours later, after the second gilt experienced serious problems and lost most of her babies.

So, once again, we clip cows and collect papers, plan work schedules and pack up half the household - and double check the tie-downs on the pickup loaded with bales. And hope the bubbles of Farm Show anticipation can manage to elude the more monstrous memories of history.

Comforting, too is the knowledge that the only pig on the place is in the freezer.

Little bubbles of anticipation are busy running around inside me. They're effervescent with eagerness about seeing old friends, perhaps making a few new ones and sheer enthusiasm for the sense of excitement that goes with it all.

"On the other hand..." to borrow the favorite phrase from the lead character, Tevye, in the musical Fiddler On The Roof.

On the other hand, a sense of dread, of impending doom, stalks the bubbles of anticipation, like little monsters chasing Pac-Man

around the video gameboard.

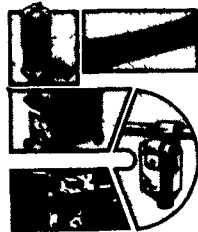
Farm Show stirs in me a whole host of conflicting emotions. Balancing the anticipation, fellowship and fun of competition is history. History supposedly repeats itself - which means the likelihood of something weird happening this week plays to pretty good odds.

Often these occurrences are the sort of things that are taken in stride when The Farmer is home. Often, too, they're stirred by the "typical" Farm Show weather. Of course, even without Farm Show,

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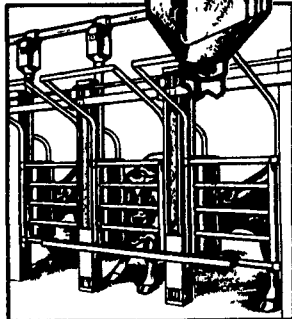


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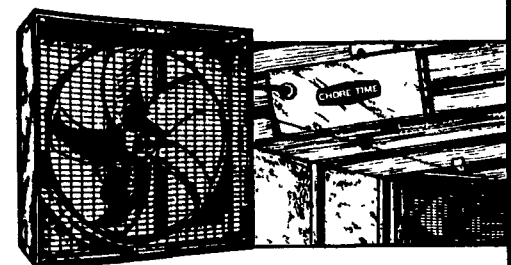
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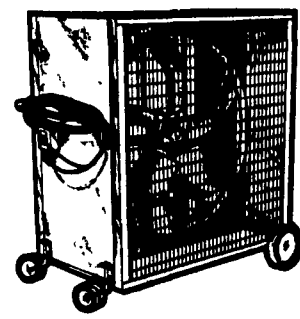
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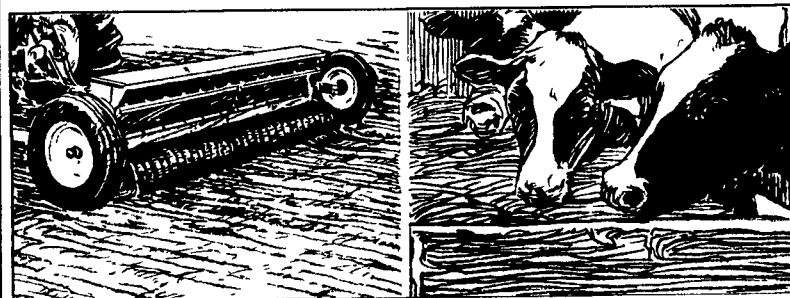
## Basic Microwave Cooking Classes

**WEST CHESTER (Chester) —** The Chester County Cooperative Extension is offering a morning and an evening session of Basic Microwave Cooking on Tuesdays, February 21 and 28 and March 14. The morning session will be from 9:30-11:30 a.m. and the evening session will be from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Extension office on the third floor of the Dague Building, 235 W. Market Street, West Chester. There is a fee of \$20 for each session, either morning or evening.

Fran Alloway, freelance home economist and instructor for the class, will teach the essentials of using a microwave oven. The classes will include basic cooking principles, actual meal preparation and methods for converting favo-

rite recipes to use in the microwave oven. Microwave oven features and cookware will be discussed and recipes will be distributed.

Deadline for registration is February 10. For further information, contact the Extension office at 696-3500.



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Pioneer invites all those attending this year's Farm Show to visit their exhibit.