

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards



**Joyce Bupp**

left-over .... hey, anybody know what this fuzzy green stuff is in the yellow dish? Or how about this jar with white mold? And then there's the inevitable plastic bag tucked in the back of the vegetable drawer with a forgotten chunk of badly-aged cabbage. Yuk. Character strengthening? If you have a strong stomach.

Balancing the checkbook probably fits in the same category of soothing my soul. Also the bank's. It takes no deep psychological delving to assess why I dread playing "checkbook solitaire", the sorting and accounting for checks returned and outstanding with what I have left compared to the bank's figure.

See, a couple of times in the middle of a time crunch, my mathematical accuracy has suffered. So, in spite of balancing, and rebalancing frequently on the checkbook stubs, I still dread tackling this task. But, when the figures all come out, it feels just like the sun bursting through a dreary day.

Breaking down a new section of hay or straw in the barn is likewise faced with dread. Usually the men tackle this one, but on occasion, there has been just me and a 20-foot-high clifflike face of

tightly-tied bundles of hay. Trying to yank one loose from the lower layers may be successful, but jeopardizes the stability of all those tons of bales towering above your head. Scaling the side to get to the top, however, puts you in peril of loosening the whole face of the stack, and having it tumble front when you're about halfway up.

Faced with such prospects, the best alternative is to swipe a couple of bales from some other feeding area.

Mending blue jeans is another character builder, one of those jobs you do out of love and budget-watching but under pressure from a buried sewing machine and empty clothing drawers.

Most of the dreaded jobs are related to cleaning of some sort. While doing them may be good for the soul, they hardly last long enough for you to sit back and bask in the sunshiny glow of accomplishment.

Washing floors, for instance. Cleaning the oven (sometimes I forget to be properly appreciative of a self-cleaning oven). Vacuuming the automobile's carpet, home to the world's most complete collection of itty-bitty pieces of sand, gravel, stones, straw bits and pulverized flakes of dried manure. Pulling weeds. And, bringing order to the attic.

Sooner or later, all these tasks whose doing are "good for you" do get tackled. I hope my soul appreciates the efforts.

Remember all those things your Mom told you to do when you were a little kid because they were "good for you"?

Eat your spinach. Drink your milk. Wash behind your ears. Change your underwear every day. And even though, deep in your heart you knew she was right, you vowed to hate every minute of it.

So you declared, "When I grow up, I'm going to do whatever I please." Right?

So here we are, all grown up, and along comes this advice that reached out from a newspaper page and took hold of my consci-

ence - and shook it real good - a few days ago.

The directive was to do two things every day that you really don't want to do, for your soul's sake — strengthens your character and all that.

Initially, I couldn't pinpoint too many ordinary, routine things of such distasteful nature until I'd thought about it for awhile.

Then while searching for something in the refrigerator, the thought occurred that here was a job that fit the bill perfectly. Who likes cleaning out the refrigerator, anyway? No one I know.

All those little containers of

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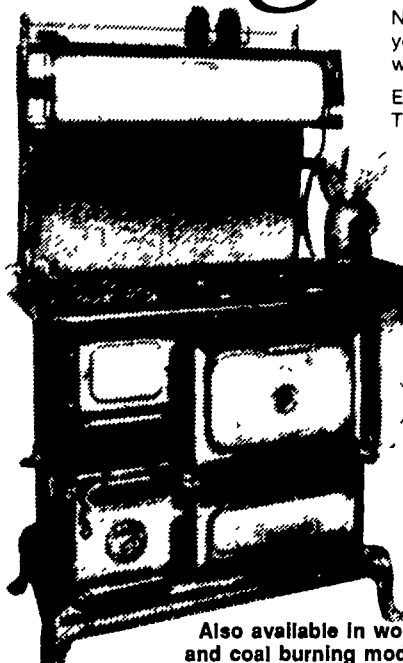
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