

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Considering the season, the setting seemed most appropriate.

Small, bright orange, jack-o-lantern pumpkins flanked both sides of the porch. A pair of solid, almost beige-colored, neck pumpkins were propped toward the back. And one black-furred cat crouched between the pumpkins, peering out with shining, yellow-green eyes.

Only thing missing was a black-garbed, straggly-haired person wearing a pointed, black witches hat. But then, there had been no specific intent to arrange this Halloween-looking porch scene; the pumpkins had just ended up

there, and the cat plopped herself down on the cool concrete.

Halloween's become another major merchandising holiday in recent years, what with all the costume, party supplies, cards, and even electrically-lit outside decorations. Sociologists claim it's the baby boom generation trying to recapture the excitement of childhood Halloweens.

At the risk of dating myself, there's a lot more "hoopla" today associated with fright night than when I was a kid. Costumes were often of our own making. We gathered the comparatively simple treats from just a few close neighbors in our rural neighborhood, carrying them in plain old brown paper bags. Homemade candy and popcorn balls were readily con-

sumed without worry of tampering. Biting into a worm from a home-grown apple was possible, but no one had ever heard of crunching into a razor blade.

I never soaped or waxed a window in my life. Had I ever done so — and been caught — the guarantee of spending more hours scraping and washing it off the victim's windows had been well explained to me in very clear terms.

But I will confess to having snatched an ear or two of corn from nearby fields in the darkness of Halloween night. Tossing hundreds of shelled corn against a house window was a typical method of reminding neighborhood residents of what day we were celebrating.

That was pretty innocent compared to some of the Halloween pranks I've heard recounted. Classic is that old tradition made obsolete by progress: upsetting the outhouse.

A group of us at a recent meeting got to debating about the reason for upsetting outhouses. No one seemed to know why they were targets, just that they inevitably were.

One good friend who years ago served on the school board of a large rural district noted that it was the job of school directors to set the outhouses back up at their local one-room schools, after Halloween pranksters toppled them. And another friend related one of those classic tales of an outhouse

being upset while in use, and the victim catching the name of one of the pranksters, and, well, just use your imagination to figure out the rest.

Still another vividly recalled a farmer's flatbed hay wagon turning up some distance away in the yard of a rural school. Early the next morning, she spied several neighborhood boys, lugging the wagon back from whence it had come. And, there were several hills in the road between, she remembered.

A hay rake belonging to a farmer's relative was completely dismantled and left in a pile of rake

teeth, bolts, nuts and parts by one group of tool-wielding Halloween pranksters many years ago. And, from what I've heard friends relate, finding your driving buggy on top of your shed or barn roof wasn't too unusual.

So maybe all the current Halloween "hoopla" is really progress after all. It's certainly more positive than dismantling, moving and pushing property around.

At the least, it's diverted the flood of Christmas commercialization from the marketplace shelves a couple of more weeks. And it's a perfect excuse to lay in a supply of chocolate candybars.

## New Jersey Dairy Princess Begins Reign

ASBURY (Hunterdon Co.)—Eighteen-year-old Tracy Beatty of Asbury in Hunterdon County was recently crowned the 1989-90 New Jersey Dairy Princess.

Tracy lives on a 165-acre farm with her parents Bernie and Sharon Beatty, two younger sisters and twin brothers. Their farm prefix is BSB Holsteins. They milk 50 registered Holsteins and are raising 50 young stock. The Beattys ship their milk to NFO. Tracy owns 10 registered Holsteins of her own which she has shown at numerous 4-H and Open Shows during her ten years as a 4-H Club member.

Tracy says of her goals as State Dairy Princess, she wants to not only inform the public about the importance of dairy products but also about the very important per-



Tracy Beatty

son that produces the milk for these products - THE DAIRY FARMER.

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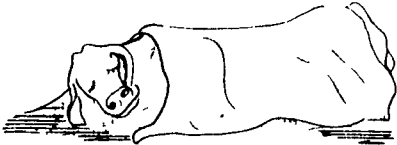
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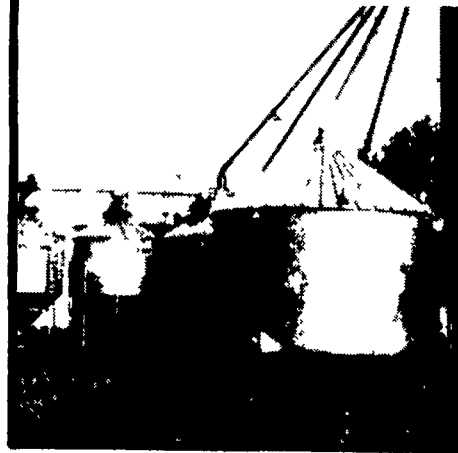
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