

# On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Slowly, my heart has begun easing back out of the pit of my stomach.

And, the quivering is disappearing from my knees.

The panic has resided. Life has slid back to normal.

All this emotional commotion unraveled my sensibilities in the space of about 15 seconds.

When I turned on my computer system, all I got was a blank, gray-white screen. Not the usual black screen against which the system displays its memory capacity in bright, white numbers. Or the familiar bleep which sets it searching for the introductory information on the system itself. And not the direction to install a system disk and get busy.

Or instructions to that effect, anyway.

Just that blank screen.

Panic! This electronic taskmaster has been my writing teammate for so long now I'm not sure I can compose an understandable sentence without its ability to erase, change around, delete and call back up from its memory that is usually better than mine.

With sinking heart, I hit the monitor button. That was fine. Ditto for the power surge protector.

Then I remembered that it had been used the prior night for a computer games session by someone accustomed to another system. I flipped the switch to the computer processor unit - usually untouched - and promptly got the normal operating mode.

The ensuing emotional relief reminded me again, of how thoroughly, how completely, how utterly dependent we are on our

electrically-powered 'helpmates.' Sometimes, in our case, "udderly" dependent.

Ten minutes into the evening milking one day a few weeks ago, all eight milking units simply fell off the cows udders to which they were attached. Just dropped, almost simultaneously, to the rubber cow mats on which the "girls" were standing.

This happens when the power goes off for whatever reason. But the barn lights still shone brightly overhead. And the motors which power the vacuum milking system still hummed steadily.

And - of course - the Farmer was away running equipment in distant fields. John, our long-time barn and herd assistant, and I began sleuthing possible solutions. The expected clogged filter or faulty pump didn't exist. Everything seemed to work fine, except some part of the automatic mechanism to pump the milk to the tank.

In frustration, I switched the system which pumps the milk from the lines to the tank onto manual, forcing the motor to run continuously. Voila! No more fall-off milkers. Just so the motor didn't burn out.

It didn't. Later, the Farmer showed me the culprit, a rubber ring in the pipeline system with a small flapper valve that regulates the automatic pumping of the milk into the tank. The flapper had torn loose, which they do just from normal usage, and later turned up

in the wash vats.

Fortunately, a replacement was on hand for prompt repair and a return to normal for milking operations.

My housekeeping hinges on a vacuum cleaner to electrically suck up the seemingly-tons of dirt that we drag into the house. The microwave is irreplaceable for quick-prep of foods and reheating, especially since it's hard to know who will show up to eat - or exactly when.

Our phones keep us in critical contact with everyone from equip-

ment dealers to veterinarians, and from family to feed and fuel suppliers.

But none of it works all the time - nor fails periodically to cease functioning, if from nothing else than sheer, normal, wear-and-tear. And reminds us again of our fragile dependency on mechanisms.

In gratitude and relief, I gave the computer an extra cleaning before installing the word processing program.

Kind of a thank-you, pat-on-the-back of appreciation.

I hope it understood.

## Great Taste Cheese Campaign

Syracuse, NY — The American Dairy Association and Dairy Council, Inc. (ADADC) and the New York State Cheese Manufacturers Association are introducing a new and exciting cheese promotion during the holiday season, using the theme "WE'VE GOT GREAT TASTE!" The promotion begins December 9 and runs through January 27. It is open to all retail supermarkets that sell New York state produced cheese and to New York state cheese manufacturers. The purpose is to increase consumer awareness of the great taste, quality, and variety of New York state manufactured cheeses.

Increasing cheese sales is not only beneficial to dairy farmers but results in higher profits for retailers. ADADC is sponsoring both out-of-case and in-case contests

for creative displays featuring New York state cheese and theme materials.

The theme materials, "We've Got Great Taste," must be prominently highlighted in the display, in either category, for the display to be considered for judging. More than 50 prizes will be awarded to the retailer and cheese representative winners for both out-of-case and in-case contests.

Each contestant will receive the free promotional kit which includes a wrap-around banner, a dairy case banner, 4-shelf talkers, and 5 New York price cards to use for the creation of the displays. And, to add to the excitement, each contestant will also receive a deck of animated cow playing cards just for entering.

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