

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Maybe it's age. But lately I seem to get sidetracked with increasing frequency. You've probably never done this. Say, you're making lunch. And you need some ingredient from the freezer in the basement, like a spare loaf of bread stashed away there. So you trot down the stairs. There you note that the heat from the woodstove seems to be fading. So you open the stove door to stuff in a couple of chunks from the wood stack. But before you throw in the wood, you note that an abundance of ashes has accumulated. So you trot out to the porch for the ash bucket. But the ash bucket is full. Very full. So you throw on a jacket, dash back outside, grab the running-over bucket of ashes,

scatter them over the garden, go back inside, remove the ash from the firebox, restuff the stove with wood and return the ash bucket to the porch. But now you've noticed, that the inside supply of wood is dwindling and an arctic cold front is on its way. So you prop open the door and lug in several armloads of ammunition against tomorrow's icy chills. In the process, you drop bits of bark, woodchips, sawdust and a scattering of dry leaves that swirled in through the open door with a prelude gust of cold. Fetching the broom and dustpan, you remove that mess before it spreads any farther. Now, back to your original purpose for having trotted down the stairs. But before you reach the freezer, you realize that the load of

laundry in the dryer is finished tumbling. So you dump the armload of dried things into the laundry basket, transfer another load of wet items from the washer to the dryer, and start yet another load through the cleaning process. You remove a couple of hand and bath towels from the basket full of dry items and begin folding them on your way back up the stairs. Back in the kitchen, you stand there momentarily and ponder why you originally went to the basement in the first place. Then, you remember that you needed a loaf of bread for lunch. And you trot back down the stairs to fetch what you set out to get a quarter-hour earlier. Hoping you don't forget by the time you get to the bottom of the steps what you went for. Now, you don't do that, do you? I plead guilty. And this problem isn't isolated to the house. Quickie trips to the garden during summertime get sidetracked

with similar ease. Perhaps it's just to pick a green pepper for a supper salad. But Solomon will want to play ball on the way, so I'll toss him his rubber ball a couple of times. Remember that I needed to pull a few onions. Decide to check the tomatoes while they're handy. Spy a ripe cantaloupe that would be tasty for dessert. Pull a couple of weeds in passing. Take the long way back around the lower back yard roses to check the latest blooms; and while I'm that close, sneak up to the bank of the little pond to see if I can spot any fish poking around near the upper edge. And inevitably end up back in the kitchen with a little of everything from the garden except - you got it - that green pepper. This is not just an issue of female forgetfulness, either, folks.

More than once, The Farmer has made a quick dash to the barn office to retrieve for me some piece of cattle record information, like the registry number for a bull we had never before used. Before he returns three hours later he will have helped chase in an ornery heifer that slipped through a gate, bred a couple of cows, helped start some reluctant piece of equipment, been called off to repair a wagon tire, fielded three phone calls and two salesmen - and eventually show up just in time for lunch. By then I will have long forgotten what bit of information I originally needed. Things do have a way of ultimately getting done - they just don't always get done in the order originally intended. We like to think of it, not as forgetfulness, but as flexibility.

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