

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



"Attitude shirts." That's what the department story sale advertisement flyer labeled them. It struck me as a catchy description for the classic tee shirt bearing a snappy, upbeat (perhaps occasionally smart-aleck!) message.

Spring fashions may come and spring fashions may go - but the tee shirt lives on indefinitely. And hem length, neckline style, waist location, and shoulder pad inclusion all are irrelevant for tee shirt selection.

True, color is important. But it's the message that really matters.

A tee-shirt can relate your opinions, outlook, preferences - your attitude - without your ever having to say one word.

One of my personal favorite "attitude" shirts sums up our dairy farm lifestyle: "Some of my best friends are cows." The youngest enjoys wearing a hunting humor tee shirt with no printed words, just a colorful picture of two buck deer dressed as hunters relaxing in deer camp, with "people" trophy heads hanging on the wall.

Pondering "attitude" shirts while milking last evening, I figured some of the more appropriate ones for around here haven't yet been printed.

"Put your foot down!" is an assertive attitude message that would come in handy while working one's way down the milking string. This sentiment is aimed at that handful of cows that like to dance their way through milking, occasionally removing the milking unit in the process.

Color that shirt a bright, attention-getting red, please.

"You're all wet" would be a most useful attitude shirt - if wearing it could just make it happen. Hopefully, this shirt would be appropriate about one day every two weeks through the upcoming planting and growing season, when we would ideally get something like two inches of steady, soaking rain on a bi-weekly basis.

Otherwise, we may be in for another season in which the timely tee-shirt for tractor and field work asserts: "Leave 'em in the dust."

"Dig it!" seems a real appropriate "attitude" shirt for us gardeners. In a bright, spring-like-green shade. With garden tools and a couple of colorful flowers and veggies. Or an alternative to that message might be "Hoe, hoe, hoe!"

Nest building seems to be getting underway in every direction, from the sparrows flitting around with long pieces of grass trailing behind to Mother Goose who regularly re-inspects the mid-pond nesting platform. Come to think of it, our backyard mother hen hasn't put in an appearance lately. Normally she'd be stalking out a cozy spot in the straw for a nest - except that the barn is nearly barren of straw, hay and everything else. She may have to rent a nest-site from a neighbor.

And for all our soon-to-nest feathered friends, we'd readily don a tee-shirt encouraging them to "Sit on it!"

Then there's a special-guest-award-attitude tee-shirt that we'd like to present to a deserving

Restaurants Take Big Bite Out Of Milk Sales

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — An increase in meals eaten away from home has greatly contributed to a 25-year decline in total milk consumption, says a Penn State researcher.

"In 1965, consumers ate one meal in four outside the home," says Dr. Blair Smith, associate professor of agricultural economics. "Now we eat one meal in three away from home — an increase of about 33 percent."

"In restaurants, people don't always eat the same kinds of foods that they do at home. In particular, they are not nearly as likely to drink milk, a phenomenon that is costing the dairy industry an estimated loss in sales from 3.8 to 13.7 billion pounds of milk annually."

"At a price of \$12.50 per hun-

dredweight of milk, this translates into a loss in returns to dairy farmers of \$475 million to \$1.7 billion each year," he says.

Using data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Smith analyzed national and statewide trends to determine the negative effect eating away from home has on milk consumption.

"Nationwide, per capita consumption of fluid milk declined 22 percent from 1965 to 1989," he says. "While we don't have national data on quantities of milk consumed outside the home, we do have estimates for Pennsylvania."

In 1965, the typical Pennsylvania consumer drank an estimated 38 pounds of fluid milk away from home. By 1989, that number had dropped to 30 pounds, a decline of 21 percent. "Thus, as the number of meals eaten outside the home increases, milk consumption per meal decreased even more sharply," says Smith.

In a 1987 Penn State national survey, close to 73 percent of 1,147 consumers reported they weren't as likely to drink milk when eating away from home.

"While they offered a variety of reasons, the overall message conveyed was that they consider milk consumption an at-home activity," says Smith.

About 50 percent reported they simply preferred other beverages, and 16 percent said milk in restaurants wasn't cold enough, was too expensive, didn't include free refills or the kind of milk they wanted wasn't available.

Fifteen percent said they just didn't think of drinking milk when eating out, and 4 percent said they were reluctant to order milk or be seen drinking it in restaurants. The remaining responses varied widely.

"Twenty years ago, milk was second only to coffee as Americans' preferred beverage," says Smith. "Although coffee consumption has since come down sharply, it still surpasses milk in popularity, and beer and soft drinks have relegated milk to fourth place."

Creative advertising and merchandising could help increase milk consumption outside the home, says Smith.

FDA Labeling To Change

YORK (York Co.) — Labels on more than 257,000 food products are in for a dramatic makeover this year. Among the important features:

Nutrition Labeling: The new labels must list, among other things, the percentage of calories derived from fat and the amount of saturated fat, cholesterol, complex carbohydrates, sugar and dietary fiber.

Serving Size: Portion sizes will be standardized to prevent manufacturers from making beneficial

nutrition claims for unrealistically small servings.

Product Descriptors: Under the proposed rules, light foods must have one-third fewer calories than a comparable product; if the food is light only in color, taste or smell, the label must specify this.

Permitted Health Claims: High calcium which lowers the risk of osteoporosis, low sodium which reduces the risk of hypertension in those who are susceptible, and low fat which decreases the risk of heart disease and cancer.

recipient.

Honored (well, that's debatable) recipient is our co-op field man and dairy inspector, who deserves this special recognition after his most recent routine inspection of our dairying operation. Part of the procedure is to check the water supply.

When he opened the door to the spring, he was a little surprised to meet face-to-face a "three-foot long snake curled up inside, that had no intention of leaving." A sort of resident "watch snake," it's made the springhouse vicinity its home for several years.

Lucky for us, the dairy farm inspection sheet lists no specific point deductions for close encounters of the reptile kind.

So to Jay Waybright, we award a "S(n)akes Alive!" tee-shirt for so calmly greeting our favorite springhouse security guard.

He'll need it if the rest of it's family (at least two more) all show up for his next inspection.

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