

**On being
a farm wife
-And other
hazards
Joyce Bupp**



"Curiosity got the cat." So goes an old saying. Ever wonder — got the cat what? Dead? Hurt? Lost?

Curiosity got Butch, our dark-tiger-striped barn cat, a mouse a few mornings ago. He's learned that when bales are moved in the feed alley of the heifer pen, sometimes a mouse slips away.

Curiosity almost got Butch squashed this morning when he perched atop a pile of bales thrown down through the hay hole. He nearly got flattened beneath another bale dropping through.

So, curiosity might well get the cat. Here, though, there often seems to be a need to re-write that old cliché.

"Curiosity got the cow" might be equally appropriate.

If there's anything with more curiosity than a bunch of cattle, I don't personally want to have to deal with it. Cattle curiosity causes enough close calls.

On one of the those balmy, spring-like days last week, The Farmer delivered a big calf to a first-time heifer mother. Because it was a rather difficult calving, we knew the calf would not have the immediate strength to stand and nurse within an hour or so, like it should.

Bottle in hand, I headed out across the heifer pasture under the afternoon sunshine to feed the new baby. Reluctant at first, she began to nurse with a little coaxing. Intent on the feeding, a nudge at my back caught my attention — the ringleader of a virtual stampede of bred heifers trotting in our direction. Curious. Wondering what was going on.

"Shoo! Get outta' here!"

Momentarily the circle of nosy, black and white muzzles backed off — at least a foot. Eventually the calf finished the bottle — but

not without several arm-waving, "get outta' here" interruptions aimed at the crowd of four-footed, 800-pound busybodies whose curiosity threatened to stomp me into the soggy ground.

And, a good-bye committee of about a dozen stayed on my heels during the hundred-yard walk back to the dairy barn. Just curious, of course.

It was curiosity that drew one of those same nosy heifers into the dairy barn a day later. But it was greed that kept her there with her muzzle buried in the high-moisture corn cart when we found her at milking time.

Fortunately, she hadn't sneaked in long enough for curiosity — and greed — to have earned her a major tummyache or bloat problem.

Curiosity also won an unexpected bath for a younger, six-month-old heifer that embarked on an exploration trip about the same hour of that same afternoon. Heifers are much like children; in a group of a couple dozen, there is bound to be one adventurous individual always testing the boundaries or rules.

This one managed to slip out of a large group pen and proceed to curiously sniff, stroll and study the errand beyond the farmstead buildings. When chase was given with the cycle, rather than return sensibly to her penmates, she opted to go visit the wooded housing neighborhood next door.

Take note that this was a mostly-black, smaller heifer, cavorting around at dusk, through lovely backyards filled with lots of trees and bushes. Kind of like hide-and-seek. Which she won. Temporarily.

Later, rounding the wagon shed en route to calf feedings after dark, she and I came face-to-muzzle. About the same time, The

Pennsylvania Fair Queen Reigns At Farm Show

**LOU ANN GOOD
Lancaster Farming Staff
HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.)**
— Within two weeks, 18-year-old Cheryl Anne Muraski will crown a new Pennsylvania Fair Queen.

Reflecting on her one-year reign, Cheryl said, "Before my reign, I hadn't had much opportunity to visit areas outside of my home in Pike County. The highlight of my reign was meeting people across the state. The hospitality they extended to me was phenomenal."

And, to many people watching, Cheryl Anne's ability to ad lib with poise and clarity before crowds in diverse places across the state is phenomenal.

"I grew up speaking in front of people. It comes naturally," said Cheryl Anne who remembers that she was only four years old when she first spoke to a church group.

Cheryl received a \$1,000 scholarship when she was chosen as the state queen from county and local fair queens across the state.

"I entered the local pageant, Green-Dreher Sterling, on a whim," said Cheryl, who said she then became very involved in fairs and in learning about agriculture. She estimates that she has attended about one fourth of the 94 fairs scattered across the state.

When Cheryl was a high school student, she started her own baking and catering business.

"I grew up in the kitchen helping my mother cook. Because there

were only three in our family, my dad, mother, and me, I needed to find another channel for the food I baked."

She began preparing brunches, desserts, and buffets during holidays and weekends.

Because Cheryl was also a cheerleader, field hockey player, in student government and ambassadorship, she wanted a job that didn't lock her into a time frame and thought the catering business would be ideal.

"It turned out to be a much bigger undertaking than I expected," Cheryl said. "When I look back, I wonder where I found all the hours to do what I did. I know I had lots of enthusiasm."

Cheryl needed to give up her catering business when she entered Cornell University, where she is studying hotel administration with a finance concentration. She also works in the human resources department for a head injury recovery center.

Cooking remains Cheryl's biggest hobby. "I read cook books for fun instead of novels," she said.

When she was asked to speak to the crowds that gathered at the Farm Show for the apple pie, cocoa cake, and chocolate cookie contests, Cheryl was delighted.

"This is right down my alley," she said. "I wish I could be one of the judges."



Pennsylvania Fair Queen Cheryl Anne Muraski presided over many activities during Farm Show week.

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