

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



Hi there, old friend,

This is just a little note asking you to stop around and visit one of these first days.

Where've you been, anyway? Enjoying the beaches of the Bahamas? Surfing in Hawaii? Wintering in Florida? We've missed you; in fact, a bunch of us have been wondering if we did something to offend you.

Yeah, we know. There for awhile it seemed you had moved in permanently. Really put the heat on us while you were here. And we did considerable complaining about you. Wished we could replace you on numerous occasions.

But you didn't have to up and leave us completely. We really want you, need you, to remain a big part of our lives.

Fact is, we just absolutely can't live without you. But, look, we can't live without the "other guy" as well.

We need you both. What can we do to get you two to cooperate a little better?

If you recall, Sun, for several years there, you just took over. Ruled with an iron hand, day after searing day—for the better part of a decade, here in our neck of the woods. You ran good old Rain

almost out of the country. Glared down on us with long, scorching stares that dried up water supplies, shriveled up crops, wilted gardens, and, by gosh, even cracked the very soil beneath us.

You certainly taught us a few things. We began practicing more conservation of our water resources. No doubt we should have been doing that already, but we humans are sometimes a wasteful lot.

We discovered we could drive cars that weren't spotlessly clean. Our lawns would survive without daily waterings. Many of us farmers began adapting cropping practices to include more drought-tolerant forage crops and grain crops that could produce with less moisture.

Then some months ago, Sun, you just lit on out of here with not even a goodbye. Turned us over to Rain, and his Fog and Drizzle gang.

It's been a change. Some hay laid so long in fields last summer it had to be chopped up and blown back on the ground just to get rid of the moldy mess. And late corn in a few fields never matured, but simply deteriorated to black, rotten ears before the ground hardened enough for the machines to

go in to pick it.

Still, we don't want to complain. People and livestock have plenty to eat. Our streams and ground water levels certainly seem more stable. The little "crick" in the meadow has more gurgle than it has had for some years. We find a few springs returning to bubble up in places where they had previously dried up.

Still, we miss your cheerful addition to our days. We miss the pastel pinks, purples and oranges of the sunrises and the uplift of those first rays of sunshine bursting above the horizon.

The pond hasn't sparkled in days but just sort of sits there, gray and leaden looking. Mud has become an endless resource, if we could just figure out what for. Livestock pens are near impossible to keep dry with this constant gray mist in the air. And, boy, have the tow chains gotten good workouts lately.

You're especially missed in the greenhouse, where the plants are just moping along in a sort of dormant stage. A touch of your warming brightness would certainly perk 'em up.

When you stop by, remember not to scare off Rain again. In fact, we'd very much appreciate it if you two would have lunch together and work out some fair balance of your visiting time with us. Thanks for your consideration.

Missing You,  
Dreary, Damp  
and Dismal



To maintain a positive climate for beef, it's important to help children understand the importance farmers place on preserving precious natural resources. "Caretakers All," a new beef checkoff-sponsored education program, takes an aggressive role in shaping how children perceive livestock farming and each person's responsibility for maintaining the environment. The educational kit was recently offered to third and fourth grade teachers throughout Pennsylvania. The "Caretakers All" education kit is just part of a coordinated demand-building marketing program funded through the \$1 per head beef checkoff program.

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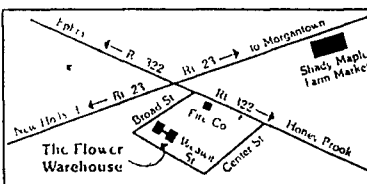
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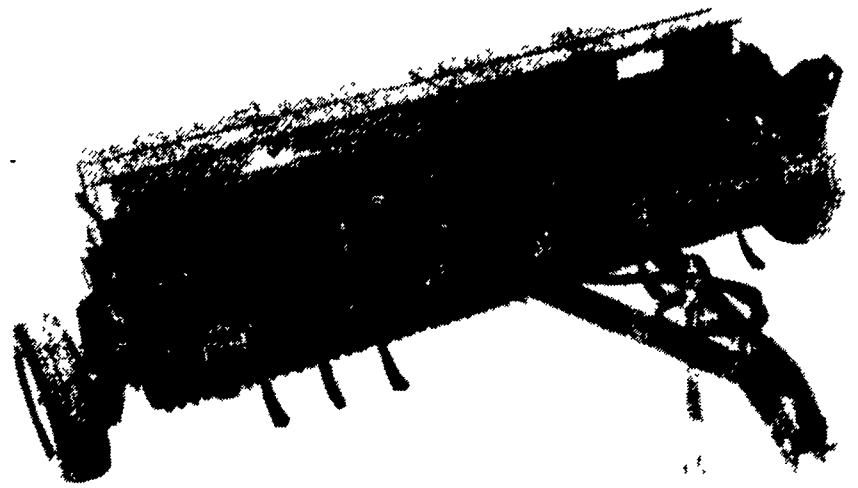


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