

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times.

Milking time. Country music tunes keep time with the steady pulsation of eight milking machines and the roar of the vacuum pump and coolant compressors.

Commuter traffic reports interrupt the alternating country songs and commercial advertisements. A backup on Route 322 north out of Harrisburg. An accident at the Interstate-83 and Route 11 split at Camp Hill. Road work along the Route 30 by-pass around York.

"Boy, I'm glad I don't have to commute." If I've said it once, I've said it a thousand times.

Creeping along the Baltimore Beltway in a 10-mile backup of rush-hour traffic a few mornings ago, enroute to an early meeting, again reinforced my appreciation for farm living. Periodic frustra-

tion with years of droughts, long hours, a flat farm economy and ever-increasing regulations are balanced every day by the joy for a super-short commute to the job.

Still, despite the 50-steps or so between the house and the barns, "commuter delays" enroute are not unusual.

A regular slow-down at the beginning of the commute is frequent. That occurs when the dog, which wasn't outside the door a minute before, shows up just as I step off the porch. And he's already licking his chops in anticipation of a morning meal. Right now.

Pedestrian traffic can sometimes be a major problem.

The commute often comes to a complete halt when a pedestrian pack of a half-dozen cats comes dashing right in front of my "wheels." Once aligned in the

flow of traffic, they tail-gate the rest of the way to the calf barn and crowd my parking place until breakfast is forthcoming at the cafeteria.

Then there's the occasional incident of unexpected traffic. Generally this is the result of some high-spirited calf or heifer escaping and meeting you face to face on a blind turn around the corner of a building.

As it does for all commuters, travel becomes treacherous here during those inevitable periods of winter-weather icy conditions.

Located on rolling York County farmland, our farmstead sits at the bottom edge of a long, sloping hill. All travels around the buildings are over slopes of some degree.

Thus, The Farmer found me literally stranded in the perennial border one slippery morning some weeks ago. The border with its split-rail fence divides the lawn around the house from the blacktopped areas around the barns. And while the stretch from the house to the border was navigable with a little caution, I got halfway up the blacktop to the calf nursery and couldn't stand up on the grass-slick ice coating.

After teasing me about being stuck, he rescued me from my refuge among the stalks of dead chrysanthemums with a bag of anti-skid. It was either that or do my chores himself!

While wintry weather causes such occasional delays, the commute back to the house in warm

weather causes the longest tie-ups. Detours are a major culprit.

There's a detour around the flower beds, an alternate but much more scenic route put into heavy service in springtime when new greenery beckons. Bulbs pushing through the ground must be checked for progress, as well as the growth spurts of the various perennials reawakening to life.

Travel is also prone to delays caused by side trips to the pond,

pauses to admire the first cheery dandelion blooms, and answering the mockingbird vocalizing from atop the electric transformer outside the dairy barn.

Our travels to work are made with neither warming heaters nor cooling air-conditioning. Also, no traffic lights, no need for radar detectors, no "nuts" behind the wheel weaving around us.

Boy, I'm glad I don't have to commute.

Teen Does Well In National Wool Contest

WAYNESBURG (Green Co.) — Melinda Kovac, 16, daughter of Michael and Linda Kovac of Trafford, was fifth runner-up in the junior division of the National Make It Yourself With Wool Competition held January 20-22 at Dallas, Texas. Melinda brought home 4 yards of wool from Woolrich Co., a \$50 savings bond from the Continental Dorset Club, a Bond Knitting Machine, and yarn from the Jack Donavan Co. There were 37 contestants in this division.

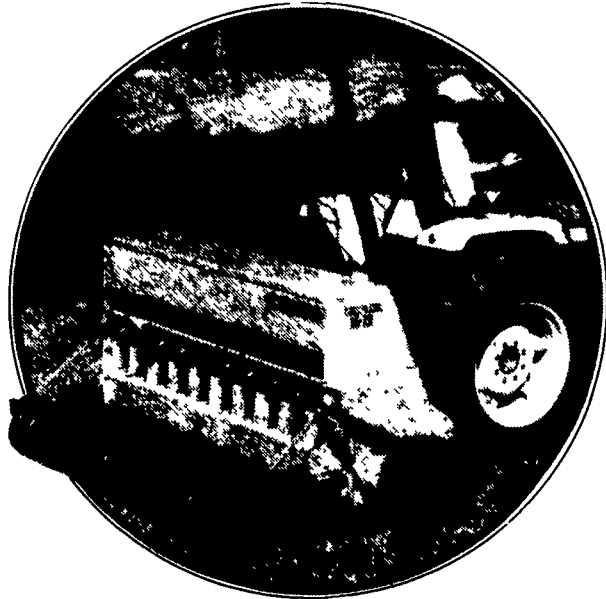
To achieve this honor, Melinda won the Pennsylvania MIYWW junior division with her jacket-slack suit of a rust-burgandy wool that featured a fitted jacket with staggered points dipping below

the waist at the center. To complete the ensemble, she also made a tweed wool/silk boucle oversized coat.

The judges, nationally prominent in various areas of the fashion industry, seemed to favor fashionable, casual styles that were suitable to the age and lifestyle of the contestant.

In Pennsylvania, the 1993-94 state contest for pre-teen, junior, senior, and adult divisions will be held in mid-November, with the district contests being held a few weeks prior to that. For information on the upcoming contest, contact Janet Mawhinney, RD #2, Box 141 D, Waynesburg, PA 15370.

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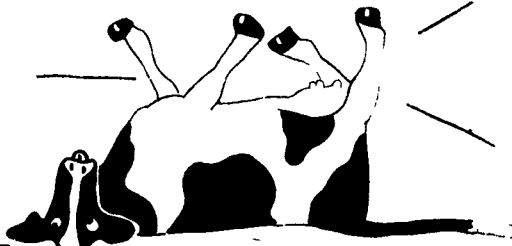
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