

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



Our four-leafed clovers are dormant. Rabbits' feet are in semi-hibernation with the rabbits. The last of the salt for throwing over my shoulder was sprinkled on the ice coating the front walk some days ago.

And the IRS has my lucky penny.

It began with silence. Dead silence. Broken by the sound of pounding. At 6 a.m.?

The silence came from the basement, where the perpetual hum of the water pump usually sounds. So did the intermittent pounding. It took a few seconds for a sleepy brain to piece the puzzle and signal the feet to get movin'.

Pump trouble. I split for the barn to help with milking, while the Farmer set about installing the back-up water pump we always have on standby. Two hours and a barnful of empty udders later, the cows were still nosing at dry water fountains.

Usually he can switch the pumps and have the system back up in short order. Split pipes created more unusual problems this time. No use to cancel my optometrist appointment for that morning; I couldn't get water to

finish chores anyway.

Plans for the day were to leave late afternoon for the mountain hunting camp, with friends joining us. But their small son, already undergoing leukemia chemotherapy, had developed a troublesome fever. That was the scary news shared when I called to beg the use of their shower.

We rarely have pump trouble; the few times it's happened we've usually been away, or are about to leave. This was par for the course.

Back home, concerned about little Andy's fever and still bone-dry at the spigots, I set out to vent frustration by lugging water from the springhouse to heat for calf bottles.

Fortunately, disturbed by plumping efforts, she had moved. She, we think. The humongous dark-gray water snake that stands, 'er coils, guard over our water supply and the plentiful frogs on the nearby pond. Dipping water from the spring meant leaning directly over her snoozing spot; I was just as happy she had disappeared.

Calves finally fed, makeshift lunch put together using a little of the water borrowed from Andy's

house, our pump system was still filled with only rust and air bubbles.

Andy and his mom stopped by on the way home from his blood test. The sun was bringing out the lucky four-leafed clovers — Andy's fever was a treatable ear infection.

Mid-afternoon brought the plumber. Still all air and rust. The cows had been turned out earlier around the pond for water, giddily circling its bright reflection to drink deeply — for about 10 minutes until they began wandering off hunting trouble.

Back in the barn, they persistently nudged the dry fountains. Snake still absent, I dipped and heated more water for washing cows at evening milking. A half-hour into milking chores, the barn filled with the sound of kids sucking milk-cartons with straws. Water!

The lucky rabbits' feet had come out of hibernation and hopped to the plumber. Six hours later, the pump finally got a rest.

One week and one day later, we awoke to no water. No electricity. Iced-up electric lines, resulting in a barn full of thirsty, full-uddered, cussing (really!) cows. I sprinkled salt over my shoulder for luck and all over the walks for safety. Eventually, power was restored.

To wake up and hear the pump, turn on the lights, and — best of all — have no one sick, makes me feel very, very fortunate.

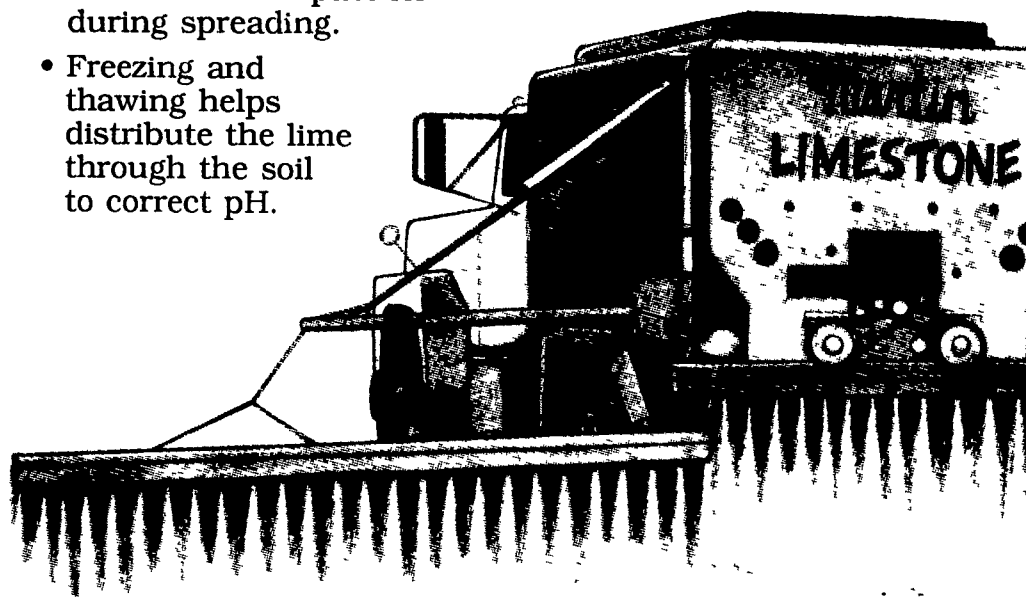
What the heck. IRS, you can just keep that lucky penny.



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Lancaster Society 15

Lancaster Farm Women Society 15 met at the home of Betty Kreider, Quarryville, with assisting hostesses Shirley Ann Kleckler and Charlotte Stoner.

Devotions were given by Charlotte Stoner. Twenty-two members responded to roll call by naming their favorite dairy product. Ice cream was chosen by the majority.

Louise Wenger introduced Lancaster County Dairy Princess Jill Harnish who said that there is no substitute for milk. She told of the 1,900 farms in the county of which

she and her family own one on which they milk 54 Holsteins.

The secretary report was given by Trudy Bard and the treasurer's report by Charlotte Stoner.

Society 15 will be celebrating their 55th anniversary this year. Nancy Shoemaker, Emily Reath, and Joan Whiteside were appointed to plan for the celebration.

Farm Women 15 are invited to be guests of Society 33 on March 4 for 6:30 supper at the Farm and Home Center.

Lancaster Society 18

Lancaster County Farm Women Society #18 met February 20 at Kreider's Restaurant, Manheim with 21 members attending. President Ruth Rohrer was in charge. Suie Wissler had devotions. Roll call was answered by showing and telling about a favorite basket.

The speaker was Phoebe Good. Phoebe demonstrated basket mak-

ing and showed the many different kinds of baskets she makes.

Members will sew at the Lancaster General Hospital on Wednesday, March 17.

Mildred Greider will be the hostess for the March meeting.

The meeting adjourned by singing the theme song "Brighten the Corner."

Lancaster Society 19

The February 13th meeting of Lancaster Farm Women's Society #19 was held at the home of June Bare. Devotions were led by Phyllis Newcomer and members answered the roll call to "I wish I had learned to"

Suggestions were taken for the County Project. The group will sew at the Lancaster General Hospital March 4 and will go to the County Home May 20 to entertain the guests.

Reports of the State Convention were given by Eva Myers and Mildred Eshleman.

Naomi Spahr, board member on the Pennsylvania Agriculture Safety Council, gave an interesting talk on the work the Council does to make life on the farm more safe.

The next meeting will be held March 13th at the home of Mildred Hoffman.



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