

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



But all I said was "We really oughta' have a little snow."

That was back around the holidays, when the first blast of icy cold set in across fields of small grains unprotected from bitter, killing winds. Stands of fall-planted wheat and barley and fields of alfalfa are more prone to devastating and costly damage when there is no sheltering blanket of snow to provide nature's own insulation. Thus: "We really oughta' have a little snow."

That was three Arctic cold fronts, two Siberian express blasts, four dumpings of snow, several freezing rains and we stopped counting how many bone-chilling, lung-paining, record-breaking, sub-zero, power-shortage days ago. After the morning the thermometer registered minus-15 on our basement porch, temperature became a comparative thing. Minus-two the following morning - with no wind

signaled the warming trend that might help thaw the Pennsylvania permafrost.

Even The Farmer, who has almost unlimited patience, grew weary and quietly frustrated after the second pickup had died, equipment wouldn't start and each day froze up more water fountains and lines in the barns. And when he tried to start the shop furnace to thaw out the second frozen truck, the stovepipe fell down.

I'm not going to complain as long as the power doesn't go off," became my mantra, chanted repeatedly for morale purposes, even before regional suppliers called electricity cutbacks.

"I'm not going to complain..." helped while dumping buckets of hot water to thaw heifers' water fountains and the water lines in the calf nursery. "I'm not going to complain..." kept me company while stapling feed bags over cracks and crannies in the old

barn walls, while skidding down icy slopes toting bags of feed, while piling on seven layers of winter-clothing "armor" to fight the wind chill battle.

Even though this worst-ever-in-memory cold snap, demanding all day to just get the basic barn chores done, there were lighter moments and some birdbrained diversions.

Thawing pipes to the heifers' fountain, The Farmer tossed hot water into an access hole under the cement-block-based feed trough, under which the water line runs. Barreling back out of the access hole came Fuzzy Gray, a furry-haired barn cat, dripping wet. Cats often snooze in this very sheltered spot, one of the last places to ever freeze up in the old barn.

From there, Fuzzy Gray apparently took off on a hunting expedition. The Farmer spied him later, after the cat had successfully snagged a barnyard bird for breakfast. Frozen to his face and whiskers were small bits of bird feathers - "tarred and feathered" noted The Farmer.

Foxy, rat-catcher resident cat of the dairy barn, fared better. We found him during milking one evening, tail-end parked tight against the kerosene space heater temporarily run in the milk house to keep pipes thawed.

Birdfeeder regulars took a back seat to a squirrel that claimed dibs on the tree feeder, downing sunflower seeds like so many pieces of popcorn. We never have squirrels - but a second one perched on a platform feeder high atop a metal pipe. After rooting for seeds, it

stood up on its back legs, held its front paws across its chest, slowly glanced around, puzzling how to get off. Then, the furry-tail agilely spun upside down, crept along the bottom of the wooden platform, and slid the metal pole head first.

And on a nostril-freezing morning, The Farmer poked his head in the calf nursery and announced the first sign of spring. One of the barnyard hens had hatched a nest of nine, itty-bitty, baby chicks.

What we really oughta' have are a few more of those signs of spring.

Fluid Milk Ads Begin Airing

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — The American Dairy Association and Dairy Council's (ADADC) new fluid milk ads will debut on television beginning the week of January 31.

The campaign was developed in conjunction with United Dairy Industry Association (UDIA) and the National Dairy Board (NDB).

The two 30-second advertisements are targeted to motivate adult milk drinkers ages 25-54. Each advertisement celebrates traditional values connected to milk by using both images and words to communicate the nutritional benefits — strong bones, bright eyes, and soft skin — and the good taste of milk. They show everyday people of all ages, such as a grandfather dancing with his grandson, who look and feel their best drinking milk.

Research shows that self-enhancement and the feeling that comes from doing something good for yourself is one of the main reasons adults drink milk.

Advertisements were then designed to appeal to adults of all ages and boost their perceptions of milk as a healthy, attractive beverage. Both advertisements were rated highest among five test ads evaluated in consumer focus groups and in quantitative research.

The new advertising will appear on network evening news and a variety of primetime programs because of a unified national media buy, which combines funds from UDIA, state and regional dairy organizations, and NDB. Approximately \$18.7 million is earmarked for national (network) advertising with an additional \$20 million being spent in local state and regional markets during the next 12 months.

The combined major media buy translates into almost 20 percent more exposure for the dairy industry. Pooling promotional dollars is an efficient way to deliver an effective dairy message with the greatest impact on consumers.

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