

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



All was peaceful. Quiet. Mist hung over the meadow, while the sun began threading its way through broken clouds. Sky reflections on the pond were stirred only by the passage of our Canada geese couple and their six, pudgy goslings.

A chorus of robins, sparrows, blackbirds poured from the thick cover of maple leaves overhead, accompanied by the solo squawkings of one loud, but off-key bluejay. And the baby squirrels raced up and down one large tree trunk, like so many kittens chasing each other about.

Amazing, this quiet and peacefulness. Not a single four-legged, black-and-white body romping around anywhere outside the fences.

Truly amazing. Because this spring, we have encountered a rampant, epidemic case of heifer escapeism. Led by what The Farmer calls The Gang. The Gang is a pack of about 15 good-sized, bred heifers, whose bloodlines somewhere picked up the escape abilities of a weasel.

One evening a few weeks ago, I glanced at the alfalfa stand on the southeast horizon and found it dotted with grazing bodies. They've been turning up there on a regular basis ever since. Even that wouldn't be so bad, if they stayed there in the alfalfa and grazed. But after sneaking out a few times when there was no one immediately available to counter the attack, they discovered the silage bag packed with high-moisture corn grain.

Soon, The Gang slipped out to make a beeline for the bag every chance they got. Then they would

wander around the yard, examine the garden, visit their relatives at the dairy barn and trash the nursery alleyway while they sampled calf grain. and that was when they weren't messing around the neighbor's yard and garden on the opposite side of the meadow.

This got old fast. Real old. Real fast.

Key problem is the two cattle guards installed where the field equipment road enters and exits the meadow pasture. The cattle guard excavations, dug the width of the road and bridged with a series of heavy steel bars with open spaces between, are nearly two feet deep. Theoretically, equipment can be driven over the bridge, while the gaps between the bars keep the cattle from crossing it, because their feet slide through. Theoretically, I said.

Over the years, the excavations had filled somewhat with ground and manure, deposited bit-by-bit by hundreds of passes over the bridges by equipment and manure-truck tires. After the first few busy-body heifers discovered they could tiptoe through the bars of the guard closest to the farmstead and step through to now-shallow hole beneath, it took only a day or two for the rest to perfect the trick.

The Farmer re-dug the excavation in the more shallow of the two crossings. Which barely halted the worst of the offenders, who banged, bruised and bloodied their legs while scrambling between bars now spanning a deepened hole. Fencing would have been the answer — but the cattle guards had to remain open to accommo-

Clearfield Plans Dairy Pageant

CURWENSVILLE (Clearfield Co.) — The 26th Annual Clearfield County Dairy Princess program will be held June 25th at the Curwensville Civic Center. The evening will begin with a dinner at 7:30 p.m. followed by the ceremonies.

There will be a Dairy Maid crowning for those girls 9, 10 and 11 years of age as of June 1. They must live on a dairy farm, father work on a dairy farm or be a member of a 4-H dairy club. The girls must write an essay on one dairy product (250 words) and a paragraph on why they would like to be a dairy maid. They are to be mailed to Mary Ann Way, RR 4, Box 80, Clearfield, PA 16830 by June 20.

Any girl who is 16 and not over 24 years of age is eligible to compete in the Dairy Princess Contest. Qualifications are to be the daughter of a dairy farmer, a farm manager or herdsman, or someone employed in a dairy related industry. She may also be employed herself as one of the above or owner of two dairy animals in a 4-H and/or FFA project.

The 1993 Dairy Princess,

date the last of our seasonal, dawn-to-dark manure hauling.

Thoroughly irritated, The Farmer proceeded to dig the second crossing even deeper, after cutting out bars to widen the gaps on the first one. It worked. For about a day.

The Gang is out-persisting him. They're now taking a running start, and making flying leaps across the bars - laughing the whole way, for sure.

Genetic engineering just introduced to society a new, improved, long-lasting tomato.

And our own natural engineering has perfected a pure bloodline of mutant, flying bovines.

Rebecca Glass kept busy this past year. She is working on school programs, has been in parades, and passed out ribbons at the county fair and 4-H show. Becky with WQYX Radio and Allied Milk Producers gave away ice cream parties to area businesses. She spoke at the Cooperative

Extension Banquet and the Clearfield Women's Club. Becky was assisted with the promotions by Dairy Maid, Laura Sankey.

Make reservations along with \$4 for each meal ticket to Mary Ann Way, RR 4, Box 80, Clearfield, PA 16830.

Search For Tioga Dairy Princess

COVINGTON (Tioga Co.) — For Tioga County Dairy Princess Rebecca Bechtel, holding the title of Dairy Princess was a very "rewarding experience."

"I can't believe the year's coming to an end already," said Bechtel. "It seems like only yesterday that I was preparing for my county pageant. As I look back on the year, it's filled with many exciting and busy times from my Dairy Princess experience. From my trips to Harrisburg to Penn State to Gettysburg and back to Tioga County, I feel I've covered a lot of the state."

Throughout her reign, Ms. Bechtel rode in parades, attended seminars, meetings and conducted school promotions.

"I think being the Tioga County Dairy Princess has helped me grow into a more responsible person. I hope to see more girls competing this year because it's a real rewarding experience," said Ms. Bechtel.

Now as her reign comes to a close, the search begins for a new princess.

This year's Tioga County Dairy Princess Pageant has been set for Monday, June 27 at the First Methodist Church of Mansfield, at

7:30 p.m.

All young women between the ages of 16 and 24, who have a farm background or who are engaged in a dairy related industry, are eligible to compete for the title of Dairy Princess. In addition, contestants must be single and never married, have had no children and must not marry during her reign. She must also present a wholesome, healthy appearance.

All contestants must give either a speech or a skit. The winner and a first alternate will receive cash awards and will attend the dairy princess training seminar at Lycoming College, July 5-8.

Girls between the ages of 13 and 16 can become a Tioga County Dairy Maid. A Dairy Maid promotes milk and dairy products at various functions throughout the year with the Dairy Princess and her court.

Dairy Princess and Dairy Maid applications are available at the Tioga County Extension office or can be obtained from Bonnie Baker by calling (717) 549-7931. Applications should be returned to Bonnie Baker by June 13. Please send them to Ms. Baker at RR 1 Box 74, Covington, PA 16917.



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