

On being a farm wife - And other hazards Joyce Bupp



"C'mon girls . . . Let's go!" Several "girls" are already waiting. They stand patiently on the opposite side of the wide gate that blocks the rear entrance to the dairy barn. At the distant, wooded edge of the exercise lot, a few more "girls" rise from where they lay, lounging in the shade. Others simply glance toward the barn, reluctant to budge.

"You're gonna' have to move, Mick," I suggest to the big, tame cow blocking the gate. Recently fresh, Mick is anxious to get to her stall near the front of the barn, both for the generous helping of feed waiting there and for relief from the pressure of milk in her full udder.

Mick slowly maneuvers back a few steps, so that I can swing the wide gate open far enough to let the early birds into the barn. Mick, Marvina, Best, Walnut, Mistress, Cashew, and Birdie will usually be among those first into the barn. Dawdling around at the tail and will be the likes of Bonnie, Lilac, McCall, and Gail.

Putting the cows in for milking is generally a two-person job, but this sunny afternoon, everyone but me is in the hayfields. Most of the older cows know their stalls anyway, and the summer flush of new, excitable heifers haven't yet calved and joined the milking herd. Only a few of the girls, who after milking several months, still have no clue about where they belong. Or pretend they don't.

A side trip to the bedbunk turns up Pebbles and Bonnie, lingering at the silage while the rest of the herd rests in the pasture. Bonnie, a laid-back pet, ignores

me. It takes an affectionate swat on the rump to finally get her in gear and headed toward the barn. Meanwhile, the last of the woods loungers are slowly rising. A few, showing their age, walk stiffly at first as if none of their joints wants to work.

Many of the cows are already in their stalls, busy munching, by the time I reach the front end of the dairy barn and begin putting the rest in their rightful places. After working my way back the length of the barn, I sneak around the back gate to chase Splash. Splash is standing just outside the door, but won't come the last three steps inside on her own. She spots me coming and heads the other way, taking refuge in a small offset corner a few yards away, where entrances to several of the cow lots join.

Huddled in a corner with Splash is Punkin, making goo-goo eyes at the young bull who is bellowing about his virility on the opposite side of the fence. His tone changes to irritation when I herd Punkin and Splash away toward the barn.

Another trip up and down the length of the barn and the girls are in their proper places, even Bonnie, though we paraded back and forth past her stall a couple of times until she got the hint.

But every job seems to have the proverbial fly in the ointment; this one's name is Lilac. Lilac is a first-calf heifer milking cow for several months, knows the afternoon routine, but has no plans of adjusting to it. She simply refuses to go into her stall. After passing it for the fifth time, Lilac hops into another nearby, vacant stall. Aw, the heck with it, I figure. And

Woodward To Crown Kay Hostler

MIRIAM WERT
Juniata Co. Correspondent
MIFFLINTOWN (Juniata Co.)
— The crowning of the 1994-95 Juniata County Dairy Princess, Melissa (Missy) Kay Hostler, will take place on Saturday, June 18, at the Walker Grange Hall in Mexico at 8:00 p.m.

The public is invited to attend to honor the princess and dairy maids who will promote dairy products starting July 1. Missy will be crowned by retiring Princess, Becky Woodward, who has done an outstanding job in dairy promotion during her reign.

With great enthusiasm, Becky has fulfilled the purpose of a dairy princess to promote the consumption and sale of milk and dairy products to consumers and to create a better understanding between rural and urban people through one-to-one contact at the local level.

By the end of her reign, Becky will have been at 16 schools; 21 different groups; 10 stores; three banks; a post office; pie judging; Wellness Fair; Grange ice cream festival; Senior Citizens picnic & Senior Citizens Recognition Dinner; seven parades and carnivals; four days at Juniata County Fair; four days at Heritage Days in East Waterford, Pa.; Farm Show; Hershey Bears' Game; 10 farm-related meetings or activities and other promotion activities.

At each of these events, Becky leave her there, untied.

By milking time, Lilac has backed out of the wrong stall she insisted on taking and stands, defiant in the alleyway. Now, with two of us on hand to corral her, Lilac promptly hops right into her own place.

I wonder sometimes: between cows and people, who outsmarts who?

has either served dairy-relation products such as sundaes or has spoken on the value of drinking milk or using dairy-related products. In addition to these activities, Becky has done 39 newspaper articles, 24 radio spots/interviews and her dairy essay for the state. So great was Becky's ability to plan and carry out special events to promote the dairy industry that she was runner-up in March for Promotor of the Month in the state, as listed in the Pennsylvania Cow-Municator.

The most popular event of her reign was the celebrity cow milking contest held at Lebkicher's Family Treat, whose specialty is ice cream. Four local celebrities (admittedly "greenhorns" at milking) milked the two cows taken there for the event. Each team of two managed to get about an inch of milk in their buckets in the allotted time!

As her final promotion and gift to the community, Becky will have a 125-foot long cheese hoagie at IGA on Saturday, June 18.

Becky graduated from Juniata High School in 1993. Although she continued to help on the farm, she decided to take no outside job so that she could devote the entire year to her duties as dairy princess.



Becky Woodward continues to work on the farm while promoting dairy products.



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