

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



BANG! The loud sound echoed around the farmstead in the 90-degree humidity of mid-morning.

"What was that?" I wondered aloud to the two cats underfoot.

The sharp, pronounced crack had sounded like a gunshot. Perhaps a groundhog sharpshooter had taken aim at one of the numerous "chucks" that excavate haybine-eating burrow-mounds of ground in the alfalfa fields and chomp off hundreds of baby soybean plants.

Or perhaps an equipment tire had blown. We've had an epidemic of those this spring. They blow with a thunderous "boooooom!" that has sent us scurrying a couple of times to see what disastrous

explosion had taken place.

But this had not been a "boooooom!", but a distinct "BANG!"

When nothing unusual appeared around the farm in the next few moments, the sound was pushed from my mind by a mental schedule of what needed done and which had to be done first. A few minutes later, the back door slammed and The Farmer came hustling through the house, covered with dirt, his T-shirt wet, and an old milkhouse towel at his head.

And quietly made one of the scariest statements I've ever heard.

"A battery just blew up in my

face."

Frankly, I don't remember much of the next few seconds, except he was peering toward the bathroom mirror, trying to see dirt in his streaming, red eyes ... and groping for the eyewash ... and I repeatedly asked a couple of times in growing terror: "Can you see?"

I do recall answering that he could and my asking him to lie down on the floor so I could better wash out his eyes — and in case for some reason he might pass out.

"Can you see? Does it burn?"

Strangely enough, he had no burning, just a terrible scratching like his eyes were full of dirt. Which they surely had to be, since the battery was near haylage and feed dust. While I flooded his eyes with eyewash, he recounted moving the battery to work on it, after having recharged it some minutes before — when it just exploded.

"Can you see?"

Knowing he'd probably been sprayed with acid, he'd had the presence of mind to keep his eyes tightly closed after the explosion to prevent further contamination from whatever might be clinging to skin and clothes. Instead, he called dairy barn assistant John, who was working nearby, to guide him to the milkhouse, where he had flushed out his eyes with cold

water for a several minutes before coming to the house.

"Can you see?" Enroute the few miles to York Hospital, I asked it again a couple of times. Each affirmative seemed an answer to some hastily offered prayers.

After nearly two hours of flushing his eyes with saline solutions, doctors were still removing tiny bits of dirt from his badly-reddened, abrasion-laced eyes.

Three separate physicians who examined him agreed he would be uncomfortable for a couple of days but would probably have no lasting damage.

Yes, he can see. And we truly thank God for that.

This was not his first emergency room visit for farm-related eye injuries. I've worn out my "wear your safety glasses" nagging tape.

Anyone have an extra one I can borrow?

Compost Directory Available

CREAMERY (Montgomery Co.) — If you've been wondering where to recycle excess yard and farm wastes or how to find recycled organics like mulch and compost, the Directory of Organic Material Recycling and Composting may be the resource you've been looking for. The directory, developed by the Recycling Education Office of Penn State's Montgomery County Cooperative Extension in Creamery, lists 50 sites in southeastern Pennsylvania which recycle, or will recycle in the near future, a variety of organic materials such as leaves, grass clippings, manure, woody brush and branches, lumber scraps, tree stumps and logs.

The Recycling Education Office promotes organic material recycling, composting, and end-product use by individuals and organizations through educational and networking programs. Based on approximately 2,400 surveys sent out last summer and fall by the Recycling Education Office,

the directory will help link people who have excess organic materials with organic material recyclers and composters.

Each recycling site in the directory is assigned a number. If you have organic material to get rid of, you look first at the map in the centerfold to locate the nearest recycling/composting sites. Look up the number(s) in the listings section of the directory to get more information about each individual site. A contact name and phone number are given along with a list of materials the site accepts. Some sites also have recycled organic end-products like mulch and compost available. Call the site(s) to find out about pick up and delivery, directions, hours of operation, and costs.

If you would like a directory, send a self-addressed #10 business size envelope with 29 cents postage on it to: Recycling Directory, Montgomery County Cooperative Extension, P.O. Box 20, Creamery, PA 19430-0020.

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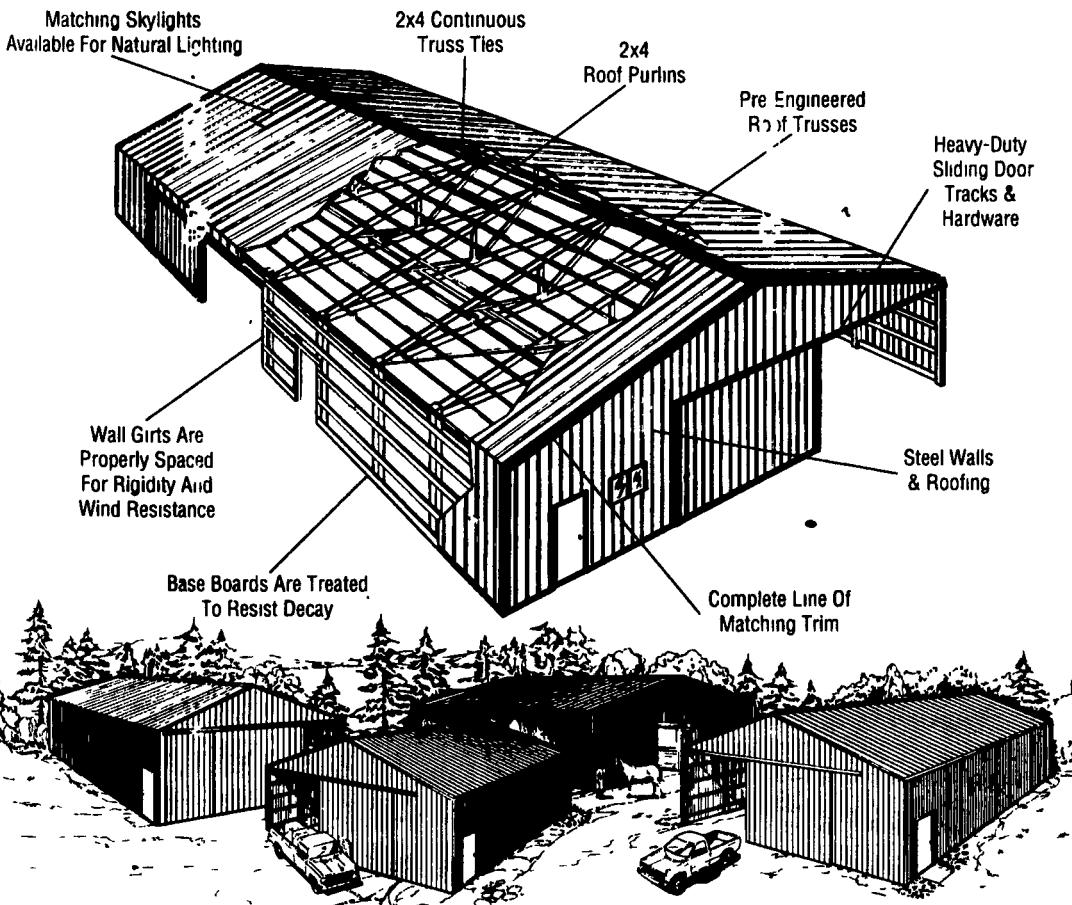
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