

On being a farm wife - And other hazards

Joyce Bupp



If Mother Nature's 12-month year could be packaged into a box of crayons, November would be the still-sharp one when I'd worn down the rest of the colors.

First to be crayoned in would be the soft shades of green and pastel floral shades of awakening springtime. Then we'd turn to the bright deep greens of summer lawns, dotted with vermillion, scarlet, neon pink, magenta, glow grange and sunshine yellows of hot-weather flowers.

Early fall would have us picking up the hues of gold, rust and red-orange. And down to a nub of colored wax would be the selections of blues, grays and ivory from crayoning the constantly changing shades of the sky and clouds.

November, however, is the brown crayon, a shade of Mother Nature often associated with negatives like muddy water. Soggy, dead leaves. Or the manure tracks dotting my kitchen floor. Again.

But driving home through the countryside on a recent drop-dead gorgeous, early-November afternoon, I suddenly realized that what seems in a quick glance as drab brownness of late fall scenery isn't. It's a whole separate, sort of subsidiary crayon box of more gentle shades, beautiful in its own way.

Just ahead along the road, in a lush green pasture framed with white fence, grazed three chestnut-colored horses. It would be impossible to see the glistening, chestnut-colored coats of these

graceful animals and not appreciate the beauty in that particular shade and in that lovely setting.

Beyond the horse pasture on the horizon stretched a "brown" woods. Except it wasn't. Tree trunks were charcoal, silvery gray and black, mingled among oak stands holding lingering leaves in shades of mahogany. Poking through the woodlot were fading accents of gold and yellow.

Harvest equipment lumbered through "brown" fields of corn and soybeans. Which aren't. Ripe stands of field corn turn the color of khaki or warm beige. And soybeans, denuded of their leaves by maturity, are a cheerful, rusty

shade.

Even scrubby, forgotten corners of meadows and unkempt roadside banks which seem to be brown are really a potpourri of other hues. Sumac bushes and briar patches fade from life into a dark maroon color. Weedy flowers in their last days hold airy, gray-white dried blooms above beige stems.

But there are some honest-to-goodness browns of November. Like the deep color of chestnuts, smooth and shiny like polished mahogany. (How many kids today know what a chestnut is, or what a roasted one tastes like?)

Or the soft, fuzzy brown of the cattail heads framing the pond. I

try to preserve some every fall, spraying the heads heavily with hairspray to keep the millions of milkweed-like seed-fluff from flying into every corner of the house.

And then there's the most beautiful brown of all: the color of the damp soil of the fields, stirred just enough to make a receptive seed bed to nurture a November planting of wheat. Without the brown of earth, there would be no trees or flowers of brighter colors, and more importantly, no food and fiber to feed and clothe the multi-hued peoples, animals and birds.

I really must use that brown crayon more often.

Farm Show Needs Ice Cream Churn-Off Contestants

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Icy weather brings thoughts of snow tires and long winter days. But the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Partners are thinking ice cream.

Contestants are needed for the 1995 Farm Show Ice Cream "Churn-off." Held on Tuesday, January 8, the "Churn-off" requires contestants to create their own flavors of homemade ice cream. The winner of this contest will take home a top prize of \$300. Second and third place recipes will receive \$150 and \$125, respectively.

Eight qualified entries will compete in the "Churn-off" Contest. All entries must use Real dairy products. Only original, unpublished recipes will compete in the contest. Judges will use the following criteria to select the winner: effective use of dairy products (30%); taste and visual appeal (30%); recipe originality

and creativity (30%); and ease of preparation (10%).

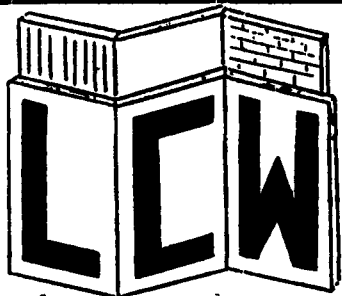
The "Churn-off" will kick-off events for "Dairy Fun Night." Come out and cheer on State Representatives as they challenge their dairy knowledge and go head-to-head in the "Dairy Feud" game show contest. Presented for the first time ever, the 1995 Dairy Olympics will test media and local celebrities in such contests as cheeseburger eating, cow milking/butter making, ice cream sundae build-off and "cow pie" tug-of-war.

The Ice Cream "Churn-off" is open to all Pennsylvania residents, except those who have an affiliation with the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Partners. Persons with professional status cannot enter the contest. The "Churn-off" contest is limited to one entry per family, FFA chapter, 4-H club, or other organization. Entries for the "Churn-off" must be

received in the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program office by December 14, 1994. Entries must include the name, address and telephone number of all contest participants and recipe. Mail to: Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program, 2301 North Cameron Street, Harrisburg, PA 17110-9408.

Dairy Fun Night is jointly sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture and the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Partners. Further information about "Dairy Fun Night" is available by calling (717) 787-6903.

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