



On Being a Farm Wife
(and other hazards)
Joyce Bupp

Recycling has always been part of the agriculture lifestyle of stewardship.

So it was only natural that a few years ago many of us would begin recycling newspaper as bedding for livestock. Mixed with straw or corn fodder, or used alone, sometimes shredded into small pieces, newspaper bedding is a win-win deal for both the donor and the user. Friends and neighbors bag or tie in bundles their used daily papers and stack them in our designated spot in the wagon shed at their convenience.

We do request they not include slick-paper magazines or thick catalogs; but a few days ago while tossing paper I came upon a fasci-

nating magazine. While it was on newsprint-type paper, it was spared recycling into the bedding pack and instead ended up as part of the paper piles accumulating near the office desk.

The black and white cover first caught my attention, a scenic photograph of Holstein cows peacefully grazing a rolling countryside. Inside are articles on subjects such as farmers and sportsmen getting along, growth data on steers with better-balanced feed rations, and an update on the latest equipment. Advertisements featured everything from electric fence chargers to farm insurance to fly control.

So what, you say?

The date on this regional agriculture publication is June, 1956, just a year shy of three decades ago. That the material is so timely—and at the same time almost historic—just fascinated The Farmer and I.

Every few issues of current regional ag publications will carry articles on better relations between farmers and sportsmen, especially in the arena of the state's deer population. Whole issues are devoted to the newest equipment models and innovations. And today's nutrition articles detail what a finely-tuned, computerized science balancing feed rations has now become.

It's not likely, though, to open a current publication and find a reader letter heatedly denouncing the use of bulk milk tanks on dairy farms. One such opinion printed in the 30-year-old farm publication states that "there are few farms where the bulk system will ever pay" and concludes with the question of how any young dairyman can ever afford to get started if a bulk milk tank has to be purchased.

To borrow a phrase—we've come a long way, baby. Today, no stainless steel bulk tank...no license granted to ship Grade A

milk. End of discussion.

A photo shows a picture of triplet calves born on an Erie County farm. Twins are not that unusual in today's dairy herds but healthy triplets are still rare enough to generate farm magazine photographs even in the mid-90s.

One article aimed at farm women readers dealt with making tasty jams and jellies. Unlike most today, the recipe ingredients did not include the packaged pectin. But even then, a suggestion was included to use the metal two-piece canning lids to seal the jars, rather than the paraffin seal which was once commonly accepted but more likely to permit mold growth.

One request from a reader was for directions on making catneal

soap by recycling leftover slivers of soap and adding oatmeal to it. Not many of today's recyclers are looking for those instructions.

But the piece de' resistance that made this publication a collectible for us was an article saluting Pennsylvania's top butterfat-producing cows. Among the photos of the top breed winners was the oldest of the six, a 13-year-old Polled Milking Shorthorn—owned by The Farmer's uncle right here in York County. The Farmer's dairy roots—his first 4-H heifer calf, a Milking Shorthorn—came from that herd.

We're still not certain where that magazine came from.

But we kinda' think Fate intended for us to find it.

Life Skills Education Training

WEST CHESTER (Chester Co.) — Penn State Cooperative Extension is holding a "Train the Trainers" session on Life Skills on Thursday, March 30, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., at the Government Services Center, Suite 370, 601 Westtown Road, West Chester. This training is designed specifically for agency personnel and volunteers in community education and will address basic life skills education. Mater-

ials are organized in a notebook for mini-lessons with appropriate supplemental information to teach clients.

The registration fee of \$25 includes the notebook, materials and instruction. For further information or registration materials, contact the Chester County Extension office at (610) 696-3500. Registration deadline is March 23.

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