



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

Baked beans. Lasagna. Pot Pie. Double doors of the church social hall doors swing open to new arrivals, bearing more steaming casseroles and kettles.

Baked ham. Fried chicken. Pizza. Spaghetti.

Offerings already weighing down the long table are shuffled closer together, to make room for the growing array of mouth-watering family favorites.

Macaroni salad. Potato salad. Tossed salad. Broccoli salad.

"Cholesterol City," wisecracks a family member, plate in hand, as he lines up to select from the groaning tables of food. Greetings and laughter pervade this informal gathering of familiar and unfamiliar faces, several dozen of us, kin-folk by blood and by marriage.

Family reunions. Marked by more food than we can collective-

ly consume, old and new photographs passed around, items of family history, whispered queries of "who is that?"—cemented together by fellowship, shared ties and memories.

Chocolate cake. Chocolate pie. Brownies.

"Guess I'll hit the dessert table," grins our son-in-law, awed that the array of sweets even surpasses the entrees. We kiddingly debate if he's safe to go ahead of me in line and chance being run over by his dessert-loving mother-in-law.

Coconut cream pie. Cookies. Jello molds. Candy. Fruit trays.

Actually, on this Sunday afternoon I'm quite content to just relax and watch while others line up for their selection of sweets. Because, the sweetest thing at this whole gathering is just inches

away, snoozing contentedly in his snugly-cushioned, infant carrier-seat.

Our new grandson.

Attending his first family gathering at two weeks of age, Joshua Andrew is oblivious to the food, the fussing over him, the barrage of questions everyone runs by his proud parents. Already at this tender age, he has experienced birth, a two-day stay in neonatal intensive care after arriving with pneumonia, phenomenal recovery after prayers from Pennsylvania to Alaska, a cross-country flight and endless attention from a barrage of adoring parents, grandparents, great-grandparents and assorted relatives and friends.

And through it all gained a pound to add to his original nine-plus.

The sweetest, most precious baby God ever made. But then, I might be prejudiced.

It's allowed, I'm assured.

Few things tighten the knots in family ties like new babies. Who does it look like? Whose nose, hair, mouth, ears, etc. does the baby have? (Daddy's, in Josh's case, right down to his abundant, dark hair.)

If it weren't for babies, family reunions wouldn't be.

Sure, we could gather to share the groaning board, but it would be just another group dinner. There would be no need to retell the funny family stories, re-look at

the old photographs, rehash the "remember whens." Reunions re-establish roots—and all babies need roots.

Like most kids, Josh will probably find such family get-togethers boring once he hits elementary school age until he, too, reaches fatherhood. Then, suddenly, family roots, family his-

tory, traditions, take on a whole new meaning once you become a parent. Who we are and where we've come from are much more significant in the fast-passing course of our lives.

So, a new leaf has sprouted on our sprawling family trees. Welcome, baby Joshua!

## Agri-Women Fly-In To Support Farming

Washington, D.C.—American Agri-Women (AAW) members and leaders met with key agency and congressional leaders during the organization's annual Fly-In. Areas of interest and concern included reforms to food safety regulations, the Endangered Species Act, property rights, resource management, tax and insurance laws.

Meeting with top USDA Administrators, 47 members heard updates on the USDA reorganization, trade outlook for agricultural commodities, new crop insurance programs and the Ag in the Classroom program.

Dr. Wendy Gramm, chairman of the National Policy Forum's Agriculture, Natural Resources & Energy Council, spoke about the importance of women in the policy setting process, and discussed current trade issues. Gramm noted, "The future for the agriculture sector is opening up trade and enhancing private property rights and free enterprise."

At the well attended reception hosted by AAW for members of

Congress and staffers, AAW president Ardath DeWall concluded "Our work here has been most worthwhile and encouraging." Members discussed AAW's priority issues with House Ag Committee Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS), Representative Phil English (R-PA), Representative Richard Pombo (R-CA) and Representative Helen Chenoweth (R-ID).

American Agri-Women is a national coalition of farm, ranch and allied business individuals and organizations whose livelihoods depend on agriculture. The organization's annual Fly-In to Washington, D.C. is one of many efforts to achieve its vision to be a force for truth: a reasoned, non-partisan voice for the agricultural community to the public.

For more information about American Agri-Women or AAW's positions on issues of concern to agriculture, please contact: Ardath DeWall, AAW president, 11841 N. Mt. Vernon Rd., Shannon, IL 61078 (815) 864-2359.

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