

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



Psychologists call it "stress." We call it "farming" . . . "Mom?" came a familiar voice over the phone.

"Where are you?" I questioned, already anticipating something gone amiss.

The owner of the voice — our son — had departed the farm with the spray truck, top-dressing corn with a boost of mid-summer fertilizer. He should have been nowhere near a phone.

"I just had fire in the spray truck. Send Dad down with the pickup and a tow chain."

Two questions always immediately come to mind under such circumstances. The primary, spoken one is: "Are you OK?" Secondary to that is: "How much is this one going to cost?"

Stress levels are pretty high

around farm country these days, what with continuing lowball prices for commodities farmers sell as compared to the ever-climbing rate of everything from health insurance to pickup trucks. Couple that with some of the overall-goofiest-nationwide weather we've seen in recent years. Friends in the mid-West couldn't plant until mid-June, now others can't harvest, due to rain. While Chester County farmers were kicking up dust, much of York County resembled a swamp at flood stage.

Still, most farmers remain eternal optimists and find little ways to beat down stress. One farm friend takes out his grandchildren's pictures and looks at them when something gets him down. Many take refuge in humor or

shooting the breeze with other farmers. Our resident Farmer enjoys a few minutes of fishin' at the pond and feeding the geese.

I like to go for a walk or run with the dogs, pick wild berries, putter around the flower beds. Pulling weeds is great, especially when you pretend they're the jerk behind the wheel of the car that nearly ran you off the highway last week and caused your knees to shake for the next 10 miles. Find shapes in clouds — or the markings on your Holstein cows.

A fellow stressed-person recently shared a list of some pretty goofy ways to relieve tension, a list he found tacked up on a bulletin board at his place of employment. Here are just a few:

- Pop some popcorn without putting the lid on it.
- Write a short story, using alphabet soup.
- Make up a language and ask directions with it.
- Read the dictionary upside down and look for secret messages.
- Fill out your income tax form in Roman numerals
- Tape pictures of your boss on watermelons and drop them from high places.
- Polish your car with earwax.
- Drive to work in reverse.

- Bill your doctor for the time you spend in the waiting room.

- Pay a utility bill in pennies.

- Leaf through an old National Geographic and draw underwear on the natives.

Silly? of course. But we got a good laugh just reading over them.

By the way, the spray truck was back in business the next day. Our

son had filled a rubber glove in the truck with water from the water system to extinguish the small electrical fire. And The Farmer repaired the minor damage from the electrical malfunction.

Guess our old National Geographic are safe for a few more days.

Martee's Chicken Coop

(Continued from Page B2)

ZUCHINNI BREAD

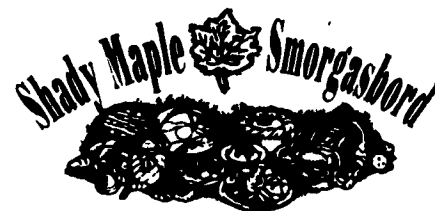
½ cup graham cracker crumbs
1½ cups all-purpose flour
1½ cups sugar
1½ cups shredded zucchini
½ cup water
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking soda
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon baking powder
½ cup coarsely chopped nuts
½ cup raisins
1 teaspoon vanilla
Generously grease 9-cup ring dish; coat with graham cracker crumbs.

Mix remaining ingredients except nuts and raisins; beat until smooth. Stir in nuts and raisins. Pour into ring dish. Elevate ring dish on inverted dinner plate in microwave. Cover with waxed paper and microwave on medium high (70%) 6 minutes; rotate ring dish ½ turn. Microwave until top of bread is dry and springs back when touched lightly, 6 to 8 minutes longer.

Let cool 10 minutes on heat-proof surface (do not use rack). Invert on dish and let cool completely before slicing. To store, wrap and refrigerate no longer than 10 days.

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