

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



Let's have an old-fashioned Thanksgiving!

Turkey and stuffing. Mashed potatoes and gravy. Sweet potatoes. Creamed parsnips. Baked dried corn. Fresh bread and butter, strawberry jam and apple butter. Pumpkin and mince pie.

You are having that? But wait—for a REAL "old-fashioned" Thanksgiving dinner, you can't run to the supermarket for those fixin's. Old-fashioned meant do-it-yourself. From scratch.

And speaking of scratch, which turkey will you have? The big, mean gobbler stalking the barnyard whose throat you threatened to cut the last time he came hissing at you with those wide tail feathers spread? Or one of the more gentle

hens who roots in your flower bed? Whichever you choose, those tiny, black pinfeathers will be a real pain to get picked out so that the skin is clean and appealing looking.

Those from-scratch turkeys do not come with pop-up cooking timers, by the way.

Now, about the stuffing. You'll have to bake the bread a day or two ahead and cube it. Make sure your hens are laying enough eggs that you have plenty on hand for the stuffing.

And the potatoes? Do you have enough stored in your root cellar? Sure, they may have some scab marks and some of them are pretty small, but that's the way potatoes are sometimes when you grow your own. Of course, if your

weather wasn't suitable, you probably don't have many potatoes put away for the rest of year.

Same with sweet potatoes. They're even more finicky about weather than white potatoes. Check the warm, dry corner of the basement and see if they're in good shape.

The dried corn will have to be soaked ahead and left to cook for awhile to get properly soft. It's tedious to cut off the cob and dry during the humid summer months when corn is fresh. And it has to be dried and stored properly, or it will turn into a glob of mold. But for "old-fashioned," it's dried corn—or no corn.

(Just forget cranberries—unless you lived in the coastal bogs of New England where they grew wild. Forget the creamed parsnips. Period.)

About the butter. Start skimming and saving cream from your twice-daily milkings several days ahead. It needs to be room temperature before it goes into your hand-cranked churn. A good job for keeping the kids occupied for an hour or so.

The jam was cooked and thickened on the woodstove during those hot days last June from strawberries you grew. And the applebutter is freshly made from

your apple trees' abundant yields and the cider you pressed from the drops. It took two days of stirring it over an open kettle, but it's one of the few sweets you'll have left, come spring.

Since it was a spotty pumpkin crop, you may have pumpkins for pies—or you may not. If you do, you'll have to chop and cook them, strain the pulp and then start your baking. Squeeze those hens for a few more eggs.

Or, you might just settle for apple pies, or mince, if you have mincemeat left. You did make mincemeat when you butchered your year's supply of beef last

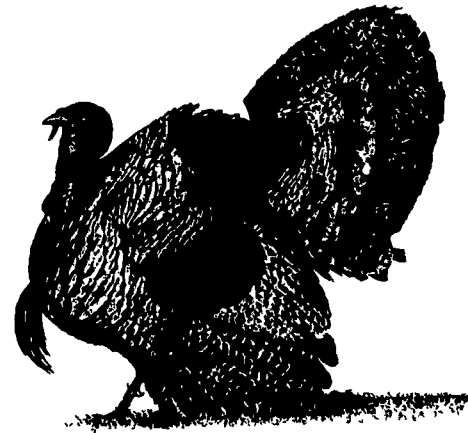
winter, didn't you? Canned mincemeat is another way to preserve meat—besides smoking and drying.

Make sure there's enough flour in the bin. Or have your Farmer take some wheat to the mill to have some freshly ground. And hope the wheat hasn't gotten too buggy in storage at the barn since the July harvest.

Let's have an old-fashioned Thanksgiving!

On second thought, let's not.

Let's just give thanks that we have such an abundance to be thankful for. And that we can just buy it, thaw it, open it, microwave it and enjoy it.



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