

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



Brace yourselves. This is the week of the "big" snow.

Despite the fact that there are many years of negligible-or no-snow that falls on the Farm Show, history and tradition have combined to establish this week as the legendary one of blizzard horror tales. Of course, every now and then, as it did a couple of years ago, we do get the proverbial "big one" to keep the tradition alive, a major weather event which snowbounds exhibitors in Harrisburg and the rest of us at home.

After all, though, it is January and the weather odds are against sunny, balmy and 60 degree-temperatures. Though that's been known to play during Farm Show week, too.

"I hate snow," was a thought included in a recent message from a good friend. A fellow dairy producer, she may dread the extra work and mess that snow brings to handling cattle and moving machinery and feed. Despite that extra hassle, I still like snow. Well, most of the time, anyway.

Snow turns the drab, dreary, tired look of the countryside into

a picturesque, greeting-card-like setting, adding a fantasy touch to the most ordinary and mundane of things.

Few scenes are more delightful to the eye than a deep-green pine tree frosted with fluffy white snow-icing on every needle, every branch. Tuck a brilliant red cardinal or a sky-colored blue jay out onto the end of one of the limbs and the striking picture is more beautiful than anything man could design.

Snow drapes fluffy accents over the split-rail fence around the yard and tops each post with a whimsical white cap. It covers the pile of leaves lingering in a corner of the yard and tidies up the scruffy look of the perennial border. And, clumps of old, dried weeds are transformed to dainty bouquets of lacy loveliness.

Against the white backdrop of snow, every tree in the woodlot stands out with greater individuality and prominence. Fallen trunks and old logs, once lost among the landscape of wintry browns and blacks, interject horizontal and angular lines across the vertical visual effect of the stand of dormant hard-

woods. This whiteness further enhances anything of color to cross its stage; the rusty red of a hunting fox, the dusty brown of a grazing deer, flashes of color from winter birds, even the bright hues of the tractor and equipment being shuttled around on daily feeding and cleanup chores.

The pounds take on a new dimension, their sparkling waters stilled beneath a silent crust of frosty, opaque ice. Strange tracks criss-cross the ice last week, faintly resembling from a distance a series of railroad tracks. Near as I can guess, the tracks were made by our lone Canada goose that lingers here. The rows of faint, indiscernible prints must have come from the bird tracking across on the ice while it was slushy, and bits of snow settling later into each tiny, shallow depression.

That single goose, by the way, has adopted the cows as its "flock," spending most of its time with our bovine bunch. When they hang around the feedlot, so does the goose. When we put them out to graze, as we did until the snow stopped our pasturing of the fields of oats and rye cover, the goose nibbled at the grasses right along with the cows.

After a day or two, the fantasy prettiness of pristine snow deteriorates into messes of mud, patches of slippery or lumpy ice, hard-packed piles that must be negotiated around, and endless tracks dirtying the kitchen floor. At that point, I shared my friend's distaste for snow.

So we dream ahead of spring and green grass. And figure

that, based on the winter's patterns so far, along with that posterchild for goofy weather-El Niño-maybe we can just write

off a "big snow" this year and anticipate an early spring. Meanwhile, go enjoy the Farm Show.

# FFA

BUILDING THE FUTURE



Pictured left to right are Solanco FFA members Jim Pelliccio, Justine Hill, Dwayne Spangler, Jessica Schmidt, Robert Lowery, Britina Robinson, and Jim Kerr, who attended the National FFA Convention in Kansas City. Not in photo: Sara Strickler.

### Solanco FFA

Eight Solanco FFA members recently attended the National FFA Convention in Kansas City, the largest youth convention in the world. The conference ran Nov. 12-14.

Sara Strickler, Justine Hill, Jessica Schmidt, Dwayne Spangler, Robert Lowery, Jim Kerr, Jim Pelliccio, and Britina Robinson were accompanied by teacher Carey Kalupson during their trip to Kansas City, Mo.

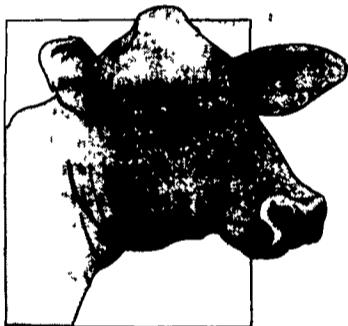
Thousands of students, advisers, and guests attended the convention featuring more than 300 exhibitors representing agribusiness, agricultural organizations, machinery companies, colleges and universities, technical schools, computer firms, and commodity groups. FFA members also had the opportunity to explore various agricultural careers by attending the National Agricultural Career Show.

Solanco members earned the opportunity to attend the convention by points accumulated through their involvement in chapter activities during a

three-year period. Three students - Sara Strickler, Justine Hill, and Jessica Schmidt - competed in the national Livestock Judging Contest while at the convention. The team of three took first place in livestock judging at the state judging contest and convention held at Penn State in June, qualifying them to compete at the national level.

In addition to attending the various convention sessions, Solanco members also visited several points of interest in the greater Kansas City area. Included were stops at the American Royal Rodeo, Blackhawk, and the Kansas City Zoo/Imax Theater.

Along the way, the members traveled the scenic Skyline Drive stopping in Charlottesville to tour the Rhedburg Stables (thoroughbred breeding and training) and in Louisville, Ky to tour Churchill Downs, Kentucky Derby Museum, and the Louisville Slugger Museum. The group also toured the Gateway Arch and Busch Stadium.



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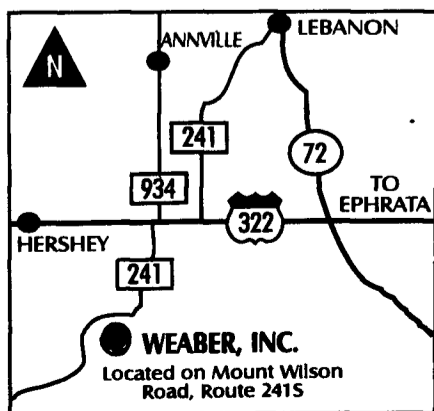


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