

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



This column is a salute to part of the agriculture industry that we farmers probably usually take for granted.

Farm equipment dealers. Some days, at least during the hectic planting and harvest seasons, The Farmer spends more time communicating with equipment people than he does with me. And, some days they may know what's going on more out there in the fields than I do as they help us keep our not-new equipment rolling through yet another season of heavy demand on its ever-breakable apparatus.

This time of year, the frantic fix-and-keep-working-in-the-fields pace has slowed a bit. Farmers thoughts turn toward repairing, repainting, replacing and restocking their parts

inventories in anticipation of that blessed day in spring when the first seed can be plugged into the warming soil.

Equipment dealerships pose an attraction far greater than providing basic services of repairs, supplies, parts and new stuff that gives farm wives gray hairs when their farmers casually mention they've been pricing it. There's an entertainment factor well beyond picking up a half-dozen shear pins, disk blades, and hydraulic oil. It's not a costly sort of entertainment, just good ole' country conversation with other farmers. Finding out who's planting what, who bought what, who sold what, who rented what, who's trying what now, what's "in," what's "out."

When we women discuss such business of our friends and neighbors, its called gossip.

Now, equipment dealers are very savvy business people. They encourage this meeting-place mania, with stools on which to park at the parts counter, maybe a hot, full coffee pot, and an ever-impressive selection of candy bars. This time of the year, many of them go a hospitality step farther, hosting customer open-house events with early-season parts discounts, repair specials, and door prizes. Knowing that farmers love to eat, they enhance the lure with goodies ranging from chips and pretzels to bowls of hot soup and hotdogs with all the fixin's.

But the equipment dealership lure is not limited to the big boys. There are few farm kids (boys and girls) who don't jump at the chance to ride along in the pickup to fetch supplies or parts. And dream over shelves full of those toy reproductions of farm equipment for their own backyard tillage operations.

For one small boy in the giant metropolis of Portland, Oregon, the farm equipment dealership has become the ultimate childhood entertainment center.

Faced with a stretch of wet, dreary weather - normal for Portland winters - his mother, in desperation, packed him and his brothers into the car one day recently and headed outside the city to the nearest farm equipment dealer. She, admittedly, was a bit homesick that particular day. At the equipment dealership, the story goes, this two-year-old "city kid" went absolutely bonkers over an entire wall filled with every kind of toy equipment imaginable.

Bottom line was that the farm-homesick mother left a considerable chunk of change at the farm equipment dealership. That purchase not only extended the small farmer's basic line of toy equipment, it also earned his mom some needed peace and quiet to pursue her home-based computer business. She figures

it was a real fair return on investment.

Now she finds herself falling overall her scatter rugs which the small farmer repeatedly snags for his "fields." The very same problem I used to have with the little farmer's uncle - who carried away my rugs for the same purpose over 20 years ago.

Is this pure happenstance? Or are there genetics involved here?

Whatever the reason, we thank farm equipment dealers everywhere for their support of our farm equipment needs and for being there when we need them in the inevitable emergencies.

And for providing toys for our boys.

Big ones and little ones.

## Winter Soup Workshop

**SCHAEFFERSTOWN (Lebanon Co.) — Lebanon Extension Home Economist Letie Schadler will share recipes and basic techniques for making tasty soups and stocks at the Dutchway Supermarket in Schaefferstown on Tuesday, Feb. 3, 1 to 2:30 p.m. and again from 7 p.m.-8:30 p.m.**

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