

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



I'm sorry, pardon my whining.

But I'm a little bummed out at the moment.

I just go back from paying our "school taxes. Which are up 43% from what they were when I paid them just one year ago. Like I said, I'm a little bummed out at the moment.

Has our real estate appreciated 43% in market value from what it was last year?

Hardly.

Have we added anything to

the buildings or the farmstead that would justify that kind of increase?

Hardly. Last year's drought and lack of feed zapped most area livestock farm budgets almost beyond even covering a coat of paint for the barn.

Has our soil become so much more valuable even as we try to maintain and improve it with the recommended amounts of lime, fertilizer, and organic matter from manure that it's 43% more productive?

Hardly.

Are prices for the crops raised on that ground up 43%?

Last time we had corn to sell, (two years ago, before last year's devastating drought) we averaged about \$3.20 per bushel. This year, at the moment, the price is \$2.35 per bushel. And that's before any charges for drying are levied.

Tell me. How are farmers supposed to stay in business?

I'm sorry, I'm a little bummed out at the moment.

We no longer have kids in school, but still pay "school" tax. Yeah, I know, it's a property tax, not a school tax. Meanwhile, there seem to be constant mandates to public schools that cost more and more money. And who pays for that?

We have not received 43% in new services from this "school" or any taxing authority.

Our farmland has not demanded any new school bus routes. Our farmland has not demanded increased police or fire protection needs.

Our farmland has not demanded the addition of curbs, or sewer, or water, or traffic lights, or recreation facilities.

Our farmland has not demanded any additional garbage pickup. We pay for our own, privately, anyway.

Our farmland provides living plants and trees to help clean the air polluted by the constant traffic passing through on the interstate high. Our farmland provides home to numerous songbirds, transient numbers of Canada geese, assorted small animals, from groundhogs to possums to foxes, a few elusive deer and, for a brief period, one beautiful cockbird pheasant not seen in recent weeks, to our great disappointment.

Our farmland provides open space, adds the proverbial greenery to the scenery; and is one of many sources of water for the growing metropolis which comprises the greater York area.

Our farmland helps to provide food for a population, which

is thus permitted the luxury of devoting time to numerous pursuits other than feeding itself

And, for this, we just paid 43% more in property taxes. (Pity some of our fellow farmers whose taxes went up 200%).

I'm sorry, I'm a little bummed out right now.

Farmland preservation is a politically and socially-popular issue at the moment. Farmland preservation monies are more in demand than cash to cover the cost. Farmland preservation is critical to the future if people want open space or plan to continue eating.

But what are we preserving if taxes, regulations, and the burden of bureaucracy continues to eat away at a farmer's ability to provide his family a living from that farmland and hope to pass it on to another generation of food producers?

What are we preserving?

Sorry, I'm a little bummed out right now.

Wouldn't you be?

Purchasing A Computer

LEESPORT (Berks Co.) — Attend a workshop on Purchasing a Computer sponsored by Penn State Cooperative Extension — Berks County on Monday, November 9, 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. or 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. in the Agricultural Center, Bern Township

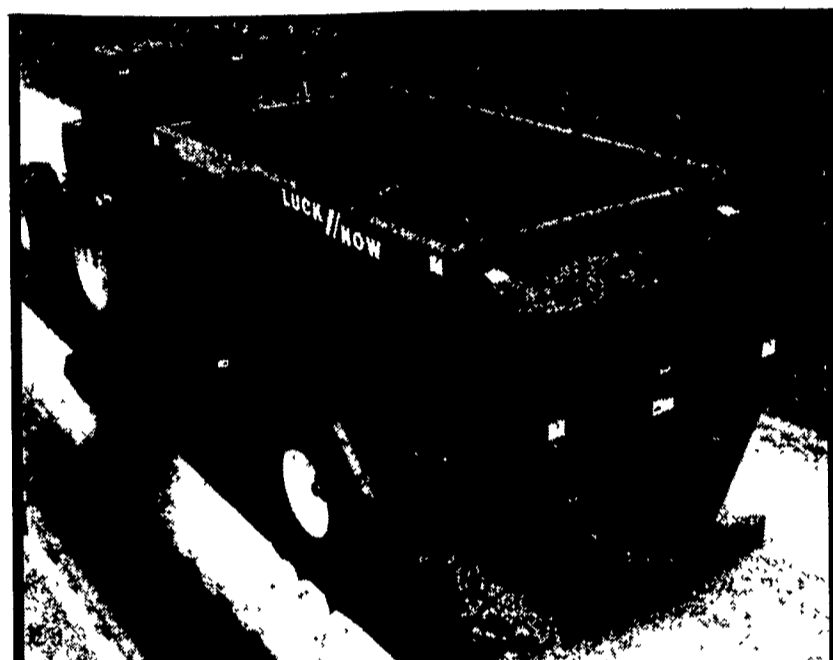
Dr. David Manzo, resource

management extension agent, will cover topics such as: Why do I need a computer? How do I plan on using my computer? What do I need in the computer in order to meet my needs?

Also, the workshop will cover the aspects of purchasing a cellular phone.

Advance registration is requested. Cost is \$2. Checks can be made payable to Berks County Cooperative Extension Special Account and mailed to Berks County Cooperative Extension, Berks County Ag Center, 1238 County Welfare Road, Leesport, PA 19533-520.

Any questions, please call (610) 378-1327



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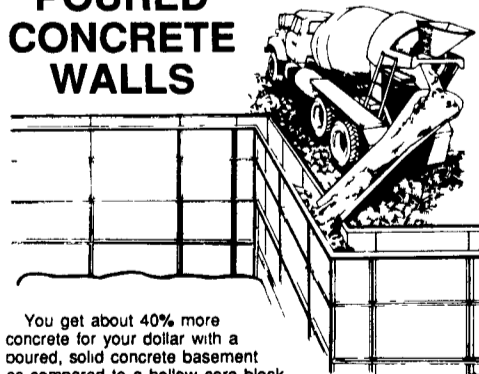
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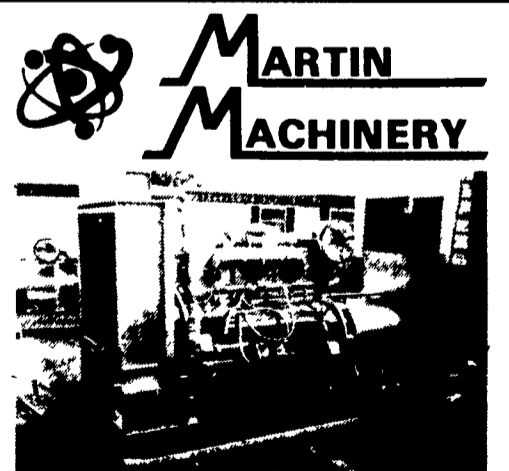
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