

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



Yes, sirree, it's that time of year again.

Tax paperwork time. And Farm Show.

Years past, that combination posed an interesting dilemma, as we wrapped up year-end accounting amidst piles of stuff being gathered for a week as Farm Show dairy competitors. So, you can understand why it's pleasurable now to abandon the demands of year-end paperwork for a day to just relax as a Farm Show spectator.

But, over the years, I've learned a lot from the Farm Show, both from a participant and spectator viewpoint.

For instance, I've learned that the legendary, brutal "Farm Show weather" only actually

occurs intermittently. But when it does . . .

I've learned that, despite repeated signs and warnings, folks have an irresistible urge to poke their fingers into cages of chickens, turkeys, and ducks.

I've learned that some parents have absolutely no clue what a cow or horse foot just this-far-away from their child in the stroller has the potential to do.

I've learned to wonder what those black winter radishes sometimes included in the Grange harvest displays taste like.

I've learned that boys—of all ages—never tire of climbing into the cushy cabs of shiny new tractors and daydreaming.

I've learned that no matter how many pieces of farm equipment are already parked in the shop at home, the "boys" can always find something at the Farm Show that "we could really use."

I've learned that tears will flow during the annual livestock auctioning events. Some from the kids at the halters of their animals. Some from mothers sitting in the arena.

I've learned that, without fail, some youngster's balky animal will flop down to the sawdust during the show event, mightily embarrassing the exhibitor.

I've learned that, without fail, some youngster's balky animal will escape and take off in a distant direction during a showing event, likewise embarrassing the exhibitor.

I've learned that, given a chilly environment, sharp tools and a very large chunk of fresh butter, a talented artist can create a sculpture of amazing detail and impressiveness.

I've learned that few folks are shy about answering dairy trivia for the chance to win a few seconds inside a small booth filled with real money swirling around to snatch for prizes.

I've learned that deep-fried

mushrooms are a scrumptious food.

I've learned that, sleeping in the livestock barns at the Farm Show is a sure-fire way to catch the common cold.

I've learned that it is impossible to keep anything on display at the Farm Show dust-free for more than 10 minutes.

I've learned that few things have more fascination for the non-farm public than a newborn baby calf... or lamb... or pig... or other baby animal.

I've learned that it is impossible to hose down animals in the wash rooms and remain dry yourself.

I've learned that there are lots of interesting exhibits

tucked away in random nooks and crannies of the massive Farm Show complex, if you have time to seek them out.

I've learned that you can make some great bargain buys on leftover plants on the last afternoon of the show.

I've learned that the clothing returning home from a stay in the livestock barns contain enough straw, hay, etc. to bed up a calf pen.

I've learned that I would make an absolute fool of myself if I tried to do the complicated routines performed by the square dance groups.

I've learned that, even after all these years, I always learn something new at the Pennsylvania Farm Show.



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