

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Go ahead.

Laugh if you like. But I happen to like this hat.

"Mom, how long have you had that hat?" asked our son a few weeks ago, a mix of wonderment and exasperation evident in his voice.

"Funny you would ask," I grinned. "I was just telling someone not too long ago, how you kids threatened to burn this hat 20 years ago."

Go ahead. Laugh at my old, bright red, fuzzy, shapeless, sawdust and straw-bit decorated barn hat.

I happen to like this hat.

Where it originally came from, I haven't the slightest clue. But it's comfortable. It's

roomy. Not tight on your head like so many of the ski-type hats that leave you feeling like you were wearing a vise around your ears. And I do need something to cover my ears, since they are susceptible to irritation from cold drafts. About the only time I catch colds is if I've been running about in the wind with my bare ears exposed to the chill.

My mom says it's because I had a very severe ear infection as a child. The Farmer claims it's because the draft goes straight through the hole in my head connecting my ears. Whatever. But the shapeless, fuzzy, bright red hat goes back on my head for winter barn use.

If I could find a similar one in

a darker color, say black or dark brown or navy blue, I'd grab it up in a minute. But I've never found another warm, wooly-type winter hat this loose and comfy. Let's face it, this hat has become my barnwork, wintertime security blanket.

It's actually the finishing touch for my stylish and colorful wintertime barn garb. Indeed, my barn-chores wardrobe selections come from the most discriminating collections of hand-me-downs from my kids (or would those be considered hand-me-ups?), clothes outgrown or unwanted by others and individual pieces selected from the most discriminating local thrift and consignment shops.

Face it. Why would anyone pay a day's salary for a pair of jeans one intended to purposely don for exposure to mud, manure, splattered milk, and chlorine? The mud, manure and milk are alone hard enough on clothes. When we began a year or so ago pre-dipping our girls' udders with a chlorinated solution prior to milking, for sanitation and anti-bacterial purposes, it really pulled the plug on any ideas about fine barnyard fashions.

Because every garment one

wears to milk will, within a few days, look like something yanked right off the racks from the tie-dyed, hippie-era of the 1960s.

Bright denim blue-jeans promptly become pock marked with round, chlorine-splatter-spots of varying sizes, especially prominent on the front of the legs, from approximately the knee to the hip area. Colorful T-shirts, flannel shirts and sweat-shirts boast similar splotchy, camouflage-type splatters, especially in the front waist and lower torso areas.

But the splotches can actually turn up anywhere on the garments, since occasionally one of the girls will lift a foot and bump the dipper, effectively splattering the chlorine solution over the human form from head to toe. Or the dipper holding the

solution may fall to the floor, splashing its small amount of solution onto one's clothing in similar fashion.

Regardless of how the chlorine gets there, it leaves its indelible mark on garment fabrics. Which ultimately will wash out into holes after several trips through the laundry.

Thus, I favor cheap, thrift-shop purchases of faded stone-washed jeans, light colored T-shirts and gray-shades sweat-shirts, which, while terribly boring, at least don't show the bleached spots nearly as bad as bright ones. Topped with the fuzzy, shapeless, red hat which has yet to show traces of a single chlorine-splatter residue.

The hat, kids — short of burning — is indestructible.

And don't you dare even think about it.

got milk?

Dairy Of Distinction Program Again Seeks Nice Looking Farms

STATE COLLEGE (Centre Co.) - Do you take pride in maintaining your dairy farm? Does your dairy farm project an attractive, wholesome image to consumers? If so, the Dairy of Distinction Program of Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey, will consider your farm for the program's annual recognition awards.

The Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program that oversees the Distinction program was first started in 1983 in Pennsylvania

to recognize the hard work and dedication of the farmers who maintain attractive farms. The purpose of the program is to instill a greater sense of confidence in the wholesomeness of dairy products, and increase their sales.

Farms that apply are judged on the roadside appearance of buildings, grounds, and surroundings, since this is what our dairy product consumers observe as they drive by the farm.

The cleanliness of the barnyard, feed areas, and manure management are all areas taken into consideration when a team of judges takes a look at your farm from a roadside point of view. Judging is conducted during the month of May. Award winners are announced during your local June Dairy Month activities.

To qualify for consideration, you must be actively dairy farming and shipping milk.

Applications are available for Pennsylvania dairy farms from Michael O'Conner, 324 Henning Building, Dept. of Dairy and Animal Science, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802. Phone: (814) 863-3913.

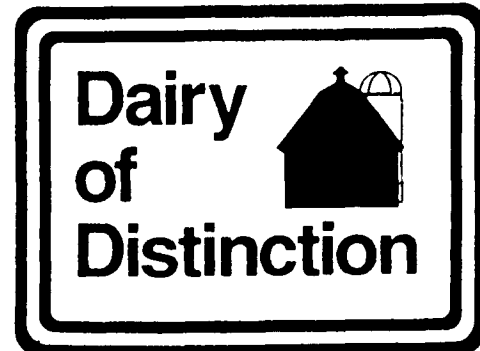
For New York State applications are available from Carol Keene, RD 1, Box 31, Gilbertsville, NY 13776. Phone: (607) 783-2169.

For New Jersey applications, send to: August Knispel, 641 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 08867. Phone: (908) 735-4989.

For Vermont applications, send to: Elisa Clancy, Vermont Department of Agriculture, 16 State St., Drawer 20, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901. Phone: (802) 828-3835.

All applications must be completed and returned to your respective state secretary by April 15, 1999.

The Dairy of Distinction program is financed in Pennsylvania by Dairy Farmers through the American Dairy Association Dairy Council and Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program in cooperation with many local agribusiness organizations. The program is conducted with advice and help from Penn State Cooperative Extension.



HOW IS YOUR FARM SCORED?

Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Program, Inc.

Awards will be based upon neatness, good maintenance and other factors which can be controlled by the farmer. Attractive background scenery should not be weighed heavily in judging. All judging observations should be made from a vehicle at one or more points on an adjacent public highway (or if farm is off the road, the nearest lane). Judging should give equal consideration to old wood construction and new construction of metal or concrete block.

The award program may be used for subsequent advertising or promotion activities for dairy products or dairy farming. Farmers who apply for awards agree that, if selected they will cooperate with these activities and make all reasonable efforts to maintain both the exterior and interior of their properties in an acceptable condition.

HOW THE APPLICATION WORKS

The owner or operator of the dairy farm should sign the application and send it to NEDFBP secretary by April 15.

HOW THE JUDGING WORKS

Judging teams will visit farms during the month of May. Farms will be judged each year as the award is presented on an annual basis. Any dairy failing to maintain appearance standards will be asked to remove their sign. The Dairy of Distinction signs remain the property of the committee, not the property of the dairy farmer. All farms must achieve a compliance score of 90 percent on their Dairy of Distinction score card. Your cooperative or milk handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality.

RULES FOR THE DAIRY OF DISTINCTION AWARD

- 1). The Dairy of Distinction sign remains the property of the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee.
- 2). The post and bracket shall be supplied by and maintained by the dairy farmer. It is suggested that a wood post 4' x 4' x 12' or iron pipe 2' x 12' be used. Posts or pipe should be installed and maintained in true vertical position with 8' above ground. Top of the bracket should be lower than six inches from the top of the post.
- 3). Sign shall be displayed in front of the dairy at roadside. An attractive post and bracket, or other frame, shall be used to display the sign. No more than three signs should be displayed from the sign frame or post, and all shall be of a style, general size and quality comparable to the Dairy of Distinction sign. Sign should be secured on all sides to avoid wind damage.
- 4). Signs shall not be moved to other premises. New owners of a Dairy of Distinction farm must apply to retain the sign.
- 5). Replacement of damaged signs shall be the discretion of the committee.
- 6). No producer shall be charged with scoring or sign expense.
- 7). Judges' decisions will be final.
- 8). Judging will take place between May 1st and May 31st.
- 9). Farms awarded a Dairy of Distinction sign in previous years will be judged between April 1st and April 30th. If they do not qualify, they will be rejudged between May 1st and May 31st so they have the opportunity to keep the sign.
- 10). Farms that do not requalify will return the sign to their regional Dairy of Distinction Committee.

Dairy of Distinction

1999 Pennsylvania Application

PURPOSE OF PROGRAM

Attractive dairy farms give the consumer greater confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales which encourages public support for the dairy industry. The award gives recognition to the dairy farmer for maintaining a well-kept farmstead.

ELIGIBILITY

All Northeast dairy farms producing milk for sale are invited to submit an application for the award. Farmers receiving the 10 highest scores in each of the 21 districts will receive an 18" x 24" Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed in front of their farm.

APPLICATION

Your Name _____ Farm Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone Number _____

Cooperative or Handler (where you ship your milk) _____

(Your Handler will be contacted to approve your milk quality)

Location (driving directions for judging team) _____

County (where your farm is located) _____

I hereby apply to the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee to have my dairy scored in accordance with the rules of the program for the purpose of obtaining a Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed on my premises. (No producer will be charged for scoring or sign expense.)

Signature of Owner/Operator _____ Date _____

Return your application by April 15. Send to:

- PENNSYLVANIA, Michael O'Conner, 324 Henning Building, Dept. of Dairy and Animal Science, Penn State University, University Park, PA 16802.
- NEW YORK STATE, Carol Keene, RD 1, Box 31, Gilbertsville, NY 13776.
- NEW JERSEY, August Knispel, 641 Sidney Road, Pittstown, NJ 13077.
- VERMONT, Elisa Clancy, Vermont Department of Agriculture, 16 State St., Drawer 20, Montpelier, VT 05620-2901.