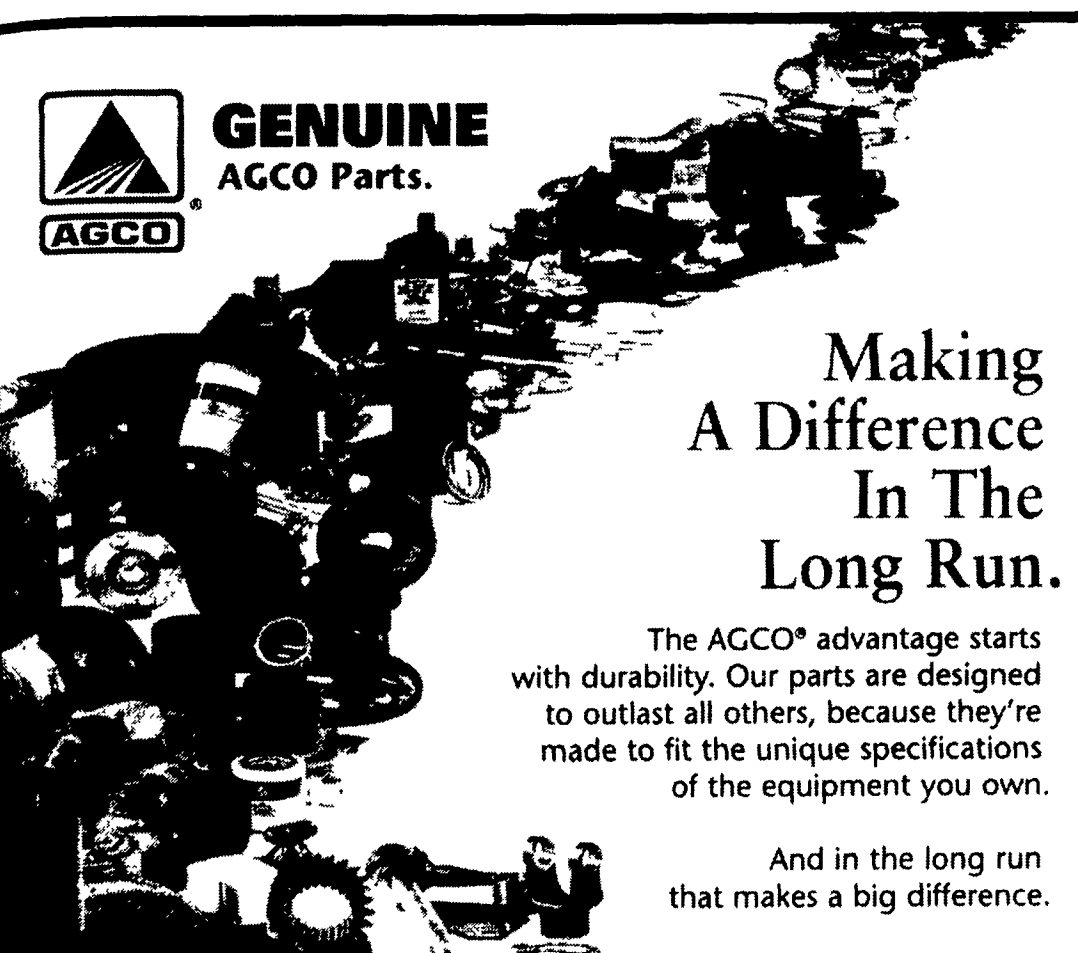




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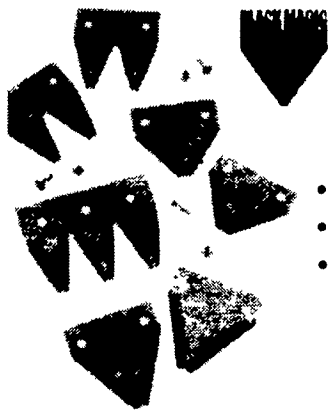
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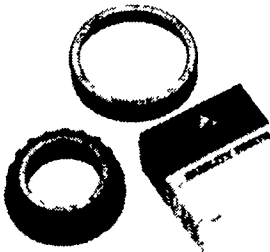


AGCO® Cutting Parts

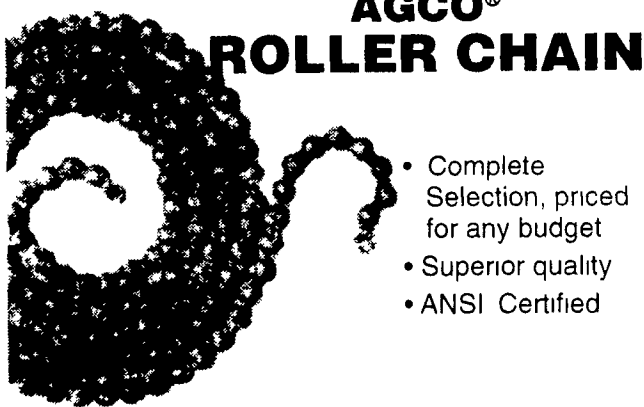
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*On Being a
Farm Wife
(and other
hazards)*
Joyce Bupp



The grass has turned a deep, vibrant green.

Daffodils gaily nod their cheery heads in the breeze Forsythia bushes glow golden in the sunshine

Giddy with the joy and promise of Springtime, we gladly dig holes in our pocketbooks. Fertilize our gardens with liberal spreading of bucks And bask in the daydreams of color-coordinated annual borders, picture-perfect perennials, and baskets overflowing with mounds of dewy, homegrown vegetables

"Grow it. Pick it. Eat it!" proclaimed a gardening ad that cracked me up as I thumbed through a publication while enjoying my early morning breakfast bagel with cream cheese.

Yeah. Right. Just like that. Oh, golly, gee whiz, if it were only that simple.

Because the advertisement had to do with planting fruit trees.

Years ago, when we first moved onto the farm, there were a couple of old apple trees scattered around the farmstead Age, building, re-landscaping, even a fire in one started by an electric fence, which slipped off the insulator, took their toll over the years

Grow it Pick it. Eat it

A fruit tree is a commitment Just ask your local professional orchardist Every plant problem in the book with an inclination toward fruit will know in a moment just the right moment your pet tree is susceptible to bugs, blights, blisters, fungi and assorted infestations.

"Do you really want to fiddle with having to spray and prune and fend off frost," queried The Farmer years ago when we first tossed the fruit tree idea around "When we have orchards a mile up the road?"

He reiterated the idea again last year, when I lamented the demise of my strawberry patch and mused about replanting more And, he's right With cows to help milk every day, bawling baby calves, and a computer relentless flashing an impatient cursor to "get with it!" our strawberries this year will be U-pick. Or, he suggests, pre-

picked.

Then there are the blueberry bushes. I've planted at least a dozen over the years. Some large potted ones. Some small mail-order slips. Some my mom even got for me. We do have one blueberry bush of a few feet high to show for the effort. Despite all gardening admonitions that blueberries need to be grown in pairs, to this bush's credit, it does bear some fruit in its state of singular bliss. The backyard mockingbirds generally find the berries before I do

Fruit cultivation is a commitment; I obviously don't have that commitment. Nor do I particularly relish gnarled, wormy apples or frozen peach tree blossoms or tending to a pear tree which may or may not choose to yield

I have grown soft and dependent on the efforts of our good neighbors who as professionals do this so efficiently.

Last mid-summer, The Farmer came home from one of his parts-and-repairs-stockup-trips to town with trees in the back of the pickup Apple trees "You bought WHAT?" I exclaimed

Hey, the apple trees had been reduced on sale to 90% off the original price, for goodness sake (Yes, they were still alive) And, shortly before, our West Coast daughter has been reminiscing on the phone one night about how she used to love picking apples off those old trees when she was a kid And how it would be nice for her kids to be able to do that on visits to the farm.

We now have a couple of "yearling" apple trees happily thriving in the meadow fence now

"The deer will enjoy them," justified The Farmer of his fruit tree planting, after years of reasoning why planting fruit trees made no economic sense Since deer are still a rare pleasure to watch on our farm, it's an acceptable excuse

And, if our "little dears" enjoy them too, why that's just an added bonus.

Around here, when it comes to grandkids and animals, economics and logic go out the window

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