

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



My apologies. This column is a week late. Or...maybe it isn't.

Just because the calendar said that last week was to be our annual celebration of Mother's Day, does that cut out any other time to offer a salute to mothers? The mothers I know love and care for their kids (young and old) 365 days of the year (366 in leap years), so why limit our expressions of gratitude and admiration for all they do to one day a year?

So, will you accept that as "excuse" reasoning?

Because I was so busy being a mom the last couple of weeks that it got in the way of writing a timely column saluting mothers. Fact is, I did one far out ahead, and completely forgot about Mother's Day. See, after 10 years of being a cross-country-sort of mom and grandmother to our eldest and her family, a new era has entered The Farmer's and my lives.

All of our kids are back in the nest. Or, more accurately, they are in adjacent nests.

Our fist indication that the

West Coast offspring might return to her roots came last fall, some weeks after their summer visit. There were two little guys growing up fast in their family, two little guys who love few things more than "farming" in dirt piles with their miniature lines of equipment. Two little guys and a yellow labrador retriever confined to the - though spacious and completely fenced - suburban back yard. Two little guys whose contact with domestic animals was mostly limited to the numerous ducks in their nearby parks and the cattle, horses, and sheep they occasionally came into contact with at the zoo or on country drives.

"I want to go back to Pennsylvania and help Grandpa farm," announced the three-year-old eldest, about a week following their return to the West Coast last summer.

That was certainly not the clincher argument in their lengthy, personal ponderings about where to live during this child-rearing time of their young-family lives. Having all

their immediate family 3,000 miles away played only part of the role in their decision, which meant uprooting from a lovely home and neighborhood, solid jobs, and many friends.

But back to their roots they have come. And with them comes the promise of a soon-to-be third grandchild to further bless two sets of grandparents and several great-grandmothers.

Their belongings have made the long and rather eventful crossing of the country, driven by our son-in-law and supervised by the four-year-old, while mother-to-be and younger son took the swifter airlines route. Despite several technical-repair mishaps and a wheel fire which plagued the trailer, holding their family vehicle behind their renting moving truck, both people and property arrived safely and intact.

Two extended families rejoiced while lugging boxes, furniture, and tripping over the trio of little boys which included a small cousin. They are settled sort of into the smaller confines of the farm's tenant mobile-home-with-addition until they choose a more permanent site.

And, for the first time in our lives, we celebrated Mother's Day, the official one, with four generations on-site.

But in reality, every day has become mother's - and grandparents' - day, as they pop in for lunch, ride the toy tractors on the deck, lug bottles to the baby calves, throw bedding to the heifers, shovel silage to the cows, feed Grandpa's goldfish and best of all come with arms out-

stretched for a hug. It takes longer, sometimes, to get it done. But it's a heck of a lot more fun.

Even as we rejoice at the blessing of the family reunited,

our younger son has now announced his intent to move West, where the lure of working in big-scale agriculture beckons. Here we go again.



Mifflin County 4-H Baby Beef Club News

The last meeting of the Mifflin County 4-H Baby Beef Club was April 8 at the Mifflin - Juniata Vo Tech School in Lewistown.

The American pledge was led by Adam Miely. The 4-H pledge was led by Becky Miely.

Project reports were given. Project reports include member's name, steer's name, breed of steer, three ingredients in steer feed, and what members have been doing with their steer.

Committee reports were given on Ag in the Classroom. Ag in the Classroom will be held July 18 at the Ag Arena in State College. Several members will show and tell teachers about their steers.

The banquet committee has scheduled a buyers' banquet Sept. 11 at the Camelot in Milroy.

A field trip to Peachey's locker plant in Belleville was discussed. Possible date for the field trip is in May.

Paula Fisher gave a short lesson on parts of a steer, then members identified the steer parts and wholesale cuts on

paper. Members then worked on books.

Mifflin County 4-H Lamb Club

The last meeting of the Mifflin County 4-H Lamb Club was April 22 at the Mifflin Juniata Vo Tech School in Lewistown.

The election of officers was held. President is Gayle Stine. Vice president is Lisa Macknair. Secretary is Samantha Speicher. News reporter duties will be shared by Gayle Stine, Lisa Macknair, and Samantha Speicher.

Vale Fisher discussed the different qualities of a lamb one should look for when picking out show lambs. A paper was done on the different parts of a lamb.

Members must be signed up and have their lambs by May 1 in order to show at the 4-H fair.

The next meeting will be May 29 at 1 p.m. at Tim and Vale Fisher's in Granville. There will be a sheep skill-a-thon and other activities relating to sheep and how to show sheep.

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