

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



Hey, you, back there. A little more gently, if you don't mind. Sheesh! Just because she's irritated, she doesn't have to take it out on me. I didn't have anything to do with it. Oh, hi there. Sorry about the mootering under my breath. I was just mooing to myself. Yeah, mooing, I'm a cow, in case you didn't notice. Just kidding. How could anyone not notice these black and white spots? They're on every-

thing these days. Even cows. Anyway, as I was mooing, she was getting a little carried away there, getting me ready to milk. She gets carried away and doesn't just dip and soak and wipe me dry. She SCRUBS. And TUGS. HEY, TAKE IT EASY. I can't help it if I like to lounge around in that mud puddle way down in the far, shady corner. We all like to hang out there. It's shady. And cool. Probably that's why it's become a puddle. But, I'm not sure it's

all mud. It's never hard to tell what moooooood she's in during milking. If the weather is pleasant and the crops growing, and none of us sick or escaped or having calving problems, she'll probably hum along with the country music station. And was me real gently. Unless I've been hanging out in that puddle, which I must admit, does take some extra work. Okay. So I give in to peer pressure to hang out where I'm not supposed to be. And I pay at teat-washing time. Or, if those little boys who visit a lot now happen to come in the barn while we're milking, she actually ignores us for a little while and pays all her attention on them. That actually makes me a little jealous. But it sure keeps her in a good mood. Boy, but lately. That's another story. I've listened to the grumbling. She probably thinks I can't understand what she's

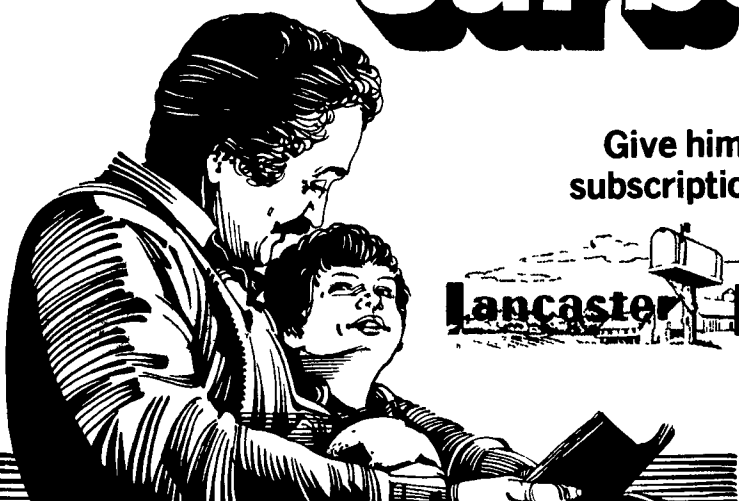
mooooting about under her breath, but I have REALLY good ears. When your ears are big, like my nice, soft, hairy cow ones, they catch a lot more of what's going on than those little naked ears you people have. Plus, I can turn and angle my ears for better reception. Let's see you do that. Anyway, as I was mooosing, she's been real irritable Grumbling to The Farmer while they take care of us about some proposal from some government dude to lower the price paid for my milk. Permanently. Like almost a dollar for every hundred pounds, I heard her growling. Seems these government types are redoing the whole system for pricing my milk. And especially lowering the price right here in this part of the country, because there are so many of us cows around here. But they didn't consider how many of you people are also around this part of the country who expect to have my fresh milk handy in the stores just any time you think you need it. Hey, you missed a spot back there on that right rear teat. PAY ATTENTION.

Boy, she must really be distracted now. I've heard her rumbling about a bunch of farmers writing letters and making phone calls about this change. They'd better not get so distracted they forget about US Doggone, I wish she'd change how she's getting ready to milk me today. HEY, A LITTLE LESS CLEANING VIGOR BACK THERE. Maybe I should have stayed out of that puddle. There, take that swap with my tail. That should get her attention. As soon as she retrieves her safety glasses from that manure splat out in the walkway. No, that won't improve her moooooood. She's too irritated after figuring up about how much less money my milk is going to earn them to pay the feed bills. And the taxes. And all that other stuff she writes those endless checks for. But it sure made ME feel better. Wish she'd remember that this is Dairy Month. And go have some strawberries and ice cream. That's one thing guaranteed to put her in a better moooooood

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