

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



Bridget is her name.

She mooseys down the alley twice every day, hops swaying with each step she takes. Her eyes rake the terrain, checking for that unexpected opportunity.

Then, finding the borderline unprotected for just a moment, she casually steps over the delineating marker and sidles off into forbidden territory.

I hope the rope tied between the two end stalls and do a twenty-yard dash down the middle of the barn, hook a right turn through an empty spot and — in the best terms of the Old West —

“cut her off at the pass.”

You can almost hear Bridget muttering under her cud as I give her a friendly swat on the rump, head her back out of the feed trough and into her favorite end stall for milking. Chain snapped into place for the brief hour or two she'll be in the barn during milking, Bridget settles down to munching silage while we get down to the business at hand.

As I begin to prep her for milking, she turns around and licks me in the face.

You haven't lived until you've

been kissed by a cow.

Today is National Cow Appreciation Day.

Cows have the miraculous ability to take stuff you and I won't eat and convert it into one of our most valuable food sources for calcium and assorted other minerals and vitamins. Dry corn, barley, soybeans, chopped cornstalks, fermented chopped hay and slices of dry alfalfa stems and leaves just wouldn't cut it on most of our tables. But when the Bossies of the world have altered it into the source of stuff like cheese, ice cream, butter, or milkshakes, it goes down a lot easier in the human diet.

Here in our dairy barn, of course, every day is Cow Appreciation Day. Some cows we just appreciate more than others.

A favorite cow in our herd right now is Butter, a big, mostly-black bovine with the gentle temperament of a beloved old dog. Butter was a friendly pet from the day she was born and, even as a heifer, would greet visitors to the pasture. Butter has one speed — slow — and can't be chased or hurried. If visiting chil-

dren want to touch a cow or try their hand at milking one, Butter's placid friendliness makes her a usual candidate for demonstration purposes.

Near the top of the friendly-cow-scale are a few others which immediately come to mind: Patty, an old cow from our extensive and heifer-prone “P” family or Jandy, whose calm disposition is slightly warped with her “busybody” nature.

While cows have a reputation for being contented grazers, usually pictured lounging around some green pasture, most of them have a streak of curiosity they never outgrow. Whoever coined the “curiosity got the cat” phrase could just as well substituted “cow” for cat in their cliché development.

Bongo comes to mind. Bongo is known around here as “the electrician.” Confined to a box-tall for treatment for a sore foot after calving, Bongo promptly took to turning off a big fan set up on hot days for extra barn ventilation. Cows are highly susceptible to stray voltage and electrocution, so Bongo has been

banned from being anywhere near the fan.

One recent morning, I recycled some calf feed bags by tossing them into a heifer bedding pack. The layered paper bags include a liner of thin plastic bag for moisture protection; I ripped the layers apart to remove the plastic, then tossed what remained of the bags into the pen. Before I'd gotten to the third bag, at least a dozen big heifers had abandoned their fresh, leafy alfalfa hay to cluster in a group to nose, shove, stomp, rip and nibble at the dry sections of tasteless paper. Go figure.

Cows will pull out, push in, rip up, run down, take apart, stomp flat, chew on and ultimately splatter with manure anything and everything they get close to. Having been behind one of the “girls” while milking one recent evening when she coughed at the same time she “lifted her tail,” I can personally attest to that.

At that moment, I had second thoughts about celebrating Cow Appreciation Day.

Warren County Fair Open Aug. 8-12

PITTSFIELD (Warren Co.) — The 70th Warren County Fair is being held on the grounds in Pittsfield from Aug. 8-12.

Tickets at the gate are \$7. “Farmer for a Day,” a new interactive display, will be on the grounds for the first time. Although it is billed as an attraction for the young, the young at heart will not be disappointed. This educational display will teach without reading or writing.

Participants learn as they try their skill with the props provided.

The Motor Sports Arena is presenting a pre-show on Monday evening to whet your appetite for the thrills and chills that motor sports events add. Stadium Truck Racing starts at 7:30 p.m. There will be a small charge for this new event.

Brad Paisley and Chad Brock, the Brad and Chad Show, open

the week's musical performances. WKNB is once again on board helping to present this show. Reserved seats are required. Brad and Chad present two shows on Tuesday, Aug. 8. The early show begins at 6:30 p.m. with the second show following at 9 p.m. Call (814) 563-3565 for ticket information.

Midway rides, food, and animals, abound. Children can pet animals and watch the animals

be put through their paces during judging. There is no charge for any animal event. There are horse shows nearly every day.

Lee Germain and Judi, comedy illusionists, are featured on stage near the fair office.

Three performances by the Wild West Follies will be given daily.

WHUG and the Warren County Fair present the Fox Brothers on Wednesday evening. Lynn, Randy, and Roy are blood

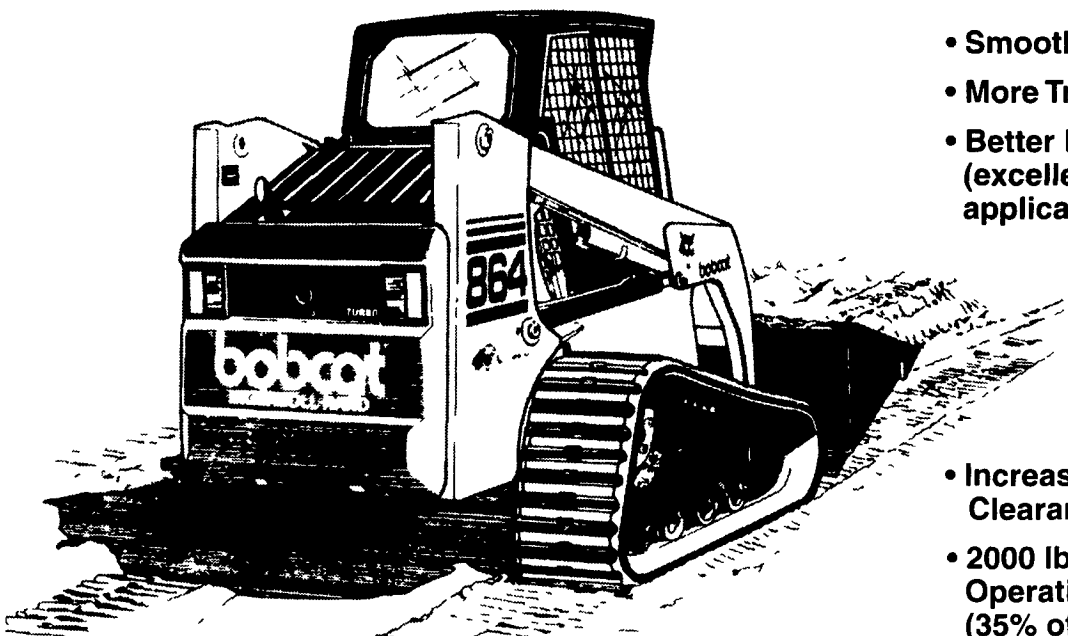
brothers from Middle Tennessee who started singing together as children.

Mark Lowry, premier Christian comedian, will present one concert on Thursday, Aug. 10. Reserved seats are required. Call the ticket office for more information.

Pick up a brochure to find out about all of the great entertainment opportunities or visit our web site — www.penn.com/warrencofair. For more information e-mail us at warrenfair@penn.com.

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