

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



September brings a cornucopia of familiar, and seasonal, farmstead changes.

Tall, lush, green corn has begun to brown, leaves fading from the bottom up, ears beginning to droop, as moisture in the plants dry and ear kernels harden toward maturity. Forage harvesters chew noisily through the earliest stands, chopping the sturdy plants to bits, to pack away as winter chow for chomping cows.

Trees hang thick with the red blush and pale gold of apples at the orchards nearby, a bumper crop of summertime sunshine packed into juicy and flavorful, fist-sized nuggets of nutrition. Pears and purple plums have begun turning up in our kitchen-counter fruit basket, but have short stays because they are two of The Farmer's favorite grab-and-go snacks.

Pumpkins begin filing onto center stage at local markets, a favorite of our now-kindergartner, eldest grandson, who pleads to begin picking our few large, but not yet ready, fruits of the vine. Hopefully, they won't rot before they finish maturing, as so many vine crops, including pumpkins, have done this sticky, swampy summer.

What we don't usually expect

here in September are baby chicks.

Well, actually it was a day in late August when I stepped out the front door to welcome the grandkids and found them with noses deep into a cardboard box in The Farmer's hands.

"Something alive," a warning instantly flashed in my brain.

Sure enough. Inside the little box — very much alive — were seven small chicks, just beginning to poke tiny feathers through their fluff. Five white and two a mottled brown.

"Guineas," grinned The Farmer.

A flock of a couple dozen guinea fowl once roamed the meadow, yard and garden here, until the aggressive local foxes wiped them out. All but one. Which has hung out here, all alone, for at least two years, finding company with a few old, bantam-crossed chickens and the usual farmstead pigeon population. We figured he must be lonely, and have often discussed acquiring a few chicks, but they are available on a limited, seasonal basis. And aren't cheap.

The Farmer had picked these up as week-old "leftovers" at a farm supply store at a slashed price. Natural housing spot was — where else? — the kitchen, where the box was tucked in a

cozy spot between the wall and appliance cart, with a window screen across the top. I dug out a curved-neck sewing lamp from under the mending pile and perched in on top the screen, an electronic "hen" to keep the babies warm.

A portion of coarse-textured calf starter feed, sifted through a kitchen colander, solved the feed problem as the chicks gleefully pecked their way through a handful of the siftings scattered among the wood shavings bedding base. Within a few days, their rations were balanced with chopped lettuce, lawn grass snipped in fine pieces and handfuls of lush, moist chickweed.

In less than a week, the guinea flock had outgrown the box and were installed in the large pet carrier in which Derra, the family yellow lab, had flown from the west coast. It's an ideal makeshift poultry housing, relocated to the basement to banish the chick-nursery "fragrance" from the kitchen.

I stepped into the house one day while the chicks were still in the kitchen to find the window screen bumped loose from the box. With ever-busy grandson Caleb in tow, I plunked the screen back on the box and kept moving. After dark, Derra Dog dashed into the house following our usual evening dog-walk and promptly planted her nose behind the computer printer table in the office, tail going furiously. A mouse, I figured.

Then I spotted the frightened guinea chick huddled back there. Which had apparently escaped earlier in the day when the screen was ajar.

Good thing Derra's a bird dog. Ushering in another September tradition. Hunting season.

Felton To Head Penn State Entomology Department

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Gary Felton, professor of entomology at the University of Arkansas, has been appointed head of the department of entomology in Penn State's College of Agricultural Sciences.

"Dr. Felton brings to this position an outstanding record of quality teaching and research, as well as excellent leadership skills that will help continue to move our entomology programs to a higher level," said Robert Steele, dean of the college. "He is a great addition to the college's leadership team."

Felton's research interests include insect-pest interactions, the physiological mode of action of natural plant products, oxidative stress and insect biology, and nutritional physiology. He has received research grants from a wide range of agencies, including the USDA and the National Science Foundation. He also holds patents for ultraviolet protectants for insect pathogens and for using insect glucose oxidase as an elicitor of plant resistance.

Felton earned his bachelor's degree in biological science from the University of California, Irvine, in 1975. He earned a master's degree in entomology from the University of Kentucky in

1983 and received his doctorate in entomology from the University of California, Davis in 1988.

He was a postdoctoral associate in the entomology department at University of California, Davis, before joining the University of Arkansas as assistant professor of entomology in 1990. He was named associate professor in 1994 and full professor in 1999.

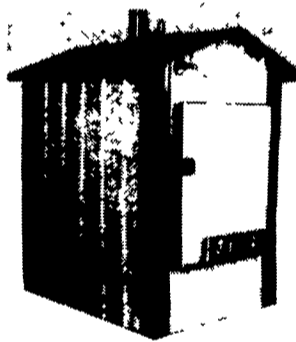
Felton has published more than 40 refereed articles, eight book chapters, and many other publications. He has presented numerous invited lectures and serves on the editorial board for the Archives of Insect Biochemistry and Physiology.

He was invited speaker and moderator for the Gordon Conference on Insect-Plant Interactions in 1998 and chaired the plenary session for the Keystone Symposium, "Signals and Signal Perception in Biotic Interactions in Plants," in 2000.

Felton is a panel member of the National Science Foundation Physiological and Evolutionary Physiology Program. In 1998, he served as panel manager for the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Research Initiative for Entomology/Nematology.

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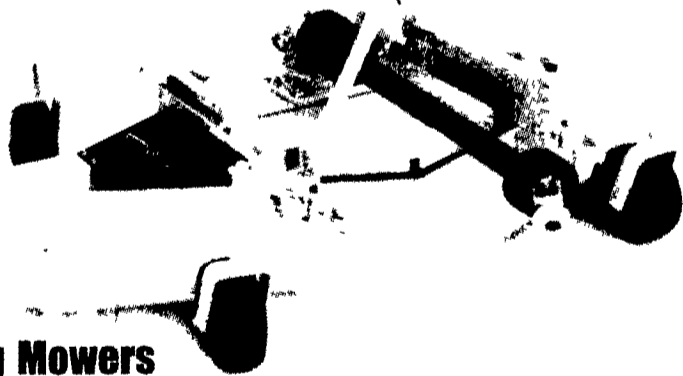
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