

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



The progress potential is awesome.

Computerized monitoring of our households is just around the corner.

Somewhere.

Commonplace to our living quarters of the future will be comprehensive home-watch systems, featuring such promises as digital printouts from your freezer and refrigerator, confirming at a quick glance that the ice cream is staying frozen and the leftover pizza cool. And glowing numbers blinking at you while you vacuum up dog hair and barn straw from the living room carpet, noting perhaps the motor power load and the machine's dust-gulping function working at 95 percent peak capacity. Which would blink "error, error, error!" when you accidentally pick up one of the kids' small toys which lodges in the machine's innards — and have to be re-programmed after it sucks up a Lego block.

We're headed there, if we believe the predictions of the gee-whiz, digital developers. Having just read about a computer-future-convention, where one of the features was a computerized barbecue grill (yeah...go figure), I can't help but anticipate this with just a shade of skepticism.

Rather than just pester me

with information, I'd like the promise of a computerized system which really tackles the mundane, ordinary household challenges.

How about a digitalized refrigerator-freezer, which not only defrosts itself, but also cleans itself out once a week? Give me a system that dumps out the fuzzy, half-cup of leftover lima beans...the blue-hued, half-crust of bread...that container of...no thanks, I don't even want to know. Just please pitch it for me.

Now that would be progress.

Give me a computerized cleaning system that faithfully — programmed every three days, or so — pokes itself under the appliance cart to suck up those errant grapes which pop of the clusters the grandkids are juggling, roll across our well-maintained, old-farmhouse, slightly-tilted floor and go into hiding. A system that doggedly goes after the population explosion of dust bunnies reproducing under the beds. An entertainment system capable of both taping and storing programs from the TV and polishing the sticky handprints from its own screen.

Now that would be progress.

Give me a system that keeps track of where I left my sneakers the last time I took them off. A

system that scans the mail, which methodically sorts the numerous bills into one pile and tosses the lone check onto another, while at the same time ripping and shredding all that junk mail into garden mulch.

Give me a microwave which intuitively knows what to have ready for mid-day lunch — and pinpoint the exact time between 11:45 a.m. and 1:15 p.m. when The Farmer will show up to eat it. Give me a coffeepot that empties its own grounds, refills itself, and dumps the half-cup of remaining brew when it reaches industrial-strength staleness.

Give me a digital dishwasher which unloads itself and stows the glasses away in the cupboard without breaking them.

Give me a computerized bathtub-tile scrubber. An automatic bedsheet remover which carts the bedclothes to the basement, hangs them out to dry in the sunshine, then carts them back and re-installs them before bedtime.

Give me a computerized system to scrub forage-harvester and combine grease out of tee-shirts and jeans. Which turns socks right-side-out. Which retrieves the buttons gobbled off during the washing process and sews them back on automatically.

And, computer guys, while you're fine-tuning all this stuff, how about figuring out how we can have appliances which reset their own digital brains after the power flickers off, without sitting there and flashing "888888" at us in glowing red numbers.

Now, THAT would be progress.

## What's The Difference Between A Spice And An Herb?

An herb is the leaf from plants or shrubs with non-woody stems. Think oregano, basil, parsley, mint or thyme. A spice, on the other hand, is the seed, bark, root, fruit or flower from plants. Think cinnamon, pepper, caraway, clove or mustard seed.

Herbs usually have a milder flavor, while spices tend to be stronger and more pungent. However, for many people, calling something an "herb" or a "spice" is a distinction without a difference.

In some cases, though, the distinction can make a big difference. Some plants give us both a spice and an herb — both their seeds and their leaves can be used to flavor your favorite culinary dishes. But even though they come from the same plant, they have different flavors and really can't be used interchangeably.

Take coriander, for example. The coriander leaf is also called cilantro; its flavor has been described as "strong, pungent and earthy," but distinctly different from the coriander seed, which has a citrus or lemony flavor

with a touch of sage.

Similarly, dillweed, the herb, is the feathery leaf of the dillweed plant. Its flavor has been called "fresh and sweet," while the small, hard dried seeds of the spice "dillseed" have a sharper, more bitter, dominant flavor.

With herbs and spices like these, make sure you know what the recipe calls for before you add it.

Spices are almost always dried before they get to the cook, but can be used whole, crushed or ground. Most herbs can be used fresh or dried. Fresh herbs don't last very long — use them immediately after picking, if possible. To store, keep them in the refrigerator in a perforated plastic bag. When you are ready to use them, wash the herbs gently under cool (not cold) water and pat dry between paper towels.

Dried spices and herbs keep their flavor longer if stored in airtight containers in a dark, dry, cool place. Over the kitchen range may not be the best choice, because heat and moisture can cause them to lose flavor much more quickly.

## Menopause Separate Fact From Fiction

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Menopause, Separating Fact From Fiction, is the third in a series of workshops sponsored by Lebanon Family Health Services, 1 Cumberland St., Lebanon.

The workshop on Tues. Nov. 14, from 7 p.m. - 8 p.m., will be taught by Dr. Carol Baase. She

will address signs, symptoms, and treatments including alternative therapies.

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