

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



Hey!
Watch where you're walking! You almost stepped on me. Down here. Next to your foot.
Yeah, me. The round, orange guy with the big, toothy smile.
Jack O. Lantern. In person.
Well, nice to meet you, too.
Whadda ya' mean, can I talk? Of course I can talk. What do you think this big, wide mouth is for? Candy corn?

Yeah, it's been kind of a rough year for us round, orange types. We like lots of bright, warm, sunny weather, to grow big, plump, and tasty. And make lots of seeds, so we can keep our kind around a few more years.
But, geez, some of the spots we settled down in this year just about drowned us. Molded and mildewed us. Shriveled our umbilicals and bombarded us with

blossom end rot. Like to have wiped us out, by gosh.
Some of my little bud-dies — back months ago when I was just a bud — never even made it past their blooming early days. Not enough bees and bugs. Too dark. Too dreary. Too wet. Bees stayed home in a dry hive, rather than work at moving pollen around. Afraid of a little damp weather.
So much for that "busy as a bee" stuff, huh?
And, then some more of my friends — rest their souls — just went limp when they were about halfway grown. Turned to mush and soggy lumps from standing in little puddles for long periods of time.
It was ugly.
Luckily, a few of us made it. We crawled up on higher ground when we were just little tykes. Took advantage of the breezes and sunshine whenever we could. And drank from those frequent showers to boost our pudginess and good looks and sweet taste.

Of course, some of us in the family taste better than others. Most of my squash cousins actually have lots more flavor than I do. Like Harry Hubbard Squash and his wife, Bessie Butternut. On the other hand, they usually end up peeled, sliced, diced, boiled, mashed, squooshed, and baked.
So who's better off? The Pie Pumpkin People or us tasteless Jack O. Lantern types?
After all, we have our own holiday. Sure, the pumpkin pie bunch gets a lot of play in a couple of weeks, but they're bit players next to those turkeys. We Jack O. Lanterns are STARS at Halloween!
In the old days, Jack O. Lanterns went through life with big, broad smiles all lit. Enjoyed those crisp, chilly October nights by candlelight. A happy bunch, we were. Then along came progress — you know, ceramic pumpkins and papier-mache'

pumpkins and the like — and some of our clan just turned their smiles into scowls.
And plastic! Plastic Jack O. Lanterns, for crying out loud. With plug-in electric lights! Is nothing sacred?
Then those people types started on us with surgical instruments — special pumpkin carving knives and stuff — and now we look like monsters. With hair and mustaches. And ears. They even give us cat faces. Cat faces! Next thing they'll be painting us black.
Enough of this. It's time to take back our right as pumpkins, to reclaim our traditions, to re-chart our course. No more fading out of the public eye the day after Halloween. So we're prepared to announce the start of a campaign the day after Spook Night.
Pumpkin for President. Trick or treat?

Agriculture Department Reminds Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Participants To Redeem Checks Before Nov. 30 Deadline

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Agriculture Deputy Secretary Russell Redding reminded

eligible seniors, mothers and children enrolled in the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) pro-

gram to redeem checks as part of the Pennsylvania Farmers' Market Nutrition Program by Nov.

30.
"There still are plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables available at farmers' markets across the Commonwealth," Redding said. "We encourage WIC families and encourage to take full advantage and redeem their coupons for the bountiful crop of fresh Pennsylvania fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets across the state."

Pennsylvania's WIC and Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition programs provide fresh fruits and vegetables to nutritionally at-risk seniors 60 years of age and older who fall within the income guidelines of the program,

and mothers and children under the age of five enrolled in WIC.
More than 400 vendors statewide participate in the programs, and \$1.5 million of state funds and \$1.9 million in federal funding have been allocated to the WIC and Senior Farmers' Market Program this year.
Eligibility for the WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program is limited to pregnant and nursing women, who are eligible to receive \$25 in coupons per year to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers' markets; and 2-year-olds through 5-year-olds, who are eligible to receive a \$20 in coupons.

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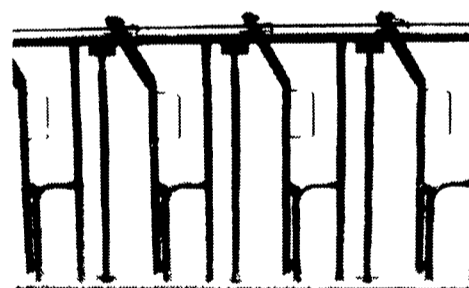
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