

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Some random thoughts as we prepare to celebrate our first Thanksgiving of the millennium...

I'm thankful for this way of life we take sooooo much for granted here in these free United States.

For markets and supermarkets and super-duper-super-center-markets, ready to sell us way more stuff than any of us could ever need, ever use or ever have place to store. Or to stomach.

For a society where diet challenges rise from our abundance, rather than from continuous worry about where our next bite of food will come from. (If only we could just figure out how to share it better).

For a stable economy where

"for hire" signs have replaced lines of folks waiting to sign up for unemployment assistance.

For the personal freedom and ability to drive my decade-old-plus little car to a service station to fill up with \$1.60/gallon gas. It could just as easily be \$3.60 per gallon. (Which, on the other hand, might FINALLY push us into a genuine focus on alternate energy sources).

For a society where we can endure the unbelievability of a cliff-hanger presidential election, its resultant legal challenges, vote counts, recounts, media hype, judicial rulings — with the only ensuing war being one of words. (Yes, we know. LOTS of words).

For watchdog agencies — some of which admittedly drive

us nuts sometimes with their bureaucratic ways — which have kept at bay such health and economic threats as the ebola virus, "mad cow" disease and, most recently, at least temporarily halted the proposed importation to the U.S. of thousands of dairy cattle assembled in a region of the world rife with that most contagious bovine affliction: hoof-and-mouth disease.

For tremendous strides made in treating and curing cancers, and heartfelt prayers that the pace of research intensifies.

For telephone answering machines, for FAX technology, for computers (well, most of the time), checkout scanners, pagers, cell phones, pocket calculators — and all that stuff that helps us digitally type, tally, and keep in touch.

For dedicated teachers who still persist in teaching our kids to write and add, subtract and divide — by hand, despite the above. And to long-suffering school bus drivers who get our kids there safely and on time, day after day.

For policemen and firefighters and public servants who keep our environment and our streets and relatively safe, wage the thankless and unending battle against criminal elements, re-

spond to accidents, save lives and still take time to remind legions of little kids to "look both ways" before crossing the street.

For good neighbors who alert us if we have cattle out or ailing in far-off pastures, drop by with their packaged newspapers for recycling as heifer bedding, wave as they job by, mow our distant farm road edges as they tend their own lawns, and, especially, for their friendship.

For our team of farm employees who faithfully assist in tending to cows, crops, and assorted crises, through weekends, holidays, 100-degree days, gully-washer rains and blowing blizzards. Ditto for milk haulers.

For the great pleasure of getting knocked off my feet several

times a week by a trio of grandchildren — and an aging, overweight yellow Lab — charging into the house, or barn, or yard to bless grandma and grandpa with big bear hugs.

For family close by to celebrate holidays — and plain every days — filled with a couple of generations of terrific cooks. For turkey and stuffing and mashed potatoes and sweet potatoes and garden salads and corn and beans and cranberry sauce and hot rolls and gravy and...desserts!

For having to go back out to do barn chores a few hours after all that to work it off.

And for the freedom to be able to bow our heads to offer thanks for our abundance of blessings.

Enjoy your Thanksgiving!

Family Finances Top Secret?

LANCASTER (Lancaster Co.) — Some parents just do not want to burden the children with the family financial planning. They reserve the headaches for Mom and Dad. Other parents simply are too secretive about such planning. These parents don't seem to think that their children can be trusted with information about the financial status of the family.

Regardless of the reason, the result is the same — the children never have an opportunity to learn the practical day-by-day financial workings of a family.

Teen-agers especially need some practical experience. They will soon be starting families of their own and will probably be experiencing the same concerns. It can well be asked, "Where do young people learn?"

Many young people who marry suddenly realize they don't have the foggiest notion of what insurance they need or don't need, how much to save, what percentage of the family budget should be allotted for

food, and so forth.

It is surprising how some parents will criticize their older children for the way they spend their money. Comments like, "I just don't understand this younger generation" or "When I was your age" are frequently heard. And yet these very parents have never sat down with their child and attempted to help him or her understand the complex financial aspects of the family.

It is also surprising how few families encourage the older children to be present when the time arrives to work on the income tax. Some parents would not even think of including the teenager in this tolerated exercise each year. Yet, is there a better place to learn?

Again, regardless of the reason, it isn't doing the teen-ager in your family a favor when you leave him or her out of the family financial planning. The family is still the first schoolhouse and parents can be the most influential teachers.



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