

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

Joyce Bupp



Tradition.

It's the watchword of the season.

On one side of this season, we have the leftovers of Thursday's turkey, with the residual cold turkey sandwiches, hot turkey sandwiches, turkey soup, turkey potpie, turkey salad, turkey etc. Our 16-pounder was a freebie — a "thank you" from the supermarket chain where I drop the bulk of my food-shopping dollars — for which we are most appreciative. It continues to provide tasty fodder for us traditional holiday-roast bird lovers.

On the other side of this season comes Christmas card lists demanding our attention, challenges to find just the right gift for those special loves ones, extra goodies to prepare and the Norfolk Island pine to lug in from the greenhouse to plunk into our living room for our instant, fresh, and live, holiday tree. The grandkids will enjoy decorating it.

But before we can hang our first cow tree ornament, we have to deal with yet another tradition which hangs over our heads like mistletoe in the doorframe of annual events.

Deer hunting.

As a child, I was well aware when deer hunt-

ing season was approaching. Dad would get out the rifle he rarely touched any other time of the year and spend an afternoon or two "shooting it in."

I vaguely recall the year someone noted to a guest who stopped by that dad was "out shooting mark." (Since I have a brother named Mark, that got a quick, laughing clarification).

Dad would also start accumulating days ahead the food and non-perishables he planned to take along, packing them in brown paper grocery bags. Though he passed away a few years ago, memories of Dad's paper bag packing always make me smile as hunting season approaches.

Though The Farmer is a hunter, the daily demands of dairy cows — and often with corn still standing in the fields — have always discouraged lengthy stays away stalking white-tails. Still, he tries to manage at least a day or two each year at the Lycoming County hunting camp to which four generations of family have belonged since it was built in the early 1940s.

In my opinion, few things smack more of tradition than deer camp. At least from my second-hand vantage point. Certain members of the group traditionally assume certain leadership responsibilities, going early to warm-up the 20-degree cabin (some years, anyway), organizing the hunt, assigning teams and positions during deer drives, deciding which group plays the evening social card games at which table.

Not to forget that most crucial tradition: meals. All that battling the elements, the mountains and the deer snickering as they high-tail it over the far horizon drum up a powerful appetite, m'am. Tradition dictates that a certain menu will appear on a certain day, allowing at least for easy planning from year to year. Tradition usually also carries through the cook does not do the dishes, which seems a fair plan to me.

When you put today's reality up against tradition, however, it seems that hunters are as likely to spot white-tails hanging around farm fields as hoofing over the thick, wooded, steep terrain of mountaintops. And, who can blame those bucks? Why slip and slide your pointy little hoofs over rock outcroppings and jagged cliffs when you could snooze snugly inside a briary, woods-edge, fence row and leisurely dine in an alfalfa field 10 yards away?

Knowing full-well that, the moment his pickup leaves the farm to point north toward hunting camp, something at the barn will break (and it will probably be before or after business hours), I ponder why one would drive hours away when there are deer hanging around much closer at some of the "back forty" fields we farm.

(And it sure isn't because we're hungry. There's still that turkey lurking in the fridge.)

But even before I ask, I already know the answer. Don't mess with tradition.

**What's Going On At Child Care**

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Your child will spend many hours at child care while you work. Do you know what he will be doing all day? Have you seen the play areas? Children need to play to learn. They need to be safe. Outdoor play is important. Make sure the program has safe areas for outside activities on cool fall and winter days. See if the activities are right for your child.

Children need active play. They need large spaces to run, jump, and climb inside and outside. There should always be enough adult supervision. Play equipment needs to be in good shape and anchored to the ground. Make sure there are no sharp edges. See if there is cushioning material under climbing and swinging equipment.

Toys and play equipment can be simple, but should be right for the ages of the children. Basic things like blocks, puzzles, art materials, and lots of books are needed for children. Broken toys need to be thrown away. Art materials, such as paint, markers, and crayons, should be non-toxic.

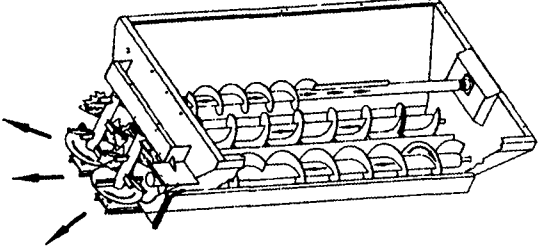
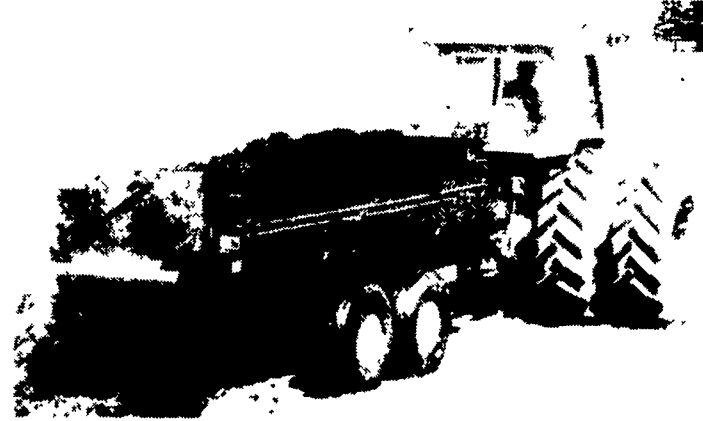
Toys should be cleaned and disinfected regularly to keep germs away. This is even more important for items used by babies and toddlers, who are always putting things in their mouths. Cleaning toys can prevent colds from spreading.

Your child's caregiver can get information and ideas from free educational materials that can be ordered by calling 1-800-452-9108, the Penn State Cooperative Extension Better Kid Care Program.

There is information for caregivers and parents on the Better Kid Care Web site on the Internet. Go to [www.betterkidcare.psu.edu](http://www.betterkidcare.psu.edu) to find out what is available.

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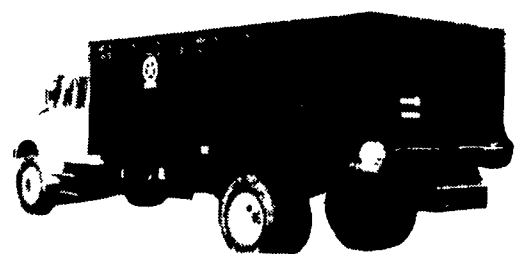


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