

## On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



The end. Or, is it the beginning? About now, it all blurs together, making it hard to tell where the end stops and the beginning starts.

But that's how most seasons change go. Without our even thinking about it, we just sort of slide from one right into another. Which is why the first day of spring often has to push its way through snowdrifts. And the first day of winter is sometimes almost balmy.

"Boy, it feels like fall," I heard myself saying at least two weeks ago, on one chilly morning when I pulled on a sweatshirt before heading to the barn. Midday, the sweatshirt had been tossed to be replaced with shorts and a sleeveless top for afternoon chores. By late evening, the sweatshirt felt

good again. Barn garb, like the seasons, tends to be pretty transitional. The end came early for many local crops, including corn stands thirsting from continuing drought which has left the area short of many inches of rainfall. Forage harvesters have ended the year for fields which lay temporarily barren of anything more than dead corn stubble and some persistent (aren't they always?) weeds.

But with that ever-present optimism that keeps farmers farming, it's also a beginning. Neighbors are sowing plantings of fall wheat and barley, while The Farmer has tucked some oats seed into the ground. We'll also drill rye in right behind chopping the corn, both for cover crop and fall-through-early-winter extra grazing — and hope the clouds soon open up to make anything germinate.

Most hay harvest has also ended, since dry stubble populates most hayfields. As a friend observes, the hay is so short one has to put down foam markers, as crop sprayers do, just to mark the end of where one swath is and the beginning of the next.

Some ends and beginnings are more than welcome. Like the ending of cows panting in the stifling heat, roar of the fans drowning out conversational ease in the barn. Already some of the fans have been silenced on a few

chilly mornings and we can begin anew listening to the radio again during milking. After we replace the one which ended its life with a thunderstorm hit and can begin anew with a replacement.

An end is in sight — always sad for me — for the gardens. Prolonged, chilly spring weather which transitioned into dry and drier hot weather had its way with this year's flowers and veggies. Tomatoes finally cranked up about mid-August, but have made up for their lateness with size, taste and abundance, testified to by a shelf of canned quarts and pints to get us through the winter.

Melons were hit and run; what survived the dry and heat were delicious, but the stalks perished quickly. Wonderful peaches are also history, but the first round of pears and Gala apples snagged at the market up the road make an incredibly tasty beginning.

A lone potted parsley plant from last winter ended its life with a prolific set of seed. Sprouted in the greenhouse is a successive generation of seedlings to keep us in herbal garnish through the winter. Bulbs wait to be tucked in the ground, along with a couple of small holly bushes for which it has just simply been too dry — and the ground too much like concrete — to attempt to plant. If I don't soon get them in the ground, what should be a beginning for them will turn into the end.

Lawn mowing has pretty much ended, the fragrance of fresh-cut green grass rapidly being replaced with that seasonal scent of dry fall leaves. Gladiolus and black-eyed susans and sunflowers are ending and fall chrysanthemums are beginning their grande finale display of garden color.

And so we celebrate endings and beginnings by incorporating some of the best of both with a batch of Summer's End soup. With some tasty beef broth and canned mixed vegetables, for a base, we salute what's left by tossing a few peeled tomatoes, chop up the remaining part of a lingering zucchini, scour the sweet corn patch for a few old codger, but still edible, ears, add a chopped onion from a bunch grown in the flower bed and chop up a bit of some of fall's first cabbage.

In a world of ends and beginnings, one thing is constant...

We always enjoy eating.

## Recipe Topics

If you have recipes for topics listed below, please share them with us. We welcome your recipes, but ask that you include accurate measurements, a complete list of ingredients, and clear instructions with each recipe you submit. Be sure to include your name and address. Recipes should reach our office one week before the publishing date listed below.

Send your recipes to Lou Ann Good, Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522.

### September

29 — Fall Desserts

### October

6 — Pork Month

13 — Rice Dishes

20 — Chicken Meals

## Packing Lunches For Back To School

Stephanie E. Biesinger  
Armstrong County  
Dairy Princess

It's that time of year again — back to school. A time for teachers, classes, studying, tests, friends, and fall sports. Let's not forget packing school lunches.

Lunches usually consist of sandwiches or pre-packaged meals. These can be boring after awhile. Here are some fun ways to add diversity and nutrition to brown bag lunches.

- Mix cottages cheese with fresh fruit and fruit cocktail. Put in small containers.

- There are several different flavors of string cheese. These make any lunch or snack fun. Look for these in the grocery store in the dairy case with the shredded cheese. You can also cube cheese for a little zip in the lunch bag.

- Make your child's lunch go wild. Cut cheese slices with a cookie cutter.

- Make a grilled cheese sandwich and use a large cookie cutter to cut them into fun shapes.

- Freeze the Go-yogurt sticks and these become nutritious Popsicles. You can also freeze the yogurt in its container and remember to pack a spoon.

- Milk has gone Looney-Tunes. There are several different flavors of milk in the Looney Tunes containers such as grape, banana, strawberry and of course chocolate.

- Fruit dip can make those slices of fruit disappear in a flash. 8-ounce package of cream cheese

½ cup sour cream

¼ cup sugar

¼ cup brown sugar

1 to 2 tablespoons of maple syrup

In a small mixing bowl combine cream cheese, sour cream, sugars and syrup to taste. Beat until smooth. Chill. Serve with fresh fruit. Yield: 2 cups.

Always pack lunches in an insulated lunch bag with a frozen ice pack.

These are some fun, delicious, nutritious and don't forget easy lunches to try this school year.

Enjoy!

## Farm Women Soc. 20

Farm Women Society 20 met on Thursday, Sept. 6, at the home of Nancy Rintz with Vivian Hess as co-hostess.

President Nancy Lefever, presided at the business meeting. The 16 members present responded to the roll call by bring-

ing items for the food bank.

For the program, Freda Wimer gave several humorous readings.

The meeting closed by Singing "Brighten The Corner" to meet in October with Mary Shirk with Marian Hastings as co-hostess.

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