

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



For years, they've gone hand in hand.

The New Year. And the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

Anything new in agriculture, you could generally figure on being able to see, touch, or at least learn about it at the Farm Show. During our high school years, Farm Show was one of those events tempting to "hook out" of classes for, because it ran only Monday through Friday. (No, I never did; it would have been the first and last time if I did and it was found out.) Our kids, as cattle exhibitors, were readily able to receive permission from school for time off to participate.

Now, the Farm Show runs over this weekend for those who can't get off from work or school, but one less weekday. This year brings one of those "temporary inconvenience...permanent improvement" periods of time, with the multi-million renovations and expansion of this Harrisburg landmark.

The Farm Show offers more things to see than most of us can possibly catch in one visit. (Especially if you go with a spouse who wants to ponder at length the merits of various pieces of equipment.) Sometimes we just part company for awhile and go different directions to see items of specific interest, especially if he wants to visit at length about equipment while I want to linger over the crafts and homemaking entries.

Here's a random check-list for

your Farm Show visit (or to re-hash it if you've already been there this year):

- Number of little kids you counted sitting on tractor seats, wide-eyed, wearing big grins;
- Winner of the new rural holiday ornament contest;
- The nut display (no, no, not people...we mean like walnuts, pecans, hickories, etc.);
- Educational displays designed by and in competition among statewide FFA chapters;
- Number of adult guys you counted sitting on tractor seats, wide-eyed, wearing big grins;
- A bird of prey on display at the nature center area;
- Winning garments from the 4-H sewing project entries;
- Number of frustrated-looking moms, wives, and sisters tapping their feet with impatience at the big and little guys, wide-eyed and wearing big grins, crawling on and off tractor seats;
- Entries in the sheep fleece competition, judged for qualities like length and kink of wool strands;
- A cooking demonstration featuring Pennsylvania-produced food;
- Number of folks spied trying to juggle milk shakes, deep fried mushrooms, apple cider, baked potato, fish sandwiches while trying to guide kids through the ever-popular food court. Bon Appetite!
- The champion Christmas tree;
- Honey and related products, like candy and beeswax candles;
- Floral arrangements (and flowers to take home for a special someone from the horticulture folks)';
- Those stunning, giant, draft

horses;

- Competitive displays of vegetables including things like black radishes, rutabagas and parsnips (yes, Virginia, folks actually grow and eat those);
- The champion dressed turkey, hoarded from Christmas dinner-use for show competition;
- Number of little kids (and big ones) petting squeaky-clean cows, fluffy sheep, snoozing pigs;
- A blue-ribbon dozen of eggs;
- The butter sculpture;
- The Department of Agriculture's new WoodMobile;
- Disappointingly, no prized poultry this year, due to an outbreak of Avian Influenza in the state. (My favorite place to take the kids when they were little and got bored before all the cow exhibiting chores were finished.)

For the Farm Show, this is truly a week for "ringing out the old" in a facility that has been such a part of Pennsylvania's agriculture history and heritage.

And we can hardly wait to see the "bringing in the new" in an expanded, spruced-up Farm Show site of the 21st century.

Cheese Carving Contest Set For Pennsylvania Farm Show

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Cheese lovers and food enthusiasts will demonstrate their patriotism and creative flair by entering the fourth annual Cheese Carving Contest to be conducted during the 2002 Pennsylvania Farm Show in Harrisburg.

Pennsylvania residents participating in the "Simply American: Cheese Carving Contest" will compete for more than \$500 in cash and prizes. Contestants age 15 or over have been required to submit a description of their patriotic cheese carving idea, along with a photo or sketch of the actual creation.

Six finalists will participate in a "carve-off" at the Pennsylvania Farm Show on Jan. 6. Finalists will be provided with one five-pound block of cheddar cheese, one paring knife and other carving "tools."

A panel of local celebrity judges will select the top three winners, who will be awarded gourmet cheese baskets and \$150, \$100 and \$50 respectively. All finalists will receive prizes and have their creations showcased in the cheese display in the Food Court.

The annual contest is sponsored by Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association, American Dairy Association & Dairy Council Mid East, and the Pennsylvania Dairy Promotion Program.

"This is an exciting way to celebrate one of America's favorite foods," said Deanna Rose, communications specialist for Mid-Atlantic Dairy Association and contest coordinator. "The interest and popularity of domestic cheese is definitely growing, and the contest provides a fun and festive setting to highlight the versatility of cheese."

4-H Accepting Food Donations At The Farm Show

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — Visitors to the Pennsylvania Farm Show are urged to contribute to the statewide 4-H Can Make A Difference food drive and help feed the hungry. Donated cans, boxes and bags of non-perishable food will be used to construct a 4-H House of Food made out of donated food products.

The house symbolizes 4-H's hopes that the pantry shelves in every Pennsylvania home will be stocked with food. The display will be located in the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture exhibit.

This is the first year the 4-H food drive has been initiated with the Farm Show and the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. Food products will be donated to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank, which distributes food to 320 nonprofit groups, including soup kitchens, shelters, and food pantries.

"Traditionally, food drives

take place during the Christmas season, but the need for food doesn't go away after the holidays," said Marilyn Corbin, state program leader for children, youth and families with Penn State Cooperative Extension. "In an agricultural state such as Pennsylvania, it's sad that people still go hungry. The Pennsylvania food banks are in desperate need of our help."

Non-perishable items always are needed. Some of the types of foods most needed include: canned tuna, canned meats and stews, soups, peanut butter, canned fruits and vegetables, packaged pasta and rice, canned and dried beans, pure fruit and vegetable juices, nonfat dry milk, baby food, cereal, and formula (must be within code date).

The Department of Health requires that all cans have labels and are free of dents or rust. Packaged goods must be factory sealed. Health laws prohibit the distribution of home-canned or

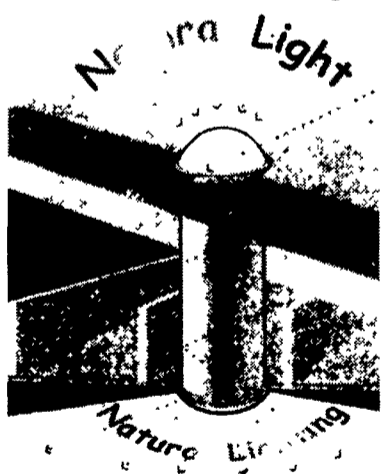
home-packaged foods.

Statistics from the Pennsylvania Hunger Action Center show that more than 736,800 Pennsylvanians are "food insecure" each year, and that number is rising. More than half of those are children.

"4-H is proud to lead such an important effort to make a difference in the lives of needy citizens," said Corbin. "4-H encourages all citizens to join in the fight to eliminate hunger in this state and to become involved in local community action initiatives."

"As we gather this holiday season around tables with a bounty of delicious food, it is important to reflect on the fact that the threat of hunger is a widening phenomenon in our society," she said. "It doesn't have to be this way. By donating food to the 4-H Can Make a Difference House, you can help to reduce the threat of hunger so children and families can live a more healthy life."

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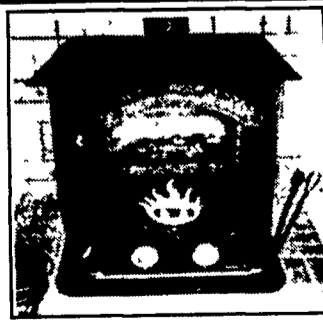
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