

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



An appetizing aroma fills the kitchen on a gloomy, somewhat muggy, fall morning.

The enticing smell pushes away the damp, almost-musty atmosphere lingering after a prolonged stretch of tropical humidity.

It's one of those food scents that pokes a suggestive warmth into every corner of the house, evoking images of childhood days arriving home from school to Mom's good cooking.

Pot roast.

An ordinary chunk of beef, zipped up with a bit of bouillon flavoring, surrounded by potatoes, carrots and onions. What could possibly be more "comfort food" than a simple, homey pot roast? (They're also easy to fix, which for busy cooks is comfort of another sort.)

What categorizes something as a comfort food? Is it because you really like it. Because it makes you feel good? Because it's something that brings back that aura of safe, happy and well-fed childhood? Because it is tied to some significant or memorable occasion or event?

Probably all part of the "comfort food" imagery in our heads.

Mashed potatoes is a dish that seems to just naturally fall into the comfort food category. Fluffy, whipped spuds seem inherently tied to festive family gatherings, conversation around a cozy dinner table, and paired with such classics as meatloaf, roast beef, or for us die-hard "Pennsylvania Dutch" food lovers, buried under a mound of pork and sauerkraut.

On the other hand, The Farm-

er is also perfectly happy with a nice, steaming baked potato. Or even a tender, baked sweet potato, preferably with a thick slice of ham, one of his favorite comfort foods.

Ranking right up near the top of my personal comfort foods is soup. A hot, steaming bowl of homemade vegetable, or chicken corn, or maybe broccoli cheese. Occasionally on a snowy, wintry day, it will occur to me to concoct my own, homemade French onion, slathered with stretchy, melted mozzarella and croutons if there happen to be any on hand.

Recently, grandson Caleb has been sharing lunch with us on occasion, while supervising our harvest of high-moisture corn from the combine cab's passenger perch. He repeatedly reported home that he had noodle soup at grandma's, though neither noodles, nor soup, had been on any of those lunch menus. Finally, one day, I fixed some noodle soup, figuring that was perhaps comfort food for him.

Of course, two of the most traditional comfort foods for kids are macaroni and cheese, and hot dogs. Since most kids love hot dogs so much, we ought to find a way to make them healthier, with extra vitamins, minerals, maybe a little bran or wheat germ.

And then they probably wouldn't touch them.

Can pizza be considered comfort food? Why not?

Labeling pizza as comfort food is likely a dead giveaway to your age, and perhaps your upbringing. Lots of kids could survive on the ubiquitous sauce n'cheese, n'whatever else you like on them, doughy favorite. Homemade pizza is a cool-weather, Friday-night staple for our grandchildren, while Sunday evenings suit better for fixing homemade pizza in our kitchen.

It's also hard to beat a plain,

old juicy hamburger, dressed up with tomato, onion, pickle, and lettuce. Proving that comfort food doesn't have to be fancy, or expensive or take long to fix.

And, in confession, after a long day of tackling the variety of jobs here, from milking and calf feeding to banging my head against computer glitches, few things are more comforting than settling down in the evening with a dish of ice cream and bag of potato chips.

Served with a fork on the side to fight off the food police.

4-H HAPPENINGS

Red Rose 4-H Beef Club Seeking New Members

Interested Lancaster County youth are welcome to attend the next meeting of the Red Rose 4-H Beef Club at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, Oct. 16, at the Lancaster Farm and Home Center.

New members are invited to attend this meeting and there will be a Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) presentation by Scott Wright, Pennsylvania Beef Council.

The club conducts seven meetings each year, a round-up in August, and a recognition banquet. Members of the club will have the opportunity to participate in livestock and meats judging programs, community fair beef shows, and the Pennsylvania Farm Show.

Lancaster County youth between the ages of 8 and 19 years regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, or handicap are invited to attend the "new member" meeting. Feel free to bring along your parents and friends.

For additional information, contact Chet Hughes, Penn State Cooperative Extension livestock agent at (717) 394-6851.

Maryland 4-H Team First In Engineering Bowl

The Maryland 4-H team won first place in the Engineering Bowl at the National 4-H Engineering, Science, and Leadership Event, September 22-25, in West Lafayette, Ind.

Members of the winning team and their placings in the individual events are: Automotive — Tim Owings, Carroll County, sixth place; Bicycle — Rebekah Overstreet, Anne Arundel County, third place; Computer — Kevin Roberts, Frederick County, first place; Electric — Gandalf French, Howard County, fifth place; Lawn Tractor — Jason Riddinger, Carroll County, third place; Small engines — Carl Keifer, Montgomery County, fifth place; and Tractor — Joshua Stewart, Carroll County, first place.

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