

On Being a Farm Wife (and other hazards) Joyce Bupp



It was hard not to be amused. Because I'd watched a similar scene play out so many times before here at home. Same plot. Same actions. Same ending. Different player.

The farmer friend playing out this familiar scene was responding to a request for a series of accumulated receipts. Following a diligent retrieval process involving pockets, wallet, and various sections of a briefcase, he turned over a sizeable accumulation of envelopes, bills, and small slips representing business-related charges, all in a few moments time, right before our eyes.

I was impressed. Not a single piece of dried-up haylage had fallen out of the amassed bits and pieces of farmer-commerce tracking. The slips of paper all looked clean.

The process brought to mind the periodic occasions when a tousled stack of crumpled, scruffy, dusty, and greasy-finger-printed bits of paper suddenly turn up on the kitchen counter or the office desk. Many of them are yellow, a few perhaps pink, maybe even a pale green one once in awhile, denoting buys, sells, deliveries, and pickups.

These tracking pieces of farm transactions all have their own story, should one want to pause and ponder them. One small slip may carry a series of numbers denoting codes of bulls, tracing pieces of breeding material to hopefully improve the genetics of our dairy herd. Others tell the variety of supplies used on a daily basis, from the plastic gloves we wear for milking, to deliveries of bags of calf feed, to tankloads of

liquid plant food for the field crops.

The bulk of the slips that accumulate represent a paper trail of machinery maintenance. Collections of these paper pieces gather in corners of the shop desk, the pickup, the barn office. Their wrinkled, grease-stained faces tell of replacement bearings for tractors or pins for hay equipment, cutting colters for planters, harvest machine blades, and tillage tool knives.

And tires. Lots of tires and tire "fixes."

Just out of curiosity — and because no fistfuls of paper trail material had actually landed in the house for awhile — I ran an inventory a bit later while piloting the pickup as part of a harvest truck shuttle mission. The front seat was amazingly clean and had but a single parts paper-trail sheet on the console. Then I remembered that the pickup had been parked for several days of wait time for some relatively minor tune-up work and not on active part gathering trips.

Diving further into the back section gave a truer picture. Several paper trail additions in various stages of crinkly crumpledness were stashed amidst a hat or two, a glo-orange hunting sweat-shirt, thermal coveralls (apparently in case of a sudden July cold snap), the brush part of a

Auction To Benefit Lebanon County 4-H



From left, Lebanon County 4-H summer assistants, Nate Artz and Rebecca Light, preview some of the items that will be up for bid on Thursday, July 31 as part of the Lebanon County 4-H Benefit Auction conducted at the Lebanon Fairgrounds.

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — On Thursday, July 31, the 22nd annual Lebanon County 4-H Auction will be conducted to benefit 4-H youth and adult volunteer education and leadership programs.

Sale items include craft items, collectibles, gift certificates to area restaurants and businesses, specialty gift baskets, and more.

The auction is a fund-raiser for the county 4-H development fund. Organizers hope to raise more than \$4,000 this year. The Lebanon County 4-H Board of Directors coordinates the event and contacts more than 100 area businesses and crafts persons for donations.

The auction includes special theme gift baskets assembled by the members of the county 4-H clubs and Farm Women Societies. Clubs have selected themes based on their 4-H projects or a more general theme such as a "Back to School" or "Baking Supplies" basket.

The auction will be conducted from 6 p.m.-9 p.m. in the North Hall of the Lebanon Area Fairgrounds, Cornwall and Rocherty Roads, Lebanon, as part of the Lebanon Area Fair. The money raised helps to fund the county's 4-H members and adult volunteer leaders. For more information or to donate an item, contact the Lebanon County extension office at (717) 270-4391.

pushbroom, a tennis ball, a softball, and a flashlight. Which may or may not light; I didn't stop to check.

All these paper trail pieces were dutifully collected, except for the one that tore to shreds when I tried to yank it from being stuck underneath something heavy buried under the thermal coveralls. No matter. Its billing contents will surely be included on some larger, all-encompassing monthly accounts statement from somewhere.

Eventually, the possibly-useful slips were filed away and the probably-never-necessary ones were chucked. Only a small residual on the kitchen counter told of the paper-trail that had passed through enroute to some semblance of organization.

There must be some use for a half-dozen dehydrated dead flies.



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