

On Being a Farm Wife

(and other hazards)

Joyce Bupp



Hey. You, there.

Yeah, you. I can read your mind, and let me tell you, I don't like what I see. I see plans. Big plans. Plans that scare me.

What plans of yours do I see? Well, I see a big table, with lots of people sitting around it. There are plenty of smiles and people talking and having a good time. The table is piled full of, let's see, things like bowls of white mashed potatoes and orange yams and red cranberry sauce and brown gravy and green beans and ... oh no.

I was afraid of that.

Right there in the middle. The one on the big platter, all stuffed and steaming and kind of golden brown. He's an old friend of mine. I'd recognize him anywhere, even without his feathers.

Looks like he finally made it big.

He always did like to be the center of attention, even when we were just fluffy little balls snuggling under the lights at the hatchery. He always bragged about pecking his way out of his eggshell, ahead of all the rest of us.

I lost track of him after we got sent out in different shipments. But I've heard tales about how he gobbled along endlessly to the hens about how much plumper he was, puffing out his breast and fluffing those tail feathers. And how he didn't have to work for a living, just laze around all day and get fat.

Looks like it worked.

Envy? Nah, I didn't envy him.

Hey, look at me. I'm of native wild turkey blood. We're not couch potatoes. We're famed for our keen eyesight, our caginess, and our street smarts. We're also much prettier than those plain, boring, white birds. Our feathers are a beautiful blend of brown and black and shimmer with green and gold luminescence in the sunshine.

When I landed on this farm, I wasn't sure what to expect. But after I got acquainted with those two hens they penned me with, I sort of forgot about all my guy buddies back at the turkey breeding farm. And I haven't thought about old pudgy, there on the table, for a long time.

These girls are my family now. We spend most of our time together, along with those two goofy guinea birds. Every day we all hang out together, checking the barn floors for grain, picking bugs and weed seeds out of the garden, making our rounds of the meadow, bullying those pesky kittens out of our way. And we

always scratch around a little under the bird feeder as we're passing by, for a little fast food sunflower seeds.

Our humans here, they thought maybe we would take to the woods, establish a little flock. Hey, there are predators out there. I spotted that fox that runs the fields after dark the very first night I was here. She made it a regular habit to stalk around our pen, even though we had a high roosting perch in the trees. Pretty unnerving. That fox has her eye on us, that's for sure. Good thing she can't fly since we found the rafters in the old bank barn. Guess she'll have to settle for catching mice.

Anyway, we like sleeping with a barn roof over our head now. Waking up with wet feathers in the morning is nasty.

I do keep watch for those chicken hawks while we're out roaming the meadow. You can't be too careful, you know. Maybe they are better fliers than I am, but could flog the feathers off any of them if they ever get too close.

Well, I can see you aren't going to change your plans about having dinner with my old friend. Remember to count your blessings and all that food you have piled there on the table in your plans.

Let me tell you, the hens and I are thankful, too. We're thankful that you people have tons of frozen turkeys to pick from at the markets.

We're even more thankful that they have one of them here in the farm refrigerator and won't be thinking about a native turkey for dinner.

And give some thought to having a ham or roast beef for your next feast.

Members Gather For 65th Annual Convention Of Cumberland County Society Of Farm Women

MECHANICSBURG (Cumberland Co.) — The members of the Cumberland County Society of Farm Women gathered for their annual convention Saturday, Nov. 8 at the Mechanicsburg Church of the Brethren.

The convention theme was "Farm Women Take the Cake, They Always Measure Up." Approximately 160 women were in attendance with 21 groups represented.

Cumberland County Dairy Ambassador, Megan Kutz, gave a presentation on dairying and promotion of the industry. Special music, skits, and group singing were the highlights of the day.

Paul Garrett of the Cumberland County Cooperative Extension accepted proceeds from the bazaar table on behalf of the Cumberland County 4-H.

Becky Swallow, Society of Farm Women state president, gave a report from the other

counties and the upcoming state convention.

Five 80 year old members were presented with special pins, and pins were accepted on behalf of one 95 year old, one 100 year old and one 100+ year old member by representatives of their groups.

There were 252 Cumberland County farm women in 2003. They contributed a total of \$8,400 to local charities in 2003.

Scholarships are available to any qualifying child or grandchild of the Society of Farm Women of Pennsylvania.

County officers elected for 2004/05 follow: president — Gayle Fry; first vice-president — Sandy Myers; second vice-president — JoAnn Paulus; recording secretary Carol Williams; corresponding secretary — Barb Deitch; and treasurer — Deb Yorlets.



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