

Twas the Night Before Christmas



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Morrow County Grain Growers INC.
FARMER OWNED AND CONTROLLED



One Cow Dairy

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Walla Walla Writer

Are you thinking of buying a cow?

Well, that is your business, but if you have never milked one the following detailed description may be of interest to you, and, if you have ever had the pleasure of caring for a cow this article will awaken nostalgic memories, heh heh.

We will assume that you have bought the cow (expensive, aren't they?) and that you have a barn, or a reasonable facsimile, with a stanchion in it. A stanchion is an open V-shaped device which, when locked, prevents the independent creature from walking away on business of her own.

Proceed as follows:

Get up out of bed an hour earlier than usual and put on your milking togs. These have no resemblance to natty ski togs, golf togs, or yachting togs. A pair of machine-washable coveralls, a pair of shoes that can take it, and an old, shapeless, soft felt hat will do nicely. If the hat it not shapeless to begin with don't worry, for it soon will be. Stay away from mirrors.

Go to the pasture and coax, push, or bully old Bossy into the barn and lock her head in the stanchion. Then give her a pitchfork of alfalfa as big as the cow and a gallon of high-priced, chopped grain. This will help to put her in a good mood, a contented frame of mind. Go back to the house and get the milk bucket, which you forgot, and also a pail of warm water and a rag. After you have brushed the cow thoroughly (if you don't you'll be sorry), wash her udder (bosom, if you prefer). Cows are not particular what they lie down in, so this may take some time. Pick up the milk bucket and the one-legged stool (one-legged stools are used for quick get-aways) in your right hand, place your left hand on her right hip bone, and pushing firmly, say in a gruff, authoritative voice, "Back yer foot!" Repeat if necessary. When the foot is back, quickly stick your head in her flank, shift the bucket to the left hand, sit down on the stool and place the bucket between your knees. Be sure the center of gravity is on the center of the one-legged stool, for it takes practice to remain upright on a wobbling stool. You are ready to begin milking.

Grab the protuberance tightly at the top between thumb and forefinger, nudging upward. Pull downward, squeezing hard with the other three fingers, and aim toward the bucket. Do not be discouraged if the nozzle twists and a stream of milk hits you in the face or spray over your coveralls, or if, perhaps, nothing happens at all. Try harder.

If your fingernails are too long, or if you pinch her, she will kick. As you will learn, a cow kicks out sideways and backwards. One good, strong kick can send you, the stool, and the bucket, full or empty, sailing out into the gutter, which, like the bucket, may be full or empty. You will react to this roguish treatment, according to your temperament. You may reapproach her soothingly, murmuring sweet little endearments like, "Nice Bossy, Good Bossy. Hold still now, Bossy. I'm not gonna hurt you." Or you may kick her right back. This second method of control is not advisable, for nobody has ever won a kicking contest with a cow. And watch your language. There is a device for the prevention of cow-kicking called "hobbles". These must be placed above and around the hocks with stealth, speed and dexterity, and is not recommended for beginners.

Afterwhile, the time depending on such things as whether she is an easy-milker, a hard-milker, whether she is at the beginning or end of her lactation period (whether she's just hadda calf or about ta), and

whether you know your business, you will have had it. The cow has probably had it long before this and expressed her impatience with your bungling ineptitude by wrapping her not-too-sanitary tail smartly across your kisser. But one does not quit simply because one's fingers and hands ache clear to the elbows. One must be sure that every ounce of milk has been extracted or the cow will dry up. Why dry UP I do not know, but one does not say dry OUT. But everything must come to an end, even this, and at last the moment of triumph arrives when you may tote your bucket of fresh milk to the kitchen.

Strain the milk through several thicknesses of cheese cloth or through a milk strainer with disposable filters into wide flat pans so that the cream will be able to raise (rise, if you must) properly. After about twelve hours, the cream can be skimmed off in preparation for the greasy, messy job of buttermaking. When you put the milk in the refrigerator you will find the wide, flat pans take up all the space and there isn't room for anything else. While your wife is muttering and grumbling as she prepares the special solution of water and sal soda to wash the milk things, for one just doesn't use soap and water... too slick, run back and finish your chores. Turn the cow out, and regardless of your thoughts, treat her like a lady, and do not say anything to hurt her feelings. Cows are sensitive.

Now clear the barn.

After this is done you may have time to shower, change clothing, and get to work on time. You will have this same

performance to look forward to in the evening.

Twice a day at the same hour, Sundays, Christmas, Fourth of July, in sickness and in health, in sun and rain, and snow, and sleet, old Bossy takes precedence over everything.

Go ahead and buy a cow. I'll think of you when I sneak out onto the front porch in my bathrobe and slippers and bring in the milk with the morning paper. I'll think of you at day's end while I am relaxing over a tall, cold glass of buttermilk. I'll think of you on New Year's morning, if I should just happen to be awake. You will be. Ever hear an unmilked, unfed, discontented cow bawl?



Yes! Joy to your world.

MILADIES APPAREL

GRACE and ALICE

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