

Healthy Farmer

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Happy Holidays from the AgriWellness Staff

Reflections on a country Christmas:

"I cannot honestly say which is the most memorable Christmas I have experienced. To be sure, I have thrilled at my share of midnight masses in our little German-Catholic community. When the snow lightly settled on the silent countryside while my family journeyed to midnight church services I felt a tingling in my heart. When the choir of mostly farm men and women broke into four-part harmony while singing "Silent Night" I felt a bit of a tear enter my eye and a chill down my spine. When Shelby, our 14 year old and first born child, was just five days old for her first Christmas in the arms of her happy mother with proud Grandpa and Grandma nearby, I felt I was the luckiest man in the world. How does one top those moments of ecstasy in deciding which Christmas is most precious?

After many days of contemplation I still cannot say with complete certainty which Christmas is most memorable. But I have arrived at what I feel most deeply about Christmas. I truly love getting up in the gray of dawn, and brewing a steaming hot pot of coffee to sip while going about morning chores. Christmas day stirs in me a special affection for my cattle and prompts me to drop extra shovels of sweet corn and layers of aromatic alfalfa bales into the bunks of the powerful herd bulls and gentle cows. The rooster pheasants beating their wings and crowing to the harem of hens still in the spruce and pine windbreak tells me that this rich farmland produces bounty for wild and domestic life alike. An hour later as I approach the farmhouse, now with several lighted windows, I can hear excited shouts, even though both the storm door and heavy wooden inside door are latched, as the kids discover unpredicted treasures in their Christmas stockings. Then they run to the entryway as they hear me kick off my boots. Jon hugs my coated waist, oblivious of the chaff brushing onto his pajamas, telling me "Thanks Dad" for the newfound Nintendo game. Shelby plants a shy adolescent kiss on my frosty cheek as she says "Thank you" for the new hair dryer which mom so thoughtfully remembered. Then Marilyn hustles to the doorway, throws her arms around my neck, and says for the sixteenth consecutive year "This is the best Christmas yet." I forget all my inner debates about what values to impart to our children. I utter an unspoken prayer of thanks to God and hurriedly strip off my heavy outer clothes to investigate what might be inside the neatly wrapped packages tucked inside my long red stocking by the fireplace."



—Mike Rosmann, Executive Director
(originally written in 1991)