

Springtime on the Farm

by Leola Fisk Todd

In years gone by, the Fisk family eagerly looked forward to the coming of springtime on the farm. Grass was greening all over and the garden was being planted.

First thing in the spring the manure spreader was readied and hitched up to a team of horses. Manure pitched from the animal stables in a pile in the barn yard was loaded onto the spreader and spread over the field for plowing.

When the soil was dry enough, two horses were hitched to a single plow and the plow pulled back and forth across the field making furrows about a foot deep turning each one over the previous one. To smooth the ground, one hitched the team onto the spring tooth drag and worked the ground over for planting.

A hand planter was used to plant the potatoes and corn. Seed potatoes were cut from the previous year's potatoes stored in the cellar. They were cut into pieces leaving an eye on each piece. The potatoes were put into the hand planter inserting the point of the planter into the ground and stepping on it. A potato would then be released into the ground about three inches deep. Corn was planted the same as the potatoes.

Oats were planted in the spring whereas wheat was planted in the fall.

Some other vegetables planted were yellow beans, hubbard squash (no new fancy ones as those of today), radishes and lettuce.

Crops had to be cultivated with a cultivator going between each row to keep weeds from growing.

In the spring the animals were happy to be out to pasture and nibble the fresh green grass.

The baby calves that were born in the stable were old enough to kick up their heels and race around the barnyard. The mother sow pig in the pig pen had given birth to probably a dozen piglets.

In the hen house the mother hens sat on the eggs in their nests patiently waiting for the chicks to hatch. The roosters were strutting their stuff and crowing at the crack of dawn to awaken everybody.

The hen turkey sat on her nest containing probably ten eggs while the old gobbler was doing guard duty.

Kitty cat had found a spot among the bales of hay and had given birth to four of the cutest balls of fur and was so very proud of her family.

The dog was lord of all and kept a watchful eye on everything that moved.

The wild birds also enjoyed the season of spring. The red wing blackbirds sat on the cattails in the marsh and sang their spring song at the top of their voices. The ducks flew in and out of the water looking for a suitable place to nest. The robins were busy building their nests high in the trees. The sparrows were searching for tiny bits of straw to build their nests on the track and top of the roller doors of the barn. The doves or pigeons always perched on the top peak of the barn and liked to find glass broken out of the windows so they could fly inside the barn.

The apple orchard was coming into bloom and varieties were Pippin, Spy, Sheepnose, Duchess and Russet. The Bartlett and Sugar pears were along the drive and in full bloom attracting the honey bees. The bee hives were in the back farm yard. Grape vines grew on the house and they were in bloom.

The sun made each day warmer and as a south wind blew, the fins on the windmill were catching the breeze and making the windmill pump water to fill the tank for the horses and cattle in the barnyard.

As evening shadows fell and the day was done, all was very quiet in the country, only the croaking of the frogs in the marsh could be heard.

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