

Haying: blood, sweat and tears

By **KELSEY JACOBS**

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 9

One hot July day, one of my relatives called me up and asked me if I wanted to work. I told him that that was not even a question, and I would be up in 15 minutes. When I got there the tractor and everything I needed was ready.

My cousin and I headed out to the far left field. When we got there it felt like it was 300 degrees. The tractor didn't have air conditioning so it felt even hotter. I took a drink of my water and went to work. I was driving the tractor and my cousin was standing in the space next to me. When I was ready I started to cut. I put the mower down and started to mow the grass. Nothing beats the smell of fresh-cut hay. The aroma filled the cab of the tractor. I went down the field and back up. I never get tired of the smell and the same driving patterns.

But there are always the what-ifs in the back of my mind. What if something gets caught in the blade, and shoots up and hits the cab? What if we drive too close to the edge and slip? What if? Fortunately, none of the what-ifs happened.

After my half of the field was done, my cousin took over. I don't like to be conceited and all, but I'm a better driver/cutter than he is. About this time I was drenched in sweat from head to toe. I chugged my water, and as I was drinking I got sharp pains in my hands. Then all of a sudden I felt something oozing out of them. My hands were covered in blisters, and now blood. My cousin stared flipping out and hollering at me.

Then he said the funniest thing I have ever heard in my life: "That's what you get when you have girly hands!"

I found some rags and wrapped them around my hands. The blisters were from driving and handling the wheel. Since I didn't wear gloves I had no protection on my hands.

By the time, my cousin's half was done, it was dusk. It was still light enough for us to have some fun. When my hands were all taken care of ... we went swimming.

That was the best farm day of my life. When it comes to hard work there is bound to be blood, sweat and tears. But in return you gain a sense of accomplishment when you see all that you have done in a day's work.

Farming

By **AUSTIN HOYT**

Crossett Brook Middle School, Grade 7

Fantastic fields of corn
Amazing squishy squash
Radiant red radishes
Mounds of crunchy carrots
Immense round zucchini
Nice firm tomatoes
Great green beans



THIS WEEK: Farming

Each week Young Writers Project selects best work from students throughout Vermont. Students respond to prompts provided by YWP or send their best "general" work. A team of students helps select work for publication in this and eight other newspapers. For more go to youngwritersproject.org, a civil community of young writers.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

YWP is an independent nonprofit that engages students to write, helps them improve and connects them with authentic audiences for their best work.

YWP runs youngwritersproject.org — a supportive online community for students; trains college mentors to provide students with feedback and builds Digital Writing Classrooms for schools.

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YWP NEWS

YWP thanks several key supporters:

FairPoint Communications is supporting YWP Schools Project digital classrooms in St. Albans, Enosburg, Grand Isle and Milton.

Bay and Paul Foundations has given YWP a grant to help students create digital stories about themselves and their heritage.

Morning on the farm

By **HENRY LANG** | Dothan Brook School, Grade 5

Up at dawn
Slip on boots
Open the loft
Slide down the chute
Get the pail
To milk the cow
The crud on my pants
Makes others say, "Wow!"
I skip to the coop
To feed Mrs. Henry

Then hop out the door
To give slops to Lenny
He eats like a pig
Because he is one of course
"Breakfast!" Mom calls
I hop on my horse
My great meal is eggs
Farm-fresh from the coop
I scarf it all down
Then it's back to the loop

All in a day's work

By **LYDIA SMITH** | Home School, Grade 6

Beep, beep, beep. My alarm clock goes off. I roll over and go back to sleep. Ten minutes later, my sister shakes me back to reality. I stumble out of bed and fumble for my clothes. I slip quietly down the stairs, trying not to wake my parents and other siblings.

In the kitchen, I mix up a warm bottle of milk replacer for the bottle lamb. One of our ewes hasn't been able to feed both of her lambs, so we have to supplement one. When the milk is ready, I fetch my sister from the other room. Together, we slip on our barn boots and heavy coats and step out into the chilly morning air.

It's a short drive to the old barn where we winter our flock. Still half asleep, we ride in silence. The large, open, three-sided barn is dark and quiet. I hop out and call for the bottle lamb. Out of a pile of snoozing sheep he eagerly jumps up, hungrily baaing for his breakfast.

I squeeze through the gate, not wanting to disturb the ewe that's leaning against it. I check to see if any new lambs have been born during the night — none. Meanwhile, a demanding tug on my jeans reminds me that the lamb is hungry. I hold his bottle as he greedily chugs it down.

My sister strides around the pen, making sure that everyone's all right. I walk across the barn to the lambing jugs and say hello to our youngest lamb. He's not even a day old yet. Lambs and ewes are sleeping in various clumps around the barnyard. I have to be careful not to step on anyone on my way back to the gate. After making sure that the gate is securely locked behind us, my sister and I clamber stiffly back into the car. We turn around and head home. We'll be back later to feed and water the animals. This is only the beginning of the day's work.

Milking can be dangerous

By **ERIC BENNEIG**

Cold Hollow Career Center, Grade 11

To milk cows you have to be alert both milking and getting the cows ready to milk. Milking cows is easy and simple because the machines do most of the work, and yet it is still dangerous to get the cows ready to milk.

When you get to the barn the first thing you have to do is push the cows to the holding area. The holding area is a large, empty space right in front of the parlor doors where the cows get ready to go through to the parlor to get milked. You have to walk behind them, pushing them to the holding area. This is very dangerous because you can get trampled or kicked. The safe way to push the cows up is to calmly walk behind them and give them a gentle pat on the back.

The cows get milked two times a day, once early in the morning and once at night, usually twelve hours apart. Once you turn the milking machines on, you start sending the cows through the parlor. The parlor is the room with all the milking machines and that's where the cows get milked. When the cows get in the parlor the first thing you do is pre-dip their teats with teat dip. Then you wipe the teats off with a paper towel. This keeps the milking process clean.

While you are milking you have to see which cows you are milking to see if they are mean or calm. If you have worked in the barn for a while you'll start to know which cows kick and which ones stand quietly. If you haven't worked there for a while then you should be careful you don't get kicked or stepped on while trying to put the milking machine on the cows' teats. After the milking machine has been put on, you wait about five minutes, or until the milking machine comes off by itself. You dip the teats once more when they are done with milking to keep them free of bacteria. After you have milked all the cows you have to clean off the machines and the parlor floor.

This is how milking cows and getting cows ready to be milked can be dangerous; you can either get kicked, bumped, stepped on, or even pinned between the cows and the wall. And yet milking is still simple, depending on how nice and calm your cows — or your boss's cows — are.

NEXT PROMPTS

General. Send us your best work, in any genre. **Deadline: May 22.** This is the final prompt for the year.

Submit at:

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