

Misguided rule has been withdrawn

Late last Thursday, we received word that the Department of Labor would withdraw its proposed rule that would essentially end family farming as we know it. This rule, which drew the ire of nearly all of rural America, would have prohibited children from working on farms unless the operations were owned solely by their parents. If grandparents, aunts, or uncles were in the mix, the kids would be out of luck.

So, amid the demographic reality that America's farmers and ranchers are getting no younger, this rule would have the effect of destroying family operations. Without a new crop of farmers to replace today's - who had an average age of 57.1 years in 2007 - rural America would be devastated.

As anyone who has spent even a shred of time in rural America will tell you, the way our farms survive is by family teaching family. While classroom learning plays a role, there is nothing like a parent educator teaching the art and science of farming from the cab of a tractor or while walking the fields. In our family, I was the fifth generation to be the recipient of this knowledge; our hope is that my children will be the sixth.

While we celebrate the Department of Labor's decision to withdraw this misguided rule, there is still more that needs to be prevented or undone. The onslaught of new regulations from other agencies - including from the EPA and CFTC - presents a considerable danger to the continuity of our family farms and way of life in rural America.

The danger is that those who are writing the rules know next to nothing about what keeps us humming.

During the Landon Lecture at K-State University earlier this spring, USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack shared two stories about how he has been "educating" top regulators in Washington about farm life.

First, he said that he took EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson to a farm in Iowa, and she learned that we use GPS in tractors. "Bless her heart," he said, she had no clue farmers use technology to increase efficiency. Meanwhile, her agency is busy writing regulations that negatively influence the productivity of our farms, obviously under the presumption that we just waste our resources.

Second, Secretary Vilsack relayed a phone call he made to Labor Secretary Hilda Solis to tell her just how wrong she was about the farm labor regulation. He said: "I appreciate what you're trying to do. But, what you don't understand or appreciate is that there is a values system here that you're creating a real concern about. And that values system is the ability of families to teach children about the value of hard work." Meanwhile, her cabinet-level agency's proposed rule would have undermined that values system.

It used to be that weather was the greatest unknown threatening a successful yield. Now it is uninformed, uneducated bureaucrats impressed by the use of GPS in tractors who threaten us.

Congressman Tim Huelskamp (R-Fowler) represents the First District of Kansas.



Lessons taught to us by our mothers

I have always said my mother was a woman born before her time; from her elopement so she could keep teaching, to daily exercise. She seemed to possess an uncanny knowledge of the world to come. So I had to chuckle when I recently read the following advice for insomnia, "Turn off the electronics and read a book." My mother was a very poor sleeper. We call it the Sproul factor and fortunately, or unfortunately, my brother, sister and I inherited the same gene. Actually, they have determined the amount of sleep we need is indeed genetic.

Mother watched TV, but she really loved to read. She was an avid patron of the Norton Library. When her eyes failed her and she could no longer check-out books, she adopted "Talking Books" and although she listened, she never got over the loss of "the quiet of book reading". She often reminisced about how, as children, Aunt Daze,

Phase II Mary Kay Woodyard



Uncle Harry and she shared books. They could each check out four books and when they had finished their own, they shared with each other. She said it taught her to love a variety of subjects. Mother was never without books. Yes, books, she had one in every location, from the porch swing, to the bathroom, to the car, a book was always available. As a teacher, my mother felt if she did nothing more than teach a child to read and love it, she had accomplished her mission.

Mother's philosophy on life was, "There is no excuse for a poor

disposition" and "Everybody has a handicap, even if it is poor eyesight". I never saw my mother in a bad mood. If she felt crabby, she kept it well hidden. Every day was a new beginning and you went forward, regardless of the situation.

I think parents often forget what lasting messages they impart to their offspring. These messages are a child's foundation. Do we always appreciate it growing up? Of course not. I never got over thinking, I will not say to my children, "What will people think," which was probably adopted from my dad, but then that is a story for another day. Happy Mother's Day to all mothers, and most especially to my mother and my mother-in-law, whose memories live forever in my heart and mind and for whom my admiration never dwindles. Mail to: mkwoodyard@ruraltel.net

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It is garage sale time again, find lots of stuff

My friend, Lindy, tells of a comment she overheard at an auction. A lady surveyed the tables and pronounced, "She sure had a lot of stuff!"

Lindy was a little annoyed. "If you take anyone's lifetime accumulation of things and lay it out on tables it looks like a lot of stuff."

True. I used to go to auctions. But I'm starting to be mindful of how my things are going to look on the auction block and it gives me pause!

So if I'm at a flea market, auction, or garage sale I limit myself. I collect bud vases, so if I find something charming I buy it. I am also hooked on green dishes of just about any sort: pottery, sandwich glass, stemware. And angels.

I went to some garage sales over the weekend.

They say to take cash in small bills to garage sales and flea markets. It irritates the sellers if you talk them down and then ask for change from a \$50 bill. If you have a five and your total purchase is \$6, you can frown and say, "I only have a five, would you take that?" And usually they will!

I found some fun things: a fish for my new fish themed basement bathroom, an angel, a bud vase, silk ties for a quilting project.

This Too Shall Pass Nancy Hagman



I found a steam upholstery and carpet cleaner for \$20. It looked new with all the attachments and instructions. The woman, who was moving, said, "My kids got it for me for the accidents before my dog died."

We walked through the house because it was for sale and they were also having an open house. From the odor I would say it should have had more use than that it was!

With apologies to devoted pet owners, I agree with my husband on this one: Livestock belongs outside!

I talked her down to \$10. My sofa that has been in the basement throughout the remodeling process needs a cleaning. I could not even rent a steam cleaner for \$10.

It was an instructive day. There was a relish dish identical to one I own priced at \$5. At the next place the same dish was \$1. At my auction I suppose the kids will only get a dollar or fifty

cents if they have a garage sale and the bargain hunters are out.

Aside from the fact that I nearly passed out in half the garages we went into (pet odor again), it was a great day. It truly is amazing the things some people sell and apparently others will buy!

The next day we went shopping for the things we could not find at garage sales, the Salvation Army, or the resale store.

Garage sales are a lot more fun! I rather imagine clerks would not at all appreciate it if I were to make them an offer half the marked price on an item. Or suggest they settle for \$5, because it is all I have.

An interesting aspect of getting older and having the kids out of the house is there is more time and money. Time to run around to garage sales and save even more money on real and perceived necessities.

Though I am having fun, I wonder and worry about families with young children. How can the clerks waiting on me buy the things they really need, especially groceries, on the salaries they are making?

I just wonder. I have no answers. However I do have a lot of stuff!



Big shout out to Shirk Dentistry group! The nice thing about your own small town businesses is that they know and care about you. Able to get a college kid in quickly with a call. Might have just been fortunate, but we felt fortunate to have them help us.

Letters to the Editor and Thumbs Up:

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