

Around the FARM

Deanne Frieders

Spring Cleaning

Punxsutawney Phil's shadow has come and gone. Our resident cardinal has assumed his perch atop our backyard fence, signaling the beginning of spring.

Autumn used to be my most favored season with the rainbow of changing colors, crunching of scented leaves underfoot and cool, crisp air. But these days, spring is where my heart is.

Spring evokes feelings of awakening, renewal and fresh starts. It's a chance to revitalize those long gone New Years resolutions, or better yet – come up with bigger and better ambitions.

This time of year is when I feel the urge to fling open the windows and freshen up the house. There are the usual housecleaning chores along with changing the bedding to lighter weight blankets, and putting the snow gear away. There's plenty of work to be had. Thankfully, I'm not in this spring-cleaning endeavor alone. My husband happens to be a superstar window and floor cleaner! I am one lucky lady!

I'm one of those people who actually enjoys tackling spring cleaning. Yes, it's a little muddier here on the farm than it was as kid growing up in town. The tiny pebbles from the gravel driveway find their way into the crevices of our wood stairs, but they are in good company. They fit right in with the occasional corn kernels and soybeans I find in random places which always seem to make me smile.

But the task of spring cleaning isn't limited to the inside of the house – there's plenty to do on the farm. We pick up trash from surrounding ditches and our stretch of Adopt-a-Highway. Brush is cut away from fence lines and ditches are burned to curb weed growth. Tractors undergo routine maintenance and the planter is calibrated for spring planting.

This is the time of year when I review my meal plans and stock my freezer with easy to make lunches and dinners. I begin acquiring tractor friendly snacks so we can stock the pantry with grab and go nourishment. I also shop the sales for laundry detergent because while our family of six normally goes through a windfall of clothing, springtime mud makes this even more of a challenge!

I can tell you the farmers are (hopefully) rested up and anxious to get started back to work in the fields. They can smell the fragrant earth as it thaws. The first farmer to be working in the field will likely start a whole



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township brigade of pickups moving out to check the soil and conditions to see if it's time to start planting.

This anticipation, this excitement, this dedication – it's why I love the season of spring. It's unpredictable, usually messy, but it's also full of hope and possibility. Our year depends not only the choices made in the products used and crops we plant, but also on Mother Nature. She's the one who's really in charge!

Wishing you a safe and productive spring season. ■