

Reflections from Lost Horizon Farm — Introduction

Rising with the Herd: A Mooving Memoir from a Dairy Farmer (1980-2000)

Barb Garvoille, *Columnist*

Each edition of this new series, retired dairy farmer Barb Garvoille brings her musings on dairy farm life from her own years of experience on Lost Horizon Farm, just north of Spring Green. This mooving memoir focuses on 1980-2000, join Barb as she rises with the herd.

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I am sharing a portrait of what life was like on our dairy farming operation. You will "meet" my husband, Vince. He moved to this valley farm just north of Spring Green in 1971 (with his parents and some of his siblings). After renting a smaller farm in Sun Prairie for many years, the Garvoilles were extraordinarily lucky to find and buy this farm. In great part, their find was facilitated by the vow of the Leo and Eva Lins estate to only sell their farm to another farmer. They waited over a year to find just the right farmer!

My becoming a farm wife began in 1980 when Vince and I were married. We became the partners owning and operating Lost Horizon Farm.

Our children, Rebecca and Alyson, grew up on the farm. They learned to master various farm chores as they grew and matured. However, our mantra always remained clear: schoolwork comes first. River Valley afforded both girls an excellent K-12 education.

Straight away I called Vince, "Mr. Farmer." I found the moniker appropriate. Farm advertising often directed its spiel to "Mr. Farmer," in print and on radio and TV waves. Vince called me "Mrs. Farmer," or often just "Missus." Vince had the huge task of teaching me about farm life. After all, I was raised in the suburbs of Cleveland, Ohio, went to university in upstate New York, and became an elementary school teacher. I knew absolutely nothing about farming, or what running a dairy farm entailed! In my defense, during high school, I did take the Kuder Preference Test, and number one on my vocational assessment was: FARMING!

I really did think that dairy farmers milked cows twice a day and then sat in the house. You will read and learn, as I did, that farming with livestock is a 365-

day, round the clock profession that can be very challenging. Fortunately, I learned quickly and had the greatest affinity for working with the animals. I loved being between cows during



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milking and being a "calf mama," caring for what farmers' affectionately call the "calfies." I especially liked milking at Christmastime because I could totally understand how Jesus had been born in the calming warmth of a barn. Some innate sense made me quite expert in detecting when an animal was not well—lots of times prior to the appearance of symptoms.

Tractor work was never my forte. I was always fearful of equipment and the undulations in the land. As the years went by, I did pick up some knowledge of machinery parts. My long, narrow fingers were useful in gaining access to parts in tight spaces. To this day, I still wonder whether the people engineering equipment ever think about the person who has to get into the machine to make repairs?

My hope is that as you read my reminiscences, you will understand a bit more about farming and look at farms around the countryside with fresh eyes and know each home, each barn, each outbuilding holds stories of triumph and tribulation and reflects the people who lived and loved thereon.

Barb has called Lost Horizon Farm, just north of Spring Green, her home for the past 42 years. She is fond of all creatures (including snakes). Her joy stems from being able to be outdoors every day observing and treasuring the plant and animal life on her small piece of this planet. She loved milking cows and is proud to have been a dairy farmer.

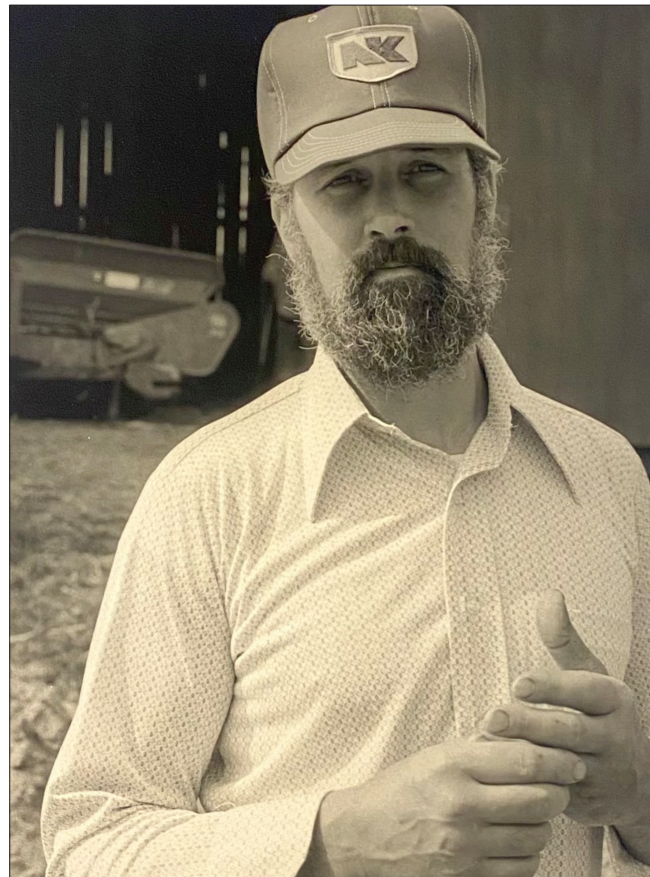


Photo contributed by Barb Garvoille  
The late Vince "Mr. Farmer" Garvoille.



Photo contributed by Barb Garvoille  
Rebecca, calf and Queenie in 1984.



Photo contributed by Barb Garvoille  
Alyson, with Wilbur, in 1989.



Photo by Taylor Scott, *Managing Editor*  
Lost Horizon Farm, as pictured in July 2022. No dairy cows, but still full of life.