



Family, Friends, Faith, and Farming: the good "F" words. *by Roddy Dull*

'Tis the season to be "Festive." Here's a word that truly brings back memories of those days as a child on the farm. Thanksgiving and Christmas, it was over the river and through the woods to Grandmother's house we go. Just like the song says. The smell of Lutefisk and Lefsa filled the air, mmm, mmm, good. For you non-Norwegian readers, please replace the last line with turkey and gravy or whatever your favorite holiday meal might have been. We never seemed to stay home for the big meals in those days, we were always heading to grandpa and grandma's house. Aunts, uncles and cousins were all there. What a festive time!

Well, I live in grandpa's house now. No, it's not the same house but it is still grandpa's house. There is a different grandma doing the cooking, there are different grandchildren, and the menu, well, let's just say is not quite the same. We usually can't meet on the actual holidays themselves because everyone can't make it at the same time. So, we check schedules and re-check schedules until we finally have a date. I anxiously wait for the big day just to have all of children and grandchildren together at the same time. Why does the holiday seem to be less festive at grandpa and grandma's house than it used to?

I think I have an answer...traditions. At my grandparent's house I hated Lutefisk as a young child, but all of the elders loved it. If you respected your elders you would try it just so that you would be accepted as a grown-up in their eyes. I know that it really had nothing to do with being grown up, but it did have a lot to do with keeping alive a family tradition. Before we were allowed to eat, we would all sit down together and say a table prayer. To me the meaning is spiritual, but to the youngest in the family, it was part of the tradition. Nowadays, we don't exchange gifts, except for the little ones, we don't meet on the holiday, and half of the bunch is done eating before the other half has even gotten a plate. I need a tradition!

I would like to thank my sister for her wisdom and caring. Her family goes together and makes a group donation to the needy or a charity. They do it every year. So, this year I am going to start some new traditions.

1. I am going to invite everyone to make something special for grandpa and grandma's tree. Something that means something special to them and we will make it a tradition by doing it every year.
2. I will ask all of my children to join grandma and me in making a donation of time or money to good cause so that the grandchildren will remember our efforts as their family tradition.
3. I will find out what would be everyone's favorite menu choice, no matter what it is, and make a big deal out of it every year as a tradition.

4. Last, but definitely not least, before anyone picks up a plate to eat... we will give thanks. Why? Well, let's just hope it is an old and still recognized family tradition.

May you all have a happy and Festive Holiday, from all of us at Wisconsin Dairy Farmers .com.