



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

Foolish. Before I elaborate on this word, I want you to know that my earliest farming experiences were very primitive. I think when I first started to drive tractor on my grandparents farm I was ten or twelve. We started by driving the tractor in low gear around the hay field while my grandpa would walk along picking up small round bales of hay with a hay hook and throwing them up onto a homemade two wheel trailer. We would then graduate to raking hay. At this early age, virtually every piece of equipment that was on the farm was designed as horse drawn and then converted to tractor pull. Most of that machinery now is either used by the Amish or has been converted to what we now call lawn art.

Eventually when I was in my early teens, we started to get equipment that was hydraulic and or PTO driven. Grandpa had just purchased a Ford-Ferguson tractor with a manure loader. The small tractor did not have live hydraulics, so if you wanted to lift the arms on the loader the clutch had to be released. This means you had to be moving forward, back ward, or you needed to be standing still with the transmission in neutral and the clutch out.

Anyway, the first time we went to take the loader off, Grandpa and I pulled it into our little lean-to type machine shed and started disassembling the loader to get it off. Neither grandpa nor I had any experience whatsoever with hydraulic hoses and how they worked. We both could see that we were supposed to push back the outer collar and then simply pull back the hose and presto, it should be unhooked. Both Grandpa and I were sitting on the ground next to the small tractor and pushing and pulling and pushing and pulling, but nothing. That hose was stuck big time.

Well again, I stepped up to the plate and felt the need to prove my manliness. I braced my feet up against the loader arm, clenched both hands tightly around the hose, and gave it everything I had. All of a sudden, BOOM! Grandpa and I fell backward into the dirt not really knowing what had just happened. Apparently, we had failed to release the pressure on the hose by not setting the loader completely on the ground when we shut the tractor off.

As we started to regain our composure and pick ourselves up from the dirt, we looked at each other and began to laugh out loud almost uncontrollably. Grandpa's hat had fallen off and his white hair and face were covered with hydraulic oil. Not only was he covered, but so was I from head to toe. As the laughter died down, he graciously pulled out his blue handkerchief and offered it to me to wipe my face.

Did we feel foolish? You bet, but what a memory. As I tell you this story, I find myself laughing out loud. However, the most foolish thing I could have done would have been to keep this story to myself.

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