



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

Fashion. Here's a word you wouldn't think had anything to do with farming. Fashion seems to be everywhere. My children have had limited farming exposure. Still, they would like to make others believe that they are experienced farm hands when they put on their cap and Carhartt jacket and put a pinch of chew in their mouths. Yes, a couple of them tried it and as far as dad knows they have kicked the habit. In my day, when I was in my late teens, the fashion was to see how brown you could get your skin during those hot summer days so that at night it would contrast well with that white strapped undershirt and a pair of highly faded jeans.

My grandpa was concerned about fashion, too. No, he didn't buy brand name clothes or anything like that, but he worried about the way he looked. When he had to go to town for groceries or something, he never wore his barn clothes. Even when he was in a hurry he would run to the house and put on a clean pair of overalls before he left. When he came to a family event or went to church, it was important for him to look his best. He always wore a shirt and tie to church. Clearly his dressing habits were not driven by his knowledge of fashion, but by his respect for others and his surroundings.

Fashion is probably not the best word for this story, but it was the closest F word that I could think of. Fashion, I think, is driven by what others think about you, instead of what you think about yourself. Pride and self esteem should drive you to look your best when you are in the midst of others. I own my own business and there are many days I like to be comfortable for me. That doesn't mean that I should wear the same clothes that I wore last night in the garden to work or the swimming suit that I wore to the beach on Saturday. Customers that come to my place of business to meet me trust that I will do a professional job for them. I might lose their confidence in me or their respect for me if I don't respect myself enough to look professional.

If a teacher at the local high school starts to wear pants that hang down so you can see his underwear to be part of the latest fashion, it will be hard for students to take what he says seriously. I am sure that the teacher will be very well liked by the students but what then is being taught about respect? We should all act like positive role models.

I often wear good jeans to church with a nice shirt or sweater. Once I went in my deer hunting clothes and sat in the far back so as not to distract anyone. I think I needed a little help finding a buck that year. It seems to be popular now for some ministers to actually dress down for church. I am not too sure how to take that either. If dressing down is a part of fashion for religion, then imagine how it would look to see a group of Nuns show up for service in the outfits you saw on the runway show on TV. I am not Catholic, but the attire usually worn by the clergy seems to draw out the utmost of respect from me.

Consider this: whether you are a farmer, a teacher, an artist, or whatever you are, respect yourself. Respect the way you dress, the way you look, the way you act, and the way you think and others will respect you for your "Good Old Fashioned" Fashion.

Roddy Dull