-Portrait of farm wives-

Adjusting to farm life was tough

By MAGGIE HANNAH

Herald staff writer While there are a whole group of people around who believe that city women have no trouble adjusting to rural living a R.R.1, Georgetown farmer's wife says they are all wrong.

Mary Lou Olah is working on a degree from the University of Guelph with a sociology major and has done a consider-

able amount of research on the problems city women encounter in trying to become a part of the rural community,

Her own experiences are added to ber research since she was raised in Boston, Massechusets, specialized in intensive care and cancer treatment nursing in the United States and became a part-time farmer's wife eight years ago when she and her

husband, George, bought a farm on Trafalgar Road opposite the Silvercreek, service station

RURAL WOMEN "It seemed to me when I looked at the research that a lot of women were sold on an a I's acre estate and wound up on a 50 acre working farm," Mrs. Olah says, "If they don't see themselves as rural women or want to be recognized as farmers' wives they're going to have a bad go of it."

"If they learn to do some chores and are willing to laugh at their mistakes they'll be accepted in four or five vears."

It isn't just a matter of difference in lifestyles, she says, it's a difference in philosophy all down the line. Women whose background is old Ontario and who are involved in the church will at least be accepted while those of immigrant background will have a very tough time integrating.

Women who drive their children to sports events, cubs and scouts and similar off-thefarm entertainments won't be well accepted in the farm community but they will make new friends and find a reference group through these activities.

Mrs. Olah says she and her husband didn't fit well into either the old or the new rural community. They weren't out to impress anyone with all the great things they had either in their home or on their farm. Their machinery is second hand and requires a lot of pampering and babying to keep it running but it gels the lab done.

"We own 14 acres but we farm almost 200 acres," she says. George will dicker with anyone who has a bit of land they aren't using and that's what we farm. It would be nice if it were all in one place but we weren't prepared to sell our souls to a bank to buy that sort of farm. Our equipment may be old but it's ours. Like, we have a tractor that's three companies before Massey-Ferguson so I don't know how old it is. It may be rotten and cranky and fuss but it's ours. According to the experts at the University of Guelph the way

OPEN ARMS

we farm is suicide."

Part time farmers traditionally have a terrible reputation in the farm community, Mrs. Olah says, since they tended to drive down prices, however the farm community accepted her husband almost with open arms. He was raised on a 50 acre truck form in Virginia so many of the traditions and customs he encountered were familiar and he could thus fit right in. In fact, some members of the community

may not be aware he holds a full time position with Prism Data Systems in Toronto as a senior systems analyst. He freely admits be works in order to be able to farm.

For Mrs. Olah things weren't quite so simple and she can now chuckle at some of her more glorious mistakes.

One of her first misadventures centres around a prowler who visited them during their first month on the farm. She was home alone with her three daughters who at that point would have been aged six, three and less than a month old, when she looked up and saw a man staring back through the kitchen window at

She hustled the two girls upstairs to lock themselves in with the baby and cautioned them not to open the door to anyone except herself or their father. She called the police and waited in total panic until they arrived. The man was waiting for them at the highway. He was apparently the worse from alcohol, thought he was at the service station and was looking for the rest room. The police escorted him across the road to his destination and came back to see Mrs. Olah,

WASHARMLESS "When he came back the officer wanted to know why I hadn't just opened the door and asked him what he wanted," she recalls. "I knew that if he didn't understand then there was no way I could explain it to him. Now that I've gotten used to the country and I've come to realize that most of the people I meet are harmless I could do what the officer suggested but it's taken time to accept that."

The Olahs keep Aberdeen Angus cattle and Mrs. Olah says that while they are excellent beasts for part-time farmers they have one bad flaw in their character. They are next of kin to antelope, she says tongue in cheek, and their herd cleared every fence on the property when they first mov-

Like many men who work away from the farm her husband felt that since she was at home she could look after the cattle and she got so sick of chasing them off the road that at one point she even strung fence to keep them in.

"The men at the garage

were marvellous," she says. "They'd come out and help me chase them back, they'd hold up traffic while Frounded them up, they even held fence posts in position so I could hammer

Delivering a call for the first time was another hilarious (in retrospect) experience. The cow was tied up because Mrs. Olah refused to enter the pen

them back in when the cattle

pushed them over."

unless that was done first. "I was a nurse but none of my patients bit me so I wasn't going to take any chances," she says. "If he wanted me to help George could lie her up first."

Her husband went to the house to call the veterinarian when the labour became acute and Mrs. Olah was left on her own to deal with it.

"Men seem to think you should understand how to deal with it," she says. "If you've had your own kids how different can it be. The answer is very."

LOGICAL IDEA

When the front legs appeared the logical idea seemed to be to grab hold and pull so she did and the calf arrived quite safely. She cleared the membranes from the mouth and nose but it still seemed to be having trouble breathing. Memories of maternity ward training suggested the infant might be full of mucous as human infants so often are and the remedy would be to hoist it by the heels and let it drain. She unfortunately forgot that an 80-pound calf and an eightpound human are a slightly different proposition when it comes to lifting them.

"I got it across my knee finally and sort of rocked it until it was breathing better but I was still upset at its colour. It wasn't turning pink like a baby should. Its muzzle was dark, almost black. Suddenly it hit me. Dummy! This isn't a human. Look and see what colour its mother's muzzle is. So I ran around to the front of the cow and peeled back her lip to look at her. That's when George returned and wanted to know what I was doing. He thought it was hilarious."

Older farm residents are the greatest resource Halton Hills has in Mrs. Olah's opinion. She refers to herself as being the typical city girl who sought solutions to all her problems in a book. A typical example would be her efforts to find a way of making butter with the cream from the cow they were milking. She tried shaking the cream in a jar and using her hand mixer but both methods proved too slow. The books suggested various types of churns but each had some fault that made it impractical for her purposes. Finally she happened to ask an older neighbour what she did with her cream and explained the problems she was having making butter. The woman's solution was to "throw it in the blender". So simple so practical And it takes about two minutes. But you don't find it in a

COUNTRY WIVES

Mrs. Olah says country wives are responsible for themselves and she has acquired numerous skills over the years including how to run a plumber's helper, how to bleed the water lines, how to guess from the funny noise the pump is making that it should be turned off even though she doesn't know what's wrong with it, and how to light the fireplace. Since the highway can become fully as treacherous as any gravel road during the winter she keeps extra food on hand in case of emergen-

"You can't send a kid to the corner store on a bike when you live out here," she says. "A lot of women send their husbands off to work with a list of things to pick up on the way



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home but I've always had a

Running down to the store in her "grubbles" when she was in the midst of scraping a wall for painting and her scraper broke was one of the fatal social errors Mrs. Olah remembers making

"Rural women always dress nicely to go downtown," she says, "but I didn't know that and when I ran into one of my neighbours on the street she was horrified to see me in town in my paint-splashed T-shirt and patched jeans."

CITY WOMEN City women have to get used to loneliness

"The men seem to think that they've spent the weekend with their families if they stayed home and worked. They may be plowing a field 10 miles away but if they were at home then they were with their wives and children and you shouldn't have been lonely."

Mrs. Olah advises women wishing to become part of the community to try getting involved with the old country crafts. If you let people know you're interested in learning a craft like weaving or quilting there's always someone around who'll teach you, she has found

The Olahs believe in giving

their children chores so that they are part of the farm. They don't believe in shipping and carting their girls to activities and have gone to a lot of trouble to provide activities for them at home such as getting them a pony, a piano and lots

of books. "A lot of the chores town kids are given are make work projects and kids know it," she; says. "But if they see their father out there slugging bales and they're there helping him then they know what a contri bution they're making to the family They don't have to be

told ' The Olahs searched for a farm that would meet their requirements for fully a year. before they found the one at Silverereek and Mrs. Olah estimates that they visited 200 places during that search.

FARM WIFE

Although her own early notions of what farming was all about came out of slory books she feels that any woman who says she isn't going to be the farmer's wife even though she lives on a farm is missing a lot.

"I thoroughly enjoy it," she says. "I drove the tractor last year for the first time and I've decided I don't like hills but I get a great deal of fun and tremendous enjoyment out of

Renovations proceed on caboose damaged in fire

Renovations will proceed on the caboose purchased by: McDonald's for children's parties, even though it was seriously damaged in a fire.

Jo Lister, public relations representative for McDonald's, c said they plan to "try and put it back together again." "It's going to take a lot longer, and a lot more money, but it will be getting fixed," she said,

Arsonists set fire to the caboose just two days after it had been placed on the McDonald's property.

Four youths have been arrested and charged in connection with the incident. They will appear in Provincial Court in Milton. August 19 to set a trial date.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

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APPOINTMENT TO LAND DIVISION COMMITTEE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF HALTON

TAKE NOTICE THAT Applications in writing may be submitted to the undersigned until 4.00 p.m. Friday. August 24th, 1979 from eligible person(s) who desire to have their names considered for appointment to:

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One (1) person to be appointed to till a vacant position with a term of office expiring on December 31st. 1979. Applicants must not be a member of Regional Council or employee of Regional Council and must not be a member of an Area Municipality.

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Farmer's wife carried a double load working in the house and the field too

but a woman's work is never done is one of those old sayings women used to tell their daughters when they complained about all the jobs they got stuck to do while their brothers loafed. Farm wives are among the women who could well find themselves facing long hours and heavy work loads in spite of the advances in bousehold appliances and farm machinery. To find out what sort of working hours farm, wives are facing The Herald talked to Pat Buchanan of RR1, Moffat whose husband operates a dairy form and to Mary Lou Olah, of R.R.1, Georgelown whose husband raises beef

cattle as a sideline. Mrs. Buchanan says she has tackled everything there is to do on the farm except seeding

and plowing. "A lot of farm wives hold down jobs outside," she says, . "so possibly they work harder than I do because they have to work at home too. I may be out discing till 9 or 10 p.m. in the spring but that's not becaue I have to be. It's because I like to see the work get done."

SMALLCHILDREN Mrs. Buchanan says she no longer works as hard as she

did when her children were

in haying season and do other heavy jobs too but they now have hired help which relieves her of that type of thing. She used to take the baby to the barn in the carriage and carry pails of milk for her husband to help with the milking. Now they have a pipeline milker.

Mary Lou Olah with daughters

Elizabeth, 14, , Jenny, 8, and Margaret, 11.

"When I had the three of them small I used to leave the oldest one in the house to look after the baby," she says. "We had an intercom hooked up so that I could stop every once in a while and listen to how things were going or ask her if everything was okay. We'd take our son to the barn with us because she couldn't look after both of them, and Sandy (Mr. Buchanan) gave him a chunk of wood and a hammer and nails. He'd pound away and by the end of a year the wood was a solid mass of metal."

When her children were old enough to start school she made their breakfast and got them ready to catch the bus before she went to the barn to help her husband finish the chores. He would come in for breakfast then and after she cleaned up the meal she'd go out and help with the cleaning up and bedding the cows. She didn't go to the barn during the summer and now that they

A man works from sun to sun small. She used to unload bales have hired help she doesn't do while when we were starting floor which are used for storchores very often any more.

Mrs. Buchanan wasn't a farmer's daughter although she lived in a house in the country from about the age of 10. She attended Milton High School and began working in a country store. She was working at a book store in Guelph when she got married.

BEEF CATTLE Mr. Buchanan was born in Pushneh Township and came to live with his aunt and uncle on the First Line of Nassegeweya Township at the age of 10 when his mother became seriously ill. They had beef cattle but Mrs. Buchanan says that she and her husband decided to change over to a dairy herd when they took over the farm since the irregular income from beef would make it hard

to raise a family. Mr. and Mrs. Buchanan met through Jumor Farmers.

"They were looking for ball players," she recalls, "an I was pretty good when I was

Not only did she play ball with the club she became their secretary for two or three years and took part in their drama productions and the debating team, Mr. Buchanan served as president for both the Acton Junior farmers and the Halton Jumor Farmers organization.

The Buchanans own 200 acres and rent another 100 acres. They now have 80 head of purebred registered holstems of which 35 to 40 are milking. Mrs. Buchanan also has a few beef cows and she and the children sell sweet corn at Milton market.

They no longer have the ducks, geese and hens which Mrs. Buchanan used to use to supplement their income when

they were getting established. "We used to have about 300 to 400 ducks and geese and 300 to 400 hens," she says. "I used to peddle eggs in Guelph and the racetrack (Mohawk Raceway) used to buy a lot of eggs from me. I had to lug the three kids with me then. The eggs put food on the table for quite a up."

Mrs. Buchanan says she loves the farm life and considers being part of the operation so that she knows what's going on and can discuss matters with her husband as being the important thing to her.

FARM ADVANTAGES "There are advantages and disadvantages to living on a farm," she says, "but the advantages for outweight the disadvantages. You may have to drive the kids to town to work or to a show but they aren't standing on a corner looking for trouble."

Mrs. Buchanan was on the executive of the Brookville Minor Softball league for five years and also coached a number of teams during that time. Since she had three children all on different teams the running in different directions to get everyone to his game took a bit of organizing. She now enjoys curling and was on the curling club board of directors for a year.

Having three youngsters so close logether in age ther daughters are 15 and 18 and her son is 16), she was totally tied down for six or seven years when they were small and never got involved with the women's organizations in the community. Now she enjoys her freedom too much to get tied up in clubs.

Mrs. Buchanan says she isn't as fussy a housekeeper as she once was. Her home is a three-storey cement block structure with nine rooms in use on the two main floors and a couple of rooms on the third "I don't do as much baking

as farmer's wives used to do either," she says. "They used to have pie and cake and fruit preserves for desert all the time. I don't think it's necessary so I have only one kind of desert. It doesn't hurt them to settle for fruit and ice cream once in a while if I don't get any baking done. Women used to cater to their men a lot more. My husband's the easiest man to feed. He even likes casseroles and a lot of farm men won't louch them."

FREEZES VEGETABLES Although she says she isn't much of a gardener Mrs. Buchanan says she freezes a lot of vegetables and makes pickles and relishes and jams.

"It's got to the point where I wonder if preserving is worth it, she says. "If you bought a case of canned goods on sale it would almost be cheaper than preserving it yourself by the time you consider all the work and energy costs involved."

Holidays were something farmers never took according to the way the old timers talked but the Buchanans don't feel that way.

"I remember hearing one farm wife saying one time that her husband hadn't missed a milking in over 20 years," she says, "I couldn't tell whether she was bragging or complain-

Although they didn't get off the farm during the first five or six years of their marriages they have taken holidays even since and took their first southern holiday last winter.



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From the Ottawa Bureau Of The Herald

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It was one of 138 unclassified contracts worth \$10,000 or more that were awarded by the department to Canadian companies during the week ended only 20. Total value of the contracts amounted to \$13,716,433.

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