

Nearing the end of Phase Three

It seems I've been hanging out in the barn quite a bit lately.

Now it has absolutely nothing to do with something I said or did in the house, or some special date I forgot.

And not even about last week's column.

Nope, I'm down there because I want to be. You see, the sheep are getting a bit rotund these days, and looking quite roly-poly, a state they get in just prior to having their lambs.

And as their lambing date looms in the not-too-distant future, I'm under the gun to get their pens set up for the blessed events.

Back in the fall, I made a few changes to the layout of the barn.

First thing, I created a new pen for 'Dodge' the ram, the place he resides when he's not spending time with the 'ladies'— sort of his own little bachelor pad.

By relocating him, I then had to reconstruct the other pens that were used last year as lambing pens— sort of little 'delivery rooms', putting things into a concept most women can relate to. (And no, we don't have little labour rooms for those who were wondering.)

So, with the ripple effect of all of those changes, I've been pretty busy.

Being one who likes to see things done properly, I've been spending my nights and weekends fabricating those pens, usually after I finish chores.

For the most part, I really enjoy building things in the barn. Every new pen is straight, square and plumb, with new hinges and latches, as well as being constructed of new lumber.

They look great, but the project has dragged on longer than anticipated.

It's like most 'guy projects' that we men start. We begin with a simple plan in mind, but the plan gets extended, or we think 'well I'm this close, I may as well do this part too' type of thing.

Next thing we know, we're rebuilding everything in sight.

The pens in the barn have been part of a multi-phase project, and I'm now closing in on finishing Phase Three.

By the end of the week, the stable

Ted Brown



will be ready to face a crop of newborn lambs.

And in spite of the fact that I've been tossing back a handful of Tylenol every evening when I finally call it a night, I must say I'm pleased with the result.

I'm pretty sure the sheep will also be pleased. They've been watching patiently, through the openings in nearby pens, talking amongst themselves as they discuss the most current decorating of their digs.

The barn at home has a great history. It was built in 1880 by my great-grandfather, and has always been owned by Browns.

As I pull off some old splintered boards, or remove a post that no longer serves a purpose, I'm reminded of that history.

I recall working on earlier projects with my dad, or remembering my grandfather feeding calves in one of the pens.

There are so many reminders of days gone by, when my forefathers worked at their chores, with similar goals and dreams as I have, for that same old building.

When I'm working alone, uninterrupted in the quiet of the night, I sense my forefathers' presence, as I carry on with the renovations.

As this phase in the barn nears completion, I often wonder how my ancestors would feel about the changes I've made.

But once I look at the newness of the pens, the straightness of the layout and the conveniences I've created, I can only think one thing.

I'm pretty sure they'd approve.

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