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COMMENT

The world's a better place when all is in order

By Ted Brown
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A Ted Bit

I'm writing this the morning after a very long and late Council meeting.

I'll be honest, I've been eyeing that particular meeting like some kid sitting in a classroom on the last day of school, just itching for the clock to strike for dismissal.

You see, with that meeting over, my schedule diminishes dramatically for the summer, allowing the work at home on the farm to take precedence.

The one thing I look forward to is tackling the barn.

Lately, I've been downright ashamed to have anyone step foot inside the stable—it's been in a state of complete disarray. There's hay in the passageways, there's baler twine stuffed into feed bags, and a truckload of 'stuff' cluttering the barn from one end to the other.

Now The Sidekick feels the same way about the house, and I agree, it needs a good cleaning up too—and we usually work together on that. But we've both been buried in time commitments and extra duties, so she is quite sympathetic when I say the barn needs to be tidied up—even when the house is a close second.

She 'gets' it—the barn is an extension of me, and when it is in order, I feel like I'm in order (but we all know I'm really not...)

The stable is where I start my day, as I open the door at 7 a.m.

It's the place Hamish, the Border Collie, bounds out to greet me, stretching, yawning, and circling me with his tail wagging, just because it's 7 a.m. and time to 'get to work!'

It's that time the barn erupts into a chorus of bleating, as the little sheep demand feed, and the older ones demand to be turned outside to get at the hay in their feeders.

Early morning is a bit chaotic—for the first 15 minutes.

But once all are fed, a sense of quiet normalcy descends upon the barn, and Tuesday,

I surveyed the state of the stable.

And I then took action.

The barn used to house a dairy herd, and as all milk producers know, it was (and still is) imperative that a milking stable be impeccable. If the milk inspector happened to make an impromptu visit, and found the barn was not up to snuff—well, big 'do-do' could descend from a dizzy height.

So having a clean, tidy barn has always been a priority for me. It's just the way it has to be.

Even when it went through a vacant spell years ago, I'd still sweep the stables from time to time, just to make me feel like things were in order.

When the sheep were introduced, once again that 'clean barn' priority was resurrected.

Like many hurdles we encounter (and procrastinate about) in life, most things really aren't as intimidating as we think—it's just a manner of getting started.

Tuesday morning I felt free as a bird—I fed the animals, I petted Hamish, scratched affectionately behind the ears of the two old rams, Angus and McDuff, and then grabbed the stable broom and swept the place from one end to the other.

The transformation was dramatic. It's been a few weeks—okay, more likely a few months, since I've dove into that fray and cleaned, cleaned and cleaned.

But man it felt good!

One window in the stable is at a perfect height to lean your elbows on, affording a great view of the marshland.

As I take a moment of meditation at that window most mornings, I survey the world around me, and I'm always reminded of one thing.

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