

Episode 4 – Who’s Got Your Back?

Partnerships are crucial on the farm, it being a place of much upheaval and unexpected emergencies on practically a daily basis. You really want to know that someone has your back, that if you don’t return for dinner, someone back at the farmhouse cares enough to come looking....

“I’m going out to check on the lambs.” I advised my husband as I jammed the toque down over my ears. The clock showed the weary hour of 11 p.m. on a January night, the temperature dropping well below freezing. “I won’t be long.” I mumbled over my shoulder as I stomped out.

The sheep were all quiet, chewing their cud and gazing wisely into the distance. Next stop was the goat barn and my husband had just repaired the two latches to make them failsafe. Goats are forever escaping and with these new latches, the door would be impossible for goats to open. Perfect!

As I stepped inside, I could see a newly born kid lying unnaturally still in front of a doe who was obviously in pain and struggling with a second birth. With no time to waste, I ripped off my gloves and knelt over the rapidly cooling newborn. Quickly, I cleared mouth mucous and then massaged the small limp body with a soft ball of hay. “Come on, little one, take a breath.” I pleaded and a little cough reassured me this one would make it. Now I turned my attention to the young doe, who was letting out howls of pain and fear. “Shhh now girl, it’s alright, you’re going to be fine.” I spoke soothingly and stroked her neck. Here was the second one coming alright, but the little hooves were pointing the wrong way – a backwards entrance into the world was causing trouble for this new mum. “Oh why didn’t I bring my sterile gloves?” I groaned to myself, as I realized this one needed a bit of help to get the hips through the birth canal. But with some gentle manipulation, out popped a very big twin.

I headed to the barn door, going to get towels and disinfectant, but the door wouldn’t open! Not one inch! I was dumfounded, and looked around in confusion. The door was locked from the outside that was clear, but how? Oh no, Molly, the Goat Queen, was not in the barn! She had nudged the door open, and out into the night while my back was turned. No doubt feeling the sting of the freezing cold, she had been trying to get back inside and had jumped up, closing those failsafe latches with her hooves! I was imprisoned in the goat house!

Nobody would hear me yelling, so I attempted a mind meld with my husband. I felt sure he would realize very soon that I hadn’t come back in, but by 2 a.m., I was cold, grumpy and fed up with goat bonding. Memories of action shows tickled my brain as I remembered impressive scenes of doors being ripped off their hinges by dudes with strong shoulders. I stood up and stretched my frozen muscles like Rocky before the big fight, realizing with cold determination what I had to do. I jumped full force at the door, but nothing budged except the bones in my shoulder. Aaargh! I’d had enough! Before I could hesitate, I put my head down, let out a bloodcurdling yell and ran straight through that door without stopping, destroying those two failsafe latches and out into the freedom of the night.

Loud, carefree snores greeted my slack jawed, glazed look of disbelief as I staggered into the house. Yep, on the farm you really want to know that someone has your back.....

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