



Sue Weaver Tells of Spring on the Farm

Sue Weaver, a Hobby Farms contributing editor, recounts lessons learned during the mostly magical spring births on her farm.

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Sue Weaver takes a break from the spring babies, leaning on Isis, a black standard donkey jenny--and a friendly farm pet.

I love spring! Spring is a magical time on the farm. Long hours of pouring over pedigrees and plotting hypothetical matings, effort spent hauling those special mares, cows, does and ewes to their perfect mates pay off—or not—as a new crop of winsome babies hit the ground.

Sometimes the magic works, sometimes it doesn't.

Weeks of interrupted sleep with one ear awake to the barn cam's murmurs; groggy nocturnal trips to see that all is well; long nights spent curled in a sleeping bag in the mare's stall or the aisle by the sheep—they fade to nothing when that long-legged future champion nickers for the first time or the brawny twin lambs you dreamed of stand and nurse their proud but exhausted mom.

And when the magic isn't there? When the skittery young ewe rejects her lambs or the doe dies of birthing complications or when the long-awaited future Paint Horse champion is plain unsullied brown? You dry your tears, scoop up the rejected lambs or motherless kids and take them to the house to bottle raise; the mare will foal a champion next year.

Who can deny that the exhilarating and terrifying flush of springtime births isn't what every small farmer lives for?

In the end, the nights of magic invariably cancel out the tears and disappointments. And on the farm, there is always another time.

~ Sue