

Easy cooking for busy days

TODAY'S cooks are always pressed for time. But now, with the convenience of a slow cooker, you can treat your family to delicious homemade lasagna without spending hours in the kitchen.

This hearty lasagna features the goodness of cheese and fresh vegetables. Assemble the ingredients in your slow cooker in the morning, and it will be nearly ready for supper when you walk in the door at night. Simply let it rest for 20 minutes before cutting into wedges.

Slow Cooker Fresh Veggie Lasagna

- 1½ cups mozzarella cheese, shredded
 - ½ cup part-skim ricotta cheese
 - ⅓ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
 - 1 egg, lightly beaten
 - 1 teaspoon dried oregano
 - ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
 - 1 cup low-sodium marinara sauce (plus additional for serving)
 - 1 medium zucchini, diced
 - 4 no-boil lasagna noodles
 - 1 bag baby spinach
 - 1 cup thinly sliced mushrooms
- Fresh basil leaves (optional)

Spray slow cooker with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.

In small bowl, mix together mozzarella, ricotta, Parmesan, egg, oregano and garlic powder.



PHOTO COURTESY OF MIDWEST DAIRY ASSOCIATION

Spread 2 tablespoons of pasta sauce in bottom of pot. Sprinkle half of zucchini over sauce and top with a third of cheese mixture. Break two noodles into pieces to cover cheese. Spread 2 tablespoons of sauce, and then layer half of the spinach and half of the mushrooms. Repeat layering, ending with cheese and remaining sauce. Firmly press ingredients into pot.

Cover and cook over low heat for four to five hours. Allow lasagna to rest 20 minutes before cutting into wedges to serve.

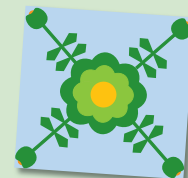
Spoon a little extra sauce over each serving and top with a basil leaf, if desired. Serves six.

■ For more dairy recipes, visit www.midwestdairy.com.

Quilts From the Past

Rose Cross Quilt

THIS applique quilt is a good example of a popular branch of quilting, and this Rose Cross pattern, dating back to 1930 in the *Kansas City Star*, is a great one to use for "retro" quilting.



The pattern was labeled Rose Cross, but the original copy concerning the pattern referred to it as Rose Crown — probably a glitch between the writer and the typesetter.

For your 12-inch block pattern, send a \$3 check or money order, made out to Farm Progress, to: Rose Cross #191, 6200 Aurora Ave. 609E, Urbandale, IA 50322.

Order a Quilts From the Past catalog, and get 150-plus illustrations of historic patterns and ordering information for quilts we've featured on these pages since 1993. Send \$8 (for each catalog) check or money order, made out to Farm Progress, to: Quilt Catalog, 6200 Aurora Ave. 609E, Urbandale, IA 50322.

Editor's note: Our thanks to Karen Bogadi, Spencer, Iowa, for her work in redrafting these historic patterns for our use in these pages.

Curiosity killed the cat, but how did the buzzards find it?

FROM time to time I find myself pondering the great mysteries of life. I have decided to open myself to feedback from my readers to help in some recent observations.

On a trip to see my parents in Baldwin County, Ala., I came upon a flock of buzzards feeding on a skunk in the road. Immediately my brain was running in circles, pondering a few points of curiosity. First, have automobiles led to obesity in buzzards? You have to admit, cars probably create more roadkill than horse-drawn wagons. Are buzzards fatter than they were in the Wild Wild West?



My second point of curiosity: How do buzzards find their food? Do they fly the highways looking with the eye of a hawk, or is it a keen sense of smell? I have to say, if it is smell, I'm not sure how in the world they could possibly stand to eat a dead skunk.

Another thing, I have seen a lot of buzzards dining in the middle of the asphalt and yet I cannot remember a time seeing a buzzard that had been hit by a car. Must be the ultimate irony to be too slow to catch a live squirrel but fast enough to dodge a car bearing down on you at 70 miles an hour!

On another recent occasion I was making a day trip to Washington, D.C., with that Mr. Don from the Peanut Commission. We hit the road at 4:30 a.m. and stopped about 30 minutes later at a truck stop for coffee. I observed a couple of things over which I have held

ponderance. Does everybody in all truck stops at 5 in the morning have a tattoo? If so, do they have a place in the back room of the truck stop where you can buy one? To some small extent I felt like I was in one of those movies where the nuclear fallout had finally subsided and you were left with some hard-core survivalists battling for superiority. I needed a tattoo.

Another point over which I have wondered recently: How is it that we have cable TV, 100 channels, and nothing good to watch? At my lake house I have an antenna, and since the digital switch I can't seem to find anything good to watch there, either. Whether you have four channels or 100, it seems the outcome is the same: There's not much on to watch.

Now LP has her regular programs. She watches shows about crime and drama. She watches movies about forbidden romance. There are even programs where folks talk to ghosts and there are skeletons in the closet. Hmm, come to think of it, I get about the same thing when I sit down and watch the evening news!

Oh well, as they say, curiosity killed the cat (and I imagine the buzzards ate him). I'm hoping, however, that some of our readers with great insight will share the answers to these mysteries of life. I might be a safer motorist when I stop pondering and start driving.

Born in U.C.L.A. (the Upper Corner of Lower Alabama), Player now lives and loves in Tifton, Ga.



PULL UP A PLOW: Kerry Hancock of Laurel Hill, Fla., and his mule, Lowretta, attended a Farm and Plow Day sponsored by the Southern States Mule and Donkey Association this spring in Opp, Ala. The SSMDA is sponsoring a Heritage Festival at the same site on Oct. 10 at 10 a.m., with old-fashioned plowing and log skidding demonstrations; a mule, donkey and draft horse show; bluegrass bands, and lots of local vendors and farmers selling their food and wares. Come on out and join them on the 331 Bypass. Visit www.wildmule.com, or call 850-240-5876 or 334-222-3062 for more details.