

## Can You Really Live Without Cornbread



by  
Pettus Read

As today's economy becomes a major factor in how all of us plan for tomorrow, I just wonder if any of you have started looking at things you use on a daily basis that you just can't live without. Most of us have cut back on some things that we consider a luxury, but I don't know if I have really considered cutting out something that I consider a necessity.

Each day I see reports on folks cutting back and it may come to a time when the term "necessity" will catch us all having to give up some of our modern day conveniences.

To find out how people felt about what they need and consider necessities in this country during these times, the Pew Research Center out of Washington, D.C. conducted a survey among 1,003 adults in April by phone.

A car was the number one need for 88 percent of the group, which is right in there with my thoughts, but the number two need was a landline phone and number three was a clothes dryer. I thought more Americans, especially the younger generation, were moving to cell

phones only, but in 2009 the landline phone is still holding its own by this survey. However, I never would have thought a clothes dryer would rate up

there as high as number three. With everyone turning to a more green environment, I thought many would be going solar, you know, hanging the wash out on the line in the sunshine. But, it seems there are some things folks are just not ready to give up.

During my growing-up years, my mother dried our clothes the all-natural way and it never affected me, other than a time or two of riding my bike under the clothesline and surviving a sudden stop. The smell of fresh sheets right off the line and stiff blue jeans that took a full day's wear to get

them bendable once again is something that you need to experience.

I grew up in the day before dryer sheets; during the time of clothes freezing on a clothesline in the winter and your unmentionables waving in the summer breeze for everyone to see. On second thought, maybe a clothes dryer is important.

The survey went on to list the order of things Americans consider as necessities they need in today's world with home air conditioning being fourth on the list, a TV set as fifth, the home computer as sixth, a cell phone as seventh, a microwave as eighth, high speed internet comes in ninth, and cable or satellite TV hookup rounds out tenth place.

Not until the 1980s did some of the items on the list even exist for many of us and over half of them were not even heard of until the 90s. Today, they are a ne-

cessity and it causes me to wonder just how spoiled we Americans really are.

Now don't get me wrong, I do like my air conditioning, Andy Griffith on satellite and getting some great offers for upside down tomato growers through e-mail, but are they things we just can't live without?

I have also done a survey with some of my southern country farm friends to find out what we cannot live without if we had a choice between having and not having. Here's our list:

- A pickup truck for hauling our dog around the farm and allowing him to look over the side while driving on the highway so his ears and lips will blow in the wind.

- Cornbread muffins at Cracker Barrel. (This one is mine!)

- Duct tape strong enough to stay on a NASCAR racecar at top speed or to keep the mirror on my pickup

truck after getting too close to the gate post at the farm trying to dodge that Angus heifer standing on the cattle guard.

- Vise-Grip jaw locking pliers. (Can't ever have enough of these, especially after you plant a few during planting season.)

- Free caps from the farm supply stores and chemical companies.

- A radio on our tractor tuned to a country station for those long days and nights of planting and harvesting in the fields.

- A good dog to ride in our pickup truck.

- A good banker to finance the pickup truck.

These are just a few of the things many of us need during tough times on the farm. But, you know, tough times are a usual thing if you farm for a living and this cutting back stuff is nothing new for the rural population. Country living has as its foundation survival skills

for hard economic times developed over years of practice.

We have learned over the years that getting-by is a necessity on the farm and luxuries are the cream from the over abundance of some successes that come around every now and then.

I'm still glad that landline phones are considered a necessity.

-Pettus L. Read is editor of the Tennessee Farm Bureau News and Director of Communications for the Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation. He may be contacted by e-mail at:

[pread@tbf.com](mailto:pread@tbf.com)

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