

Farming Fairy Tale

One HF reader escapes farm life at a young age only to find that hobby farming is her true fairy tale.

By Margaret Riley

I hated farming. I didn't want farming to be a part of my life once I finally moved away. I saw how hard my father worked, sun up to sundown and beyond. I saw my mother do without things in the house while new items were purchased for the farm.

It wasn't until I was out on my own and owned my own business that I realized my father had a business. It was his living. It was what he loved. And he was very intelligent in all that he did in farming. I left home to get married at age 18 and vowed I'd never ever be involved in farming again.

Just recently, I married my high-school sweetheart (we dated 40 years ago), and what a change in life I have made. I moved from Indiana to Florida, where he lives.

But with this marriage came a hobby farmer. Yes, I am back into farming but not on the scale that my father had. My hubby's grandparents farmed, so we both know the work involved in raising animals and working any acreage.

It's different now than growing up working on a farm. Every day, we enjoy what our place has to offer us. Every day, we look forward to seeing what's in store for us. I now see why my father enjoyed his farming. Being outside on a gorgeous day beats being behind a computer board of letters and numbers.

We have 3 acres, and that keeps us busy. I can't imagine having any more than that.

My hubby, Sherman, had pygmy goats and chickens before we got married. I have learned that the goats are interesting creatures. They are very entertaining as we sit out on our garden deck during lunchtime and watch the goats play. They earn their keep by keeping the pasture area clean and well 'mowed.' Those goats will eat out of our hands and take our hearts away when they present us with new babies.

Who ever said that roosters crow when the sun comes up? I beg to differ. Our roosters start crowing at 3 a.m. I'm sure any of our overnight guests will vouch for that, as their window is by the chicken coop.

The chickens earn their keep by giving us eggs. I am so thankful that my parents had chickens and I know the ins and outs of egg-bearing creatures. But I never knew how roosters strut around and protect their lady hens! These chickens eat table scraps, so I soon found out that a garbage disposal in my kitchen is obsolete.

Gardening is not anything new to me. I have had a garden most of my adult life. It's great exercise and is my therapy. I can think and dream while weeding, along with enjoying the sounds of nature. I do weed patrol almost every day.

And since I've moved to Florida, I'm learning that gardening is almost a year-round thing. I've had to learn when to plant what and what grows best here.

On top of learning about a garden, I've had to be educated on perennials, annuals and shrubs. Little by little, we are landscaping around our home to give some beauty to the Florida surroundings.

Even though we don't have lots of acreage, we have goats that keep part of our land clean while entertaining us, chickens that give us eggs and dispose of our table scraps, and two dogs that keep the place clear of unwanted creatures.

Along with the domestic animals, we are always amazed at the wildlife that appear from time to time, such as deer, turkeys, turtles, bald eagles, hawks and many migratory creatures.

I've lived in the city and in a rural area, but I enjoy this place the most. Sherman and I think how lucky we are each day to enjoy nature and work at our tiny hobby farm. So never say never! You never know if you'll end up back in the same surroundings that you were raised in. They say you always return to where you started. 'Tis true with me!

Farming...fairy tale...both sound like heaven to us!

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