



Longhorn Dreams

From the first time I set eyes on the magnificent Texas Longhorn cow, I knew I had to have one. Read more about the adventures at Cottonwood Farm.

Texas Longhorns at Cottonwood Farm enjoying some pasture time.

The 1896 German farmhouse at Cottonwood Farm in all its summer glory. By Nisha Coker

There are some dreams that just never seem to pan out; luckily, mine took only eight years. From the first time I set eyes on the magnificent Texas Longhorn cow, I knew I had to have one.

I was a single mom at the time, raising my 2-year-old son and looking for a weekend hobby for the two of us to share.

I didn't own any land and I didn't know a thing about cows, but I was awestruck and knew that someday, somehow I would own one of these magnificent animals.

That Longhorn weekend hobby never took off, as soon afterward I was even more awestruck with a handsome man I met at work.

We were married three months later. In our eight years of marriage, we've blended three kids, delivered two more and lived a hurried life in the suburbs of Houston.

In 2004, we decided to slow down, buy some land and let our five boys "be boys" at Cottonwood Farm in Brenham, Texas, a small town about an hour outside of Houston.

The farm includes an old German farmhouse built in 1896. We're the first owners to occupy it on a full-time basis since the 1970s.

We wouldn't trade it for anything being built today; the original, creaky floors and single-pane windows, the tilt of the post-and-beam house depending on rainfall amount—it has withstood the worst and best over the past 110-plus years.

Little did I know that within the first year of settling into our newfound country life, my husband would remember my Longhorn dream from years back—most likely a short conversation during our brief courtship—and he was busy researching where to buy a Longhorn calf of our own.

The very first Christmas he purchased not one, but two heifers as my Christmas present! That's the thing about Longhorns—they're contagious! We have since extended our herd and are expecting five calves this summer and fall.

Cottonwood Farm is unique in the fact that we've been a haven for animals that have had some sort of tragedy in their lives. We adopted miniature donkeys whose home had been flooded by Hurricane Rita and A set of llamas from a farm whose horses didn't want to share space with them. Of course we have the familial farm cat and her seven babies as rodent deterrents. They find their way inside from time to time to share the house with two spoiled, indoor cats who were also strays at one time.

Since moving to Cottonwood Farm, we've learned to slow down. We don't take as many things for granted as we used to. A cookout over a smoldering campfire is far more satisfying than the movies or shopping that used to occupy our weekend time. My sons have discovered more intriguing bugs than they ever knew existed. They've dug up discarded items from long ago, such as square nailheads and rusty belt buckles. They know how hard, yet satisfying, planting a garden is and how good a farm-fresh egg tastes. We have seen the night stars as never before—flung across the giant Texas sky like sprinkles on a cupcake.

We don't miss the glaring streetlights of a neighborhood, but take comfort in the porch light of the nearest neighbor over the adjoining hill. We are living the life!

The Author, Nisha Coker will receive six 1-pound containers of QuikStrike Scatter Bait, Starbar's insect management



solution using the industry's most innovative technology (www.starbarproducts.com).

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