

Happy National Ag Day

I consider myself blessed to have been born and raised in a Midwest, agriculture family. My parents had me on a horse at an early age, gathering cattle and helping on the ranch. I'll be the first to admit, I'm not horse person. Honestly I don't really like horses at all, but they were utilized heavily on our ranch growing up. Much easier to gather some of the northeast Kansas pastures on a horse than a four-wheeler or side by side.

I had the opportunity to partake in 4-H growing up as well. Showing cattle was one of my favorite activities. I loved halter breaking calves, spending time at our county fair, and loving on my big old steers. Cattle have always been my favorite animal. There's just something about a fresh baby calf just getting up, learning to walk; or a cow trotting off the trailer to a new pasture for the spring that makes my soul so happy. I don't consider myself a "cowgirl." Like I said before, I don't enjoy riding horses or any rodeo type event for that matter; I simply love my cows.

I had a 4-H steer one year that was so tame, I could literally take naps on or by him; and I did. Cattle taught me responsibility, hard work and patience. Sorting cattle with my dad was always an experience. He was really good at giving directions sometimes (insert sarcasm here - Dad, if you're reading this I hope you're getting a good chuckle).

I also always enjoyed the genetics side of the cattle business. There is a lot of science behind breeding cattle, and I learned from some of the best. My mom and dad have owned and operated a purebred cattle ranch in northeast Kansas for over 35 years. One of my favorite things to do growing up was look through the bull inventory books and talk EPD's (expected progeny differences) with my dad. I've always been a huge science nerd, and these discussions fueled my fire. When I was student teaching at Junction City High School, I actually had my class go through a sire selection for their "cow herd." Gosh that was so much fun.

Fast forward from growing up on a ranch to about six years ago When I took the teaching job in Larned, I met this cute farmer named Ty. His family has run cattle and farmed for many years. Just to clarify, there is a big difference between farming and ranching. Ranching normally involves cattle or livestock of some sort. Farming involves tractors and row crops such as corn, beans and milo. Obviously the two different sectors of agriculture overlap in some ways but I think my husband would classify himself as more of a farmer.

I've learned a lot about farming since I met Ty. (I did know SOME stuff about farming, because my brother farms in conjunction with my parents' ranch, and both of my grandpas farmed). I had never been around farming that involved irrigation before I met Ty. I remember one time, when we were driving around before we were married, I asked Ty if farmers had to take their irrigation pivots down and put them in the shed for the winter. I think he thought I was crazy. (They do not take down the pivots in the winter time, in case you were wondering).

One big change that I hadn't experienced before living in western Kansas was wheat harvest. It was definitely an eye-opening experience for me. Cooking for a harvest crew has quickly become one of my favorite parts of being a farm wife, though. I'm not as involved in the day to day of my husband's family's operation - right now I'm just soaking in being a stay at home mom and doing what I can, when it's needed.

I still have a strong passion for agriculture. I think my love for all things agriculture will always hold a special place in my heart ☺ So, to all the farmers and ranchers out there - thank you from a Kansas farm wife. We wouldn't be able to feed the world without all farmers and ranchers.

Happy National Ag Day! If you ate today, thank a farmer.

AND

TODDLERS