

# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## When Do You Play?

Ranchers and farmers are the hardest working folks I have ever met. If it is daylight that means there are things to be accomplished outside. Thus summer means long days.

I must admit I have always looked forward to wintertime when darkness comes earlier just because it meant more relaxing time with my honey to watch Hallmark movies and play games. Of course in recent years I have been spending more time by my husband's side indoors and outdoors. I have come to value and appreciate all the time we spend together including working cattle and hay hauling.

While I certainly appreciate my husband's work ethic, I do believe there should be more to life than laboring fast and furiously. I have often asked him, "Just because it's still daylight, does that mean you must or should always toil till dark?" He usually responds in the summer months that it is nice to get some tasks done after the hot Texas sun goes down, and I do understand that.

Anyone who knows me would tell you that I am a go-all-in kind of gal with whatever endeavor I am focused, so I totally get the rancher work ethic, but anyone who knows me very well would also tell you I value time to play as much as I value responsibilities.

I have always believed in the importance of taking time off, giving yourself a retreat and going on vacation, but over the years I have come to believe it is equally important to include playtime and breaks into one's every day routines. If you're not sure what to do during a pause from being busy, you might ask yourself a question. What brings you joy, calm or peace?

I'm happy to report my hard-working rancher has learned to comply with his partner's need for play and pauses and now values them, too. This might be stopping by the city park to swing when on the way home from delivering hay, or it may be playing a round of Mexican Dominos that is continuously set up on our dining table these days, or knowing you



(Above) Annette Bridges enjoys a bit of sunset hay hauling. (Left) Annette and her husband take a break from the hard work for a bit of fun. (Photos courtesy Annette Bridges)




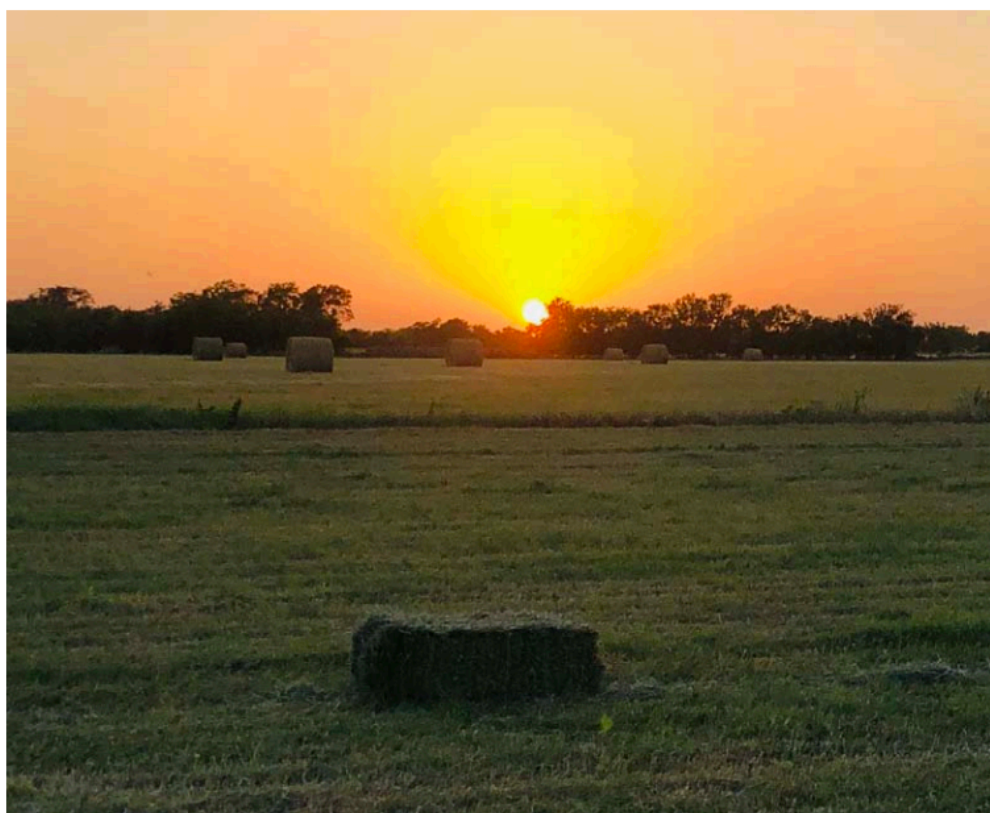
simply must stop picking up square bales out in the field to snap a photo of the most gorgeous sunset you have ever seen.

There was a time when my hubby thought he was too busy to stop. When he didn't notice the beauty surrounding him. When he was consumed with the need to rush to the next task demanding his immediate attention, or so he thought it required his immediate attention, but no more.

The words to one of his all-time favorite songs by the country music group Alabama resonates with him:

*"I'm in a hurry to get things done  
Oh I rush and rush until life's no fun  
All I really gotta do is live and die  
But I'm in a hurry and don't know why."*

These words now remind there is no reason to be in such a hurry, but there is cause to slow down and appreciate every precious moment of living, to enjoy being with the people you treasure, and to relish and love every moment. Indeed, life happens in the moment, and you don't want to miss anything truly priceless and memorable. So my friends, if you're feeling too busy maybe it's time to slow down, stop for a while and play. 



The sun sets behind the hay bales. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

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