

# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## When Herd Mentality Gets a Bad Rap

**M**ost of the time I'm all about not simply following the crowd. I'm a fan of thinking outside the box. I love creative folks who are always coming up with unique ideas and new ways of doing things. I'm especially tickled when someone comes up with a fresh idea that implements the smarter-not-harder philosophy.

Those folks that inspire me the most know themselves very well and stay true to their desires and passions even when that makes them different from the majority of popular opinion or fads, but are there times when having a herd mentality gets a bad rap?

Our cows certainly seem to believe so.

Is there more than one trail that leads to water? Perhaps, but why not simply follow the well-established path that has proven to be reliable in the past?

Why should you follow other cows making their way toward a gate that leads to a different pasture? History tells us that when others are moseying toward or waiting at a closed gate, it is very likely the gate will soon be opened and access to fresh grass can be reached.

Why should we pay attention when we see the tractor carrying round bales of hay?

That tractor has never let us down. If it's carrying round bales of hay, we can rest assured that it is bringing food for us to eat.

Should we get excited when we hear the engine roar of a Ranger and see our humans coming into our pasture? You betcha! We should gleefully run with gusto toward them and be ready to nibble up the magical cubes that seem to flow endlessly onto the ground.

Indeed, there are times when following the crowd can be good for you.

Learning to follow the herd and their mammas can be a steep curve for some new calves. Some mammas will hesitate to leave their babies to follow their sisters-on-the-move, but



Cows are social animals. They want to be with the rest of the herd. Their herd mentality is essential to their survival instincts. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

eventually even the best mammas expect their kiddos to get with the program and learn to follow and keep up with their moms.

Cows are social animals. They want to be with the rest of the herd. Their herd mentality is essential to their survival instincts. Experience has taught them that the herd knows best.

Of course, us humans have undoubtedly experienced both the good and the not-so-good outcome from following the crowd.

Our individual survival and success is rooted in the wisdom that recognizes and perceives when the majority knows or doesn't know what's best for us. Unlike cows, we need

to have autonomy with the freedom and ability to act in our own best interest.

There are times I'm super impressed when watching our herd do their collective thing. Recently I was awed as I observed our cows one by one create a long line along a fence during a thunderstorm. They all had their backs and booties facing the direction of the storm's strong winds. It was clear this was the best and smartest course of action to protect their heads.

I couldn't help but giggle and think I guess there are times, if you're a cow, when you should turn your back on Mother Nature. 🐮