

# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

There are many ways my husband and I partner on our cattle ranch, one of them being marking the rows as he puts out fertilizer in our hay fields. He used to position white jugs to mark rows, but these days he prefers my body as his marker to drive toward.

I wonder if I should be worried that he likes to drive straight toward me? Actually, I really think he enjoys working together in all the ways we can, and I love to feel needed and useful. Plus, I think I am easier to spot in the distance. He laughs when I say this, assuring me his eyesight is not that bad yet.

Before we begin, he decides how many paces are needed in between each row and has me pace off to see how my steps match up to his. Usually, this means my pacing requires a couple of additional big lunges. I have some suggestions for new rancher wives learning to help their husbands with marking pasture rows.

Dressing in light and bright clothing makes it easier for your partner to see you amongst the green grass. As he turns down a new row to head toward you, he needs to get the tractor straightened up to assure he is getting fertilizer spread out as evenly as possible. Stand in your position until you have just enough time to pace off the next row before the tractor drives where you were standing. Wait too long to move and you will feel fertilizer pellets hitting the backs of your legs.

Since having a melanoma excised off my arm earlier this year, I now only wear clothing that is UPF 50+ when I am marking hay fields, including my hat.

Fortunately, you can find some beautiful colors in this type of clothing and some sassy hats too. There is no reason for you to not look and feel gorgeous and safe while you work in the sunshine.

One of my best suggestions for a field marker is to wear your boots. As hard as we try it seems impossible to kill all of the fire ant beds. I prefer to wear my tall rubber boots. Of course, you still must watch where you step and where you are standing as you await the approach of the tractor.



"This is what marking rows looks like as my hubby puts out fertilizer! Yes...I'm the marker! As in my body," Annette Bridges shared with her social media followers.

My absolute must-not-do tip is do not take anything to drink with you. Any hay pasture is probably a wide-open space. If drinking water goes through you as fast as it does me, I think you understand the problem with this picture. Plus, I am pretty sure you, like me, would be a really long way from a bathroom.

The perk that comes to mind when I think about marking rows is it provides a new track for getting some exercise in. I have my usual walking path that is basically me bopping

around and around our rather big circle driveway. It gets old, but I know how many loops equal one mile. It is always nice to take in some new views while exercising. I do knee lifts and stretches while standing in position. I think this is called multi-tasking.

So, there you have it, another day in the life of this city girl gone country. Our first day of fertilizing this season is a wrap, and it is time to cross our fingers that the meteorologist forecast for rain this week actually happens. ☺