



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

The Ideal Work Wardrobe

Do you have your ideal work wardrobe?

As I threw on my favorite work dress when getting ready to drive my trusty red tractor and pull the hay wagon while my husband picked up square bales, I couldn't help but giggle. I wondered if there were other cattle ranching women who also wore work dresses.

My early childhood years were spent in Georgia – the state of my birth. I lived there until 1968 when my mamma and I made our journey to Texas. In those days, I didn't even own shorts or jeans. I had a dress for every occasion including play dresses, school dresses and of course, church dresses. My first memory of wearing jeans was when I was 12 years old. They were bell-bottom hip hugger blue jeans that cost five dollars. I bought them at the Army Navy Store.

But there was a time when I didn't wear work dresses to work in the hay field. One of my first dates with my husband in the summer of 1980 was when he asked if I wanted to help him haul hay. Of course, this city girl was totally clueless with what that entailed.

We had no conversation about what might be good attire to wear so I showed up in short shorts and a cute little tank top. It was August after all and a typical hot summer day. Plus it was a date with a young man I had recently met and I wanted to get his attention. I knew nothing about blowing hay shavings that stick to sweaty skin, or how jeans covering legs keep them from getting scratched up when unloading hay bales into the barn. My young man didn't mention that part of the date.

I also didn't own a pair of work gloves to protect my polished long fingernails. I didn't own work boots or even an old pair of tennis shoes that I wouldn't mind getting hay forever stuck in. This girl owned and wore flip flips.

Much has been learned through the 40-plus years I've been with my cattle rancher. There were many years when my working ensemble was an old pair of jeans and long sleeve work shirt. And yes, work boots and gloves.



At the end of the day, your work wardrobe should be about what works best for you. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

To be very honest with y'all, and I suspect at least some fellow senior women will understand my meaning, this season of my life doesn't tolerate Texas summer heat very well and I quite simply can't stand wearing jeans when I'm hot. So indeed, I'm back to the days of my youth when I have dresses for every occasion, including work dresses when hauling hay.

There are times when jeans and a long sleeve shirt are best - when it's not too steamy. I love it when it's cool enough outside to wear

my beloved red flannel shirt jacket. On most workdays in summer or winter you'll see me wearing some kind of hat or my hair in a messy bun.

At the end of the day, it's about what works best for you and what you prefer to wear when working around your ranch. My hubby certainly has his favorites as well. I'm always telling him we would have a lot more room in our closet and drawers if we got rid of all the things we never wear. One of these days maybe. (Wink wink.)