

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Merry Maui Cows



Annette Bridges is confident her Texas cows are as happy as the merry Maui cows, at least most of the time. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

I simply had to have my photograph taken with some merry Maui cows. I couldn't help but wonder if our Texas cows wished

they lived where the temperature was never too hot or cold, where they never had to deal with sleet, snow or hail, and where they al-

ways had luscious green grass to graze complete with a heavenly ocean view.

I was convinced these Maui

cows were happy cows and I returned home from our winter vacation wondering if our Texas cows were happy, too.



My husband assures me that our girls are jovial, pleasantly plump bovines. They are certainly well fed.

I was curious if there were ways to actually know for sure if cows are happy.

I read somewhere in all of my searching that one indication of happy cows is they will sprint around and jump into the air with excitement. I couldn't wait to share this bit of news with my husband.

When we drive our Ranger into the pasture to check our girls and give them some cubes, they will run, jump and moo as they greet us. My husband sometimes tells them to stop acting crazy, but now I know they are simply showing their joy and that delights my heart.

I began to consider other emotions and behaviors I've witnessed.

I've seen cows that I am certain are best friends. They tend to stick close to each other when grazing and even babysit for one another. They sweetly lick each other, too.

But it's always intriguing to me how quickly some seem to forget a fellow bovine.

For whatever reason, there may be a cow penned from the rest of the herd for a few days and when she returns some of the other cows treat her like an unwelcomed stranger and may even push her around. Of course, this doesn't last too long before they all go back to business as usual – eating!

Nothing is sadder to me than when a mamma cow is separated from her calf during weaning and she moos for hours crying and grieving, but even these feelings don't last forever.

We have plenty of grown mammas and daughters in our herd and

they don't act like they even know they are related.

I do love how curious our cows are. Their stares make me giggle, especially when they have totally encircled us as we sit in the Ranger.

Of course, I adore the cows that get right in my face and try to give me a smooch and let me rub their head. I hope this means they love me.


Although I can't say any of our girls have behaved too aggressive toward us, I have seen cows clearly mad at their herd mates. A recent example was after a twin mamma rejoined the herd with her calves following a few days stay in the barn and maternity pen.

One cow in the herd seemed to not recognize twin mamma and challenged her to a head butting dual. Twin mamma was so angry after she won the battle she walked around pawing the

ground and rubbing her head into the ground, too. She was not happy and seemed to be letting the other gals know they better stay away. And they did.

Cows do seem to have a range of emotions, including the babies. I think calves are at their happiest when sucking their mammas evidenced by their tiny tails gleefully twirling around and around. The little ones enjoy warm sunny days best as that's when we see them playing chase and race each other all over the pasture.

All in all I'm pretty confident our Texas cows are as happy as those merry Maui cows, at least most of the time.

While I sure wouldn't mind having year-round green pastures with a perpetual ocean view myself, I am quite content gazing at the grand and gorgeous Texas sunsets and taking deep breathes of fresh country air. 

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