

# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## 40th Anniversary of Hay Hauling

I was cruising along driving my beloved red tractor while my hubby stacked hay on the trailer when I realized this month held an important occasion. Indeed, this month this year marks my 40th anniversary of hay hauling.

This is truly an amazing accomplishment to me, and it is much more than a celebration of years of hard work and sweat.

One of my first dates with my darling cattle rancher began with the invitation, "Would you like to help me haul some hay?" To which the naïve city girl I was back then said, "Sure!"

I was so infatuated with my country boy I would have said yes to most anything he needed me to do. We still giggle together when we reminisce how he didn't get thrown off the back of the truck as I did my best at driving a can-tankerous stick shift for the first time in my life.

Although I can't say I've become a huge fan of being hot and covered in itchy grass shavings, I am still surprised by what I love about this sweaty job.

I love that I've learned to do something I never imagined myself doing. I love that I was willing to try something I had not done before.

I love the wide-open spaces and broad horizon that always surround my view. I love the fragrance of fresh cut grass. I love knowing I'm doing something important and needed. I love the feeling of partnering with the love of my life.

I love seeing our beautiful cows



Forty years of hay hauling is an amazing accomplishment for Annette Bridges, and it is much more than a celebration of years of hard work and sweat. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

grazing as we stroll by their pasture. I love that I've mastered getting the hay bales into the loader even as I turn corners. I love that I can manipulate a stick shift these days pretty smoothly.

This is all to say that the next time you can't imagine yourself doing something, or believe that something is too difficult to learn, or you feel like you're too old, or not able to for whatever the

reason, maybe you should think again my friends.

These past few months I've been reevaluating my 40 years of country living.

I've sincerely gained not only an appreciation for my life, but I've also adopted an astounding and unexpected mindset that's changing my dreams and goals for the rest of my life.

I've spent many years feeling discontent, inadequate and out-of-place, and believing I belonged somewhere else.

Now during this unimaginable, uncertain season we are all living through, I've become acutely aware of and thankful for what I have and where I live.

Apparently, a grateful heart really can shift our point of view from lack and loss to abundance and appreciation for absolutely everything and everyone that we have in our life.

When I say abundance, for me, this has largely evolved into a profound recognition of my many ranching abilities and vast knowledge that I never valued before. I can now say sincerely and unequivocally how much I love my life.

My advice? Amidst any frustrations, aggravations, anger, doubts or desperation you may be feeling these days, you might try opening your heart to what you are grateful for and zone in on precisely what you do in fact love about your life. Like me, you may be surprised at how a heart filled with love and gratitude results in a happier, more satisfied you. 🍷