

How Do Farm Wives Survive Fall Harvest?

Fall Harvest Season - A Tale of Two Farm Wives

Linsey's Story

Fall is already here! Pumpkin patches and apple orchards are full of families with kids in wagons and couples in cute flannel shirts and riding boots taking photos in front of hay and pumpkins. Fall is also always full of rustic, warm weddings and celebrations.

Not for us.

Farm Wives

Fall takes on a different meaning when you farm, especially as a new farmer's wife. Fall use to be my favorite season because of all those things. Now I think it is one of my least desired seasons.

What does fall mean to me and why has it fallen into the least desirable season in my life?

I met my now husband at the beginning of my college junior year. I didn't know much about him yet and we didn't start dating until the winter. That's when I found out he was from a real farm. Still, no clue about what all that entailed. At first, I didn't understand why he couldn't just leave work in the fall for a couple hours to do these fall things with me, but I was so consumed in college life that I filled that void with homework and hanging out with friends.

We've been out of college three years now and married for two years; I can tell you fall hasn't really gotten any easier. Fall for farmers mean combine cleaning, hydraulic fluid on the jeans, beans in my wash machine, cowboy boots covered in dust, and very late nights. Because of that, people sometimes refer to us wives as "farmers widows," we can literally go days without seeing our husbands in the daylight. I do know that every time before I become a "widow" I tell myself that it'll be different this year; that I've prepared myself mentally and emotionally.

Then, **it** comes . . .

The first few days aren't so bad, but the days turn into weeks and I just long for eating dinner at our table together at 6:30 pm, taking the dog for a walk together, and getting ready for bed and tucking in at 10:00 pm. I am one who looks somewhere for guidance and find myself googling "How do farm wives survive the fall?" you really find nothing. There is no instruction manual or a *For Dummies* book for this one either.

So what do farm wives do?

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One thing I have found is that cooking a lot of field food keeps me occupied and his belly full on these long nights. I like to find a good show on Netflix that has a lot of seasons. It'll help on those nights you're laying in bed and just can't sleep. A big one for us without kids--a dog...I know, I know, I am that crazy dog lady, but it truly helps to have that living, breathing snuggler to walk with, play with, and provide kisses.

Last harvest our two year-old dog we got when we moved from college to our new home was hit by a grain semi truck. So harvest this year is taking another unfavorable feeling. We got our new dog, Duke, in November. Having him with me is something I know my husband is comforted with. Another thing that helps, but can be difficult when being "new" to this, is finding something that you can do with groups of people or being able to surround yourself with people. Working at a dance studio I get to surround myself with little giggles and adults that go through the same long nights. You can find comfort in the commonalities and having silly, down to earth conversations with kids.

Home-based business

A different thing for us this year is that I started my own home-based business and quit my day job. I work my own hours and can stay up later and be more available if my husband comes home early or on a rainy day. Lastly, but definitely not least, take one of those harvest meals to the tractor, push the dog up in the cab, download a movie on the iPad and connect it to the speakers, bring a blanket and a pillow and you have what you want, but in a much different setting.

Feeding America

Sometimes you have to adjust to feed America and in time, it may become a littler easier. All I can say is if you do see a farm wife try to give advice, invite them over for some coffee, and just open your doors to them; it is an unpredictable and tough life to get use to. I think it can be said that God surely choses strong women to fill those shoes and be a partner to those who farm.

Wanda's Story

Like Linsey, I never grew up on a farm and I learned about farming from the bottom--the very bottom. We share some commonalities during the harvest season. It truly is a very busy season where our days start in the early morning and go until late at night. In fact, one night last week, I walked in the house after midnight. We try not to make staying out that late a habit, but it happens.

One thing that is different between Linsey and I are our roles on the farm. Every farm family is different in how their farms are operated. While I am not in the pig barns, I do help with spring and fall crop farming. And I have graduated to [combine operator](#), which I love! Linsey is a newlywed and she helps support her family's farm in a different way. But one thing we know is farm wives are important to our farms.

I love fall!

I love the fall weather - especially early fall -- it is my favorite season. The temperatures are mild and the humidity is now a memory. Unfortunately, my enjoyment of fall doesn't go past sitting in the combine. While others are carving and placing pumpkins near their front door steps, relishing pumpkin lattes from Starbucks, enjoying the season change by watching leaves turn yellow and orange, purchasing fresh apples from a local apple orchard to make apple crisp or simply visiting a fall craft show, I am harvesting corn.

As someone married to a farmer, I know this is the sacrifice I made and I did so willingly. Yes, I am envious of those that can truly enjoy this time of year. But I also know as a farmer, I am given the privilege of raising and growing food and I truly am appreciative and humbled God allows me to do that.

Another difficulty I have being the combine operator is meal time. Prior to fall I prepared a lot of great freezer meals. But because I am in the combine, the meals don't automatically come out of the freezer and deliver themselves. And if I quit combining to make meals, the farm work stops. It's like an assembly line - if no corn is harvested by the combine, no corn is delivered to the corn dryer or corn bin. And the people who are performing those jobs have to stop also. In fact, there are a number of [things most people don't realize about harvest.](#)

Most of our farms are in close proximity of our home so there are times that we just stop and go eat in the house. Thank goodness for microwaves! Other times, my wonderful mother-in-law prepares us a harvest lunch delivered in ice cream pails. Did I say she makes the best harvest meals? And, lastly, something unique (although I thought every area did this) in our area is the number of ag-related businesses who deliver us a meal in the field. They literally drive out to the field we are in and deliver. As a farmer, this is just *plain awesomeness*! Sometimes it's a sack lunch, sometimes it's a hot meal prepared by a local restaurant and sometimes we may have a grilled pork chop on-a-stick. No matter what it is, we are so appreciative for harvest meals.

So how do I survive the fall harvest? Because we are both working so closely together we spend a lot of time together. We go on "parts run" dates and if it rains, we have some free time to go to a movie or just stay home to catch our breath. We make the best of it.

Both Linsey and I know we are making sacrifices during the fall harvest season, but we also feel blessed for our husbands, our families and the life we live. Feeding America is a farmer's life goal and besides that. I give free combine rides!

If you are a farmer, I would love to hear from you in the comment section. Do you feel the same or

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do you have other thoughts? How do you juggle your roles?