

Taking A Vacation Farmer Style

Even though we are passionate about what we do, we also know it's good to take some time and get off the farm. It may not surprise you, but our vacations are a little different. We didn't spend our entire vacation on the beach drinking our favorite adult beverages.

It's about taking a vacation *farmer style*.

Surprise!

We took a few days and headed to sunny Florida. More specifically - the Ft. Myers area. Sunny skies, warm temperatures and color is what we enjoyed. We relished a reprieve from the drab brown colors of Minnesota to green grass, palm trees and flowers of Florida. After a turbulent flight, we arrived in Florida and drove to the house we rented. I don't think we were there a day when . . .

We received a call from our employee, Jordan, who informed us his pregnant girlfriend gave birth. Mind you, she wasn't due for another few weeks. But as we know, babies don't always follow prescribed schedules. We felt bad because we wanted to make sure he could spend time with his new family and now he had to take care of the pigs while we were gone. When you raise livestock they need to be taken care of daily, no matter what.

County Fair

Being from the midwest, our county fairs are held during the late summer--usually starting the latter part of July into the month of August. But can you imagine what a county fair would be like in Florida in the summer? That is why Florida's county fairs are held in March. The [Collier County Fair](#) was in full swing while we were there. We vacationed with another farming couple and so we decided one day to see a Florida county fair.

Once there, we immediately headed for the ag and livestock buildings. They didn't have much for livestock - primarily beef cattle and chickens. Pigs were coming the following day. We quickly noted this county fair had an emphasis on the carnival activities - not so much agriculture.

We watched this young boy standing in line waiting to have his chicken judged. Way too cute and so proud! He took this judging thing pretty seriously!

Here is another idea that excited me as soon as I saw it! I hope some of our local county fairs will

do the same or something similar. Here is a small booth placed in the livestock barns where 4-H kids talk to fairgoers and answer questions they may have about their animals. I have said for quite some time that kids who show at fairs need to talk and engage with fairgoers. What a great way to connect our public with agriculture! What do you think?

What do you think?

I have included a few other pictures and videos from the fair at the end of this post.

Florida Farming

Because the four of us were "farmer nerds" we took a day and traveled to south-central Florida in an attempt to find other types of agriculture. And we hit the jackpot!

Traveling east we took some back roads near Clewiston and saw some farming activity in the fields. As we drove closer we noticed they were harvesting sugar cane! Holy moly! I have learned the sugar cane fields are not family farms in this area of Florida but rather owned and operated by the [U.S. Sugar Cane](#). As we drove some of the back roads we saw very little (basically non-existent) traffic. Not like the type of traffic we have here in rural Minnesota.

Here are a couple of short videos.

The Everglades

And you can't visit southern Florida without spending time in the Everglades. Yes, we saw alligators. Yes, we took an airboat ride. Yes, we saw manatees. Yes, we ate alligator (well, I didn't but my husband did). There is just something about the Everglade atmosphere. Very laid back. The Everglades screams Florida.

Places to Eat

We had some really delectable tasting food while in Florida. Ate lots of seafood. One unique place we ate was [Doc Ford's Garage](#) in Cape Coral, Florida. The atmosphere mirrored a car repair garage. Enjoy the pictures. I would recommend eating here not only for the atmosphere but also the great tasting food.

You can find additional pictures of Doc Ford's Garage at the end of the post. We also ate at the [Bahama Breeze](#) in Ft. Myers on our last evening in Florida. The food and service were exceptional. I enjoyed a Bahamamarito. It was almost too beautiful to drink. Loved it!

We spent time a day at the beach and also went to a Minnesota Twins game. This vacation was lots of fun mixed with a good amount of relaxation.

And yes, it's good to get off the farm.

Additional pictures from Doc Ford's Garage:

Additional videos from the Collier County Fair:

Carla Wallenda, 81 years old. Crazy! A member of the famous Wallenda circus family.

When you can't milk a real cow!