



the farmgirl in all of us

“Nationally, women are the largest — and fastest growing — group of people buying small farms. Some figures indicate that in 10 years, 75 percent of American farmland will be owned by women.”

— Peter Miller, from “Vermont Farm Women”

Cindylou and I were havin’ a frontporch “sit” the other day, talkin’ ’bout chickens, little clucks (our kids), aprons, huckleberries, cowgirl campouts, tartes and such, when Clou (that’s her nickname, as in “glow” like she does), got going on some farmgirl ideas. I’m thinking it was the red cowgirl boots she was wearing, the ones she got from Teri, one of the Farm Chicks, up at their sale in the Grange just this side of Spokane. Anyways, Clou’s idea dam was just bustin’. Chicken this and chicken that.

Farmgirls, those of us living or longing to live in the country, are just about everybody we know, girls anyhow. Somehow Clou went from tea towels and handkerchiefs to SWAP! FORAGE! NEST! GATHER! — her claimin’ it’s instinctual for us to want to shop. (She has people who back her up on this. Her husband’s one of them.)

Course, I’m into the “eating” part of instinctual, so I took to moving the conversation to chicken dumplin’s. Clou managed to turn that term right around, goin’ from it meaning “food” to “stuff,” kid stuff actually, the fun stuff (toys and games) a foraging farmgirl finds for her brood, her little clucks.

(continued)



front-porch farmgirls from Ruth Ogle’s scrapbook (Mary Jane’s mother-in-law)



FARM LIFE

m a r y j a n e b u t t e r s



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And then, "chicken scratch" (my term for money) got to be "finding the best stuff" and pretty soon, before I could say chickadee three times, Clou was wondering if the Dixie Chicks would come to sing here at MaryJanesFarm, at a farmgirl event we'd put on, or maybe we'd put on a whole string of events. (I'm part and partial to Willie Nelson, but I'm an older farmgirl).

Clou finally got serious and likened it to a growing up story of hers. Her grandma lived on a farm, but not her. Didn't matter. Her mom went ahead and let her and her sister bring home some baby chicks. They didn't have anyplace to put them but the basement. I know that'll work for a while, but pretty soon they get big, and they did. "There was a window," Clou assured me. By the time they could find a weekend to get them permanently moved to Gramma's farm, they were full grown.

Well, putting them together with Gramma's chickens was a sight for sore eyes. Clou and Kathleen's chickens didn't even know how to walk up the ramp to the chicken coop. They didn't know how to scratch and they didn't know how to roost. BUT, (now here comes Clou's serious ponderance), **they knew how, deep inside. And that's what makes us ALL farmgirls, no matter where you find yourself.**

So now, one thing's led to another and we're planning some farmgirl events like rolling pin bakeoffs (that'll be me teaching you how to bake a Tarte Tian); fresh eggs and milk, etc. for sale (the etc. will include Clou selling huckleberry everything — she's got a serious huckleberry hankering); farmgirl campouts; farm tours (hosted by farmgirl CindyLou, too); some more front porch kind of connecting, no matter where you are in conjunction to us, like in our last issue (that'll be Pam); apron contests; swap and forage gatherings; nostalgic farm stuff for sale (I have extra of everything to share); old fashioned anything (I like old red jeep trucks. Come to think of it,

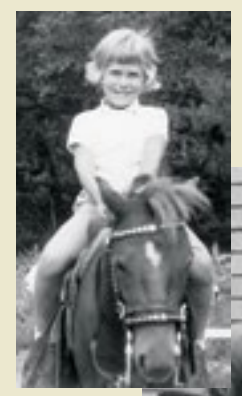
“farmgirl is a condition of the heart”



Design Associate Sarah Harrison



Design Director Carol Hill with her horse named Mary



Copy Editor Pam Palmer



Mary Jane



CindyLou

Carol — once a farmgirl, always a farmgirl!

we've got one of those we can sell, actually, it's Ruby's Dad's — you can read about her on p. 83). Oh, and Ruby's the kind of farmgirl who's *always* gathering and swapping vintage stuff. She'll come too, and Cecelia Ann and Nita'll be there and Julie Bell and Kattie and Sayra (she makes vintage hats on a little farm out in Princeton next to her husband's diesel mechanic shop), and the Farm Chicks over near Spokane said they'd come and sell their stuff, and Carol said she'd be happy to do any gift wrapping.

And so, like I said on my contents page up in the front few pages, it's easy to sign up, subscribe, get behind, pitch in. Membership, as they say, has its benefits, and no matter where you are, you're invited to join us. We call our local chapter the MJ Farmgirls. You'll be privy to all the nuances of when and where we gather, but never the how of it.

We know you'll know how, once you get here. In fact, we'll show you how to do what we do so well, you can take the idea back home with you so you can have your own farmgirl events, not to mention haulin' home lots of farm nostalgic stuff, cooking ideas, farmgirl tales and such.

MaryJane

P.S. I'm thinking about having a booth where I can fit you for a pair of Mary Jane branded shoes, maybe even some red cowgirl boots!

P.P.S. My son Emil, my husband Nick, and CindyLou's husband Aaron said to bring your guys along, and they'd be sure to cook up something special for them. You know where that went: "On-site guy sitting available." True to their nature, they talked about a barbecue, beer, old junk cars, sports, whittling, whistling and pyrotechnic demonstrations, with maybe even some Click & Clack type sessions thrown in. At the very least, they can have some fun too, and then help pack up all the scratchin's you forage to take back home to your own little nest. ✨



Carol's farmgramma Blanche

farmgirl Marisa Akin



Carol comes from a long line of fun-loving farmgirls

... and their guys, always good for a laugh.

