



Indiana's Family of Farmers

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Raising Kids on the Farm

Guest Post By Real Farmwives of America and Friends' Jent of From My Front Porch

I heard one time that teaching children work ethic has changed: It used to be that kids were interwoven in the fabric of our work, they saw their parents work and often were required to participate – whether on the farm, running a store, at the mill etc. – kids were more exposed to the hard work and effort that it takes to support a thriving family.

Now don't get me wrong – I have no desire to go back to the 1900's – I am all about technology but I do see the value in this point and feel truly blessed to live on a farm where our kids see and participate in our work. Our kids are a part of our livelihood – our jobs are truly a family lifestyle – they witness everyday our work ethic – they live it! As my Father-In-Law says “Your work is your signature, sign it with pride” and I feel our kids witness this every day on the farm.

I love the fact that my kids can: artificially inseminate sows, halter break a calf, assist a cow giving birth, drive tractors. They have seen a piglet take its first breath climbing over the back leg of a sow knowing instinctively where to go to nurse. They know how to walk out in a field and look to see if a seed has germinated. They help wean pigs every 5 weeks and are in charge of feeding and bedding the cows every day. Participating shoulder to shoulder with us and each other, they have learned responsibility and the advantage to cooperation. Our hope is that they learn the value of hard work, experiencing the satisfaction that it brings, and that work isn't just something to get over with so you can move on to fun, but is something that can be rewarding as well. We feel instilling these qualities will pay dividends down the road, as well as right now, evidenced by their consistent appearance on the honor roll and their leadership roles in 4-H and FFA.

Now just for the record our lives are not a Norman Rockwell painting every day! I can remember before Chris installed the automatic waterer for the kids' show calves, it was their job every day to make sure the water trough was full – it didn't always get done. To prove my point of how important it was that the cattle have water at all times the kids' punishment was to go without water (drinks) for 24 hours to see how it felt! Now before anyone calls CPS – they were in school and I had no direct control over their thirst there and am pretty sure that they did not adhere 100% to my punishment but they did learn and needless to say the water trough was full every day until the automatic waterer was installed. This was also the year I sat our oldest down to fill out her 4-H beef paperwork and when she got to the question:

During our busiest times of year (planting and harvest) if I am working in the field we often don't eat supper until 9pm – this makes for grumpy kids sometimes and well quite frankly makes for a grumpy Mom too! The kids do homework in a tractor, combine, semi or grain office – not the most conducive to book learning but we make due. Then there are the days between school and extracurricular activities the only time they see their Dad is to catch a quick ride with him – but this is one-on-one time! A true blessing on a multi-generational farm like ours is knowing that we all work together, if I am working, my mother in-law is always willing to run kids around, help with homework, and feed the hungry.

All in all the good times and laughter far outweigh the bad – and when the not so good come along we all definitely know how to pitch in, stick together and wade thru the manure (figuratively and literally) as a family.

I am so proud to be raising the 7th generation to farm this same land if they choose to do so. Chris and I both grew up on farms and know the importance of agriculture and instilling that in our kids. We want them to know that if they want, we would love to have them be a part of something we love so much, but also know that if they choose to go a different direction in their life we are behind them 100%. But never forget where you came from and the importance that agriculture has in every single person's life every day!