

# FROM CITY LIFE TO FARM WIFE

A STORY OF TRANSFORMATION, ACCEPTANCE, AND STRENGTH

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NEVER DID I ENVISION MY LIFE LEADING ME TO RAISE A FAMILY IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN, SURROUNDED BY GOLDEN WHEAT AND BLOOMING CANOLA FIELDS. MY UPBRINGING IN BUSTLING CITIES LEFT ME UNPREPARED FOR THE FARMING LIFESTYLE; YET, I FOUND MYSELF FALLING FOR NOT ONLY ITS CHARM, BUT FOR THE FARMER WHO WORKED THE LAND. OVER THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, A PIVOTAL TRANSFORMATION TOOK ROOT WITHIN ME, AS I EMBRACED MY LIFE AS A WOMAN IN AGRICULTURE...







**A**djusting to long hours, time apart, and the uncertainties within grain farming required a monumental shift in perspective. After our first son, Nate arrived, I hit a wall, overwhelmed by a sense of disconnection during seeding and harvest. Three years later, we were still in this repetition as I vividly recall my farmer driving off to the sprayer while I cradled four-day old Sam with a toddler crashing toy tractors into my ankles. Gene is a wonderfully present father and husband, a dedicated, hardworking farmer. I couldn't accept the fluidity between these roles, and the resentment that built during the early years of our marriage and parenthood wove itself into our lives intricately. April showers brought up dread as the farm season approached. Arguments brewed, comments snapped, the cold shoulder over a missed supper all compounded with my ignorance of farming family dynamics. I couldn't see how deeply I was affecting Gene through my need to feel connected and prioritized. We were stuck in a "he vs. she" cycle and I distinctly remember the day he challenged my perspective: "I need to know you're okay at home, so I can be okay in the field." Simple yet profound. The message was clear.

I learned to stand on my own, navigating the hectic farm seasons while balancing motherhood and my career. This reflects a profound acceptance of the life we lead and my husband's chosen career. We are a team daily, especially after our daughter, Joy, completed our family of five. If we could manage three kids, sports, and two careers, we could figure out how to manage these seasons.

The moment I realized it had to start with me was the moment I felt this sense of ownership and responsibility grow. Rather than fearing these moments, I welcomed them with open arms which allowed space to explore the following...

**Pre-planning each season became vital.** I became proactive in planning the busy seasons long before they began. This was done in collaboration with Gene first, setting a date when he is focused on farm and not able to get the kids on the bus or drive them to sports. We would meal plan together so it didn't feel entirely on my shoulders. I leaned on my support network, booked babysitters, organized my calendar, and reduced commitments. We decided that I didn't need to fulfill traditional expectations of a farmer's wife, such as bringing meals to the field, and we cultivated our own way.

**Healing the ticks of the heart.** Emotionally, I did the hard work of recognizing and healing fears of abandonment and of not being a priority. Ticks that weren't Gene's actions, but that my mind, heart, and body still held knee-jerk reactions and triggers. I started within and strengthened my sense of self through movement, reflection, painting, and sober-curious living.

**Holding each other in positive regard and cultivating acceptance.** I chose to see the beauty of my surroundings and accept where life had taken me: a fourth-generation farming family. Speaking of his efforts with love and excitement, looking forward to time as just mom with the kids, and setting aside complaints of his lack of presence - I built him up and focused on the necessary hard work being accomplished. I assumed good intentions when "I'll be home in 20" turns into an hour. Taking charge of my role as a woman in ag (with zero experience) was exactly what I needed to settle in and find acceptance. I learned to grow a vegetable garden and bought my own tiller so I didn't have to wait for him when the weeds grew. These small steps were meaningful towards shifting my mindset.

**Embracing vulnerability and compassion.** Together, we learned communication strategies that completely changed the way we navigate stressful times - which is paramount in farm life. Specifically, clearly articulating needs. I have replaced "if only" with "I need" or "I will." Beginning a statement with "I need" can feel emotionally charged, especially for women. We live in a society where women are nurturers, and their needs are often on the bottom of the list. Clear and compassionate needs expression helps counter stressful circumstances in ways that allow us to work together against an issue.

**Finding playfulness and creativity.** Discovering meaningful ways to stay connected even when apart was essential. From silly or sexy notes left with his supper in the fridge to making playlists to blare in the trucks, there is consistency in being thoughtful and playful towards each other. This has trickled down to our children when they miss him. We emphasize the good, the hard work, and how present Dad is throughout the year. We embrace missing him and turn it into gestures, crafts, funny videos, or leaving a stuffed animal on his pillow.

**Being curious.** I have learned the art of being curious about another person's experience. I am curious about Gene's day, not judgemental about the time he walks in. I am curious about what the May long weekend holds for us, not fearful of three days alone. I am curious about what I can add to my strength and resilience.

This isn't to say there aren't hard times because there certainly are. We have just figured out some ways that make the stress a small piece of a wonderful life and I allowed myself to be open to a new outlook on it all. This journey, filled with love, growth, and acceptance, has shaped a life I never imagined, but one I wholeheartedly embrace.



### about heather

Heather Sinfield is a mother to three children and co-owns a fourth-generation grain farm with her husband of ten years. She values movement, energy, connection, rest, and ongoing learning and discovery. Understanding how the body works in tandem with healing the mind and heart are passion areas which translate into supportive services to clients in her private practice as a Registered Social Worker and Counselling Therapist. Moving from the big city to rural Saskatchewan in 2009 was a life changing experience, and Sinfield intricately weaves her personal, professional, and rural self into her practice, her family, and her worldview.

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*Jason Whiting, a talented photographer from Lloydminster, found his passion for capturing moments at a young age. He believes in showcasing the truest form of a photo, using minimal editing to enhance images and realistically portray their subjects. Whiting enjoys capturing a wide range of events, including family portraits, graduations, and commercial shoots. His work extends beyond photography to include video production and livestreaming, offering a comprehensive suite of services. Whiting's dedication to authenticity and attention to detail make his work stand out in the community. His ability to connect with subjects ensures every project tells a compelling story. Find him on IG at @videre\_images*



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