



## Philosophical Ponderings of a Farmer

### The Simple Life?

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Many people I've spoken with recently are under the impression that an agrarian lifestyle is equivalent to "a simple life." Some live in a city, where the constant hustle and bustle causes them to dream about an escape. Others live here in PT and look fondly upon those who are working the land around them. While in some regards, I get where they are coming from - I certainly hold an idealistic (and somewhat unrealistic) view of agrarianism, but I have never once stated that it is simple.

To me, the simple life is working in an office and living in a condominium. You don't have to own (or fix) very many things and everything you need is nearby.

Farming, on the other hand, comes with baggage - both physical and mental. It is unpredictable - I never know how a season is going to shape up until it is happening. Weather is always a gamble - do I plant tomatoes outside now in hopes they will actually ripen, or are we going to get a cold and rainy June? Who can say? Which is why, as a very small producer, I diversify. Not only am I growing small amounts of several different crops (it is unlikely that they would all fail in the same year), I also make value-added products that can be sold out of season. But it's a lot to keep in my mind all the time.

I am also my own bookkeeper, saleswoman, and numerous other things, so I need to be a Jill of all trades - good with numbers and good with people (but also content to work long hours by myself); handy (well, I didn't come with that skill, so fortunately I have a partner who can help me out when I need it), and the list goes on. I feel like I am dividing myself into many different factions each and every day.

Farming also comes with another, more physical type of baggage - tools, supplies, and equipment. Despite the human-scale, low tech nature of Hopscotch, the farm has slowly crept into my personal space. Here is a little excerpt from a never-published blog post I wrote right after making Hopscotch official:

*"When you decide to start your own farm, even a micro one, getting free and cheap supplies all of a sudden becomes more important than ever before. A necessity even. So, we began stockpiling anything we thought might be useful down the road in the summer of 2016. (Well, actually a couple of years before that if you count the brush piles we were saving for chipping and more compost than we could have used otherwise). We had piles everywhere in the yard, giving it a Tucsonan or Sonoran vibe, not so much one that fit in with the well-kept yards of uptown. Fortunately, our neighbors are also excited about the farm and have been very supportive. Plus its amazing how quickly those items become useful!"*

And, farming never quits - there is ALWAYS something on the list. Even when I am "done for the day", I know that you actually really need to water the beets, like, NOW, because tomorrow morning isn't soon enough and they will die. Or when I am working the farmers market, I wish I was weeding in the field, but when I am weeding, I feel like I should be processing in the kitchen. Whew.

So, whoever said farm life is a simple life? I don't know, but he or she was WRONG. However, I wouldn't give it up for the world - I get to enjoy the sound of the frogs in the wetland, watch eagles soaring above my head, and discover worms wriggling through the beds every day, and that makes it all worth while.