

Welcome to my blog about my life in the country, or I really should call it a 'love letter' because from the moment I first saw this place - I fell in love with it. It is my haven, my paradise, an adventure that makes me feel alive! Me, together with my husband and two kids, have been here for one year now and even in my lowest moments and during some heartbreaking experiences, I have never regretted the move!

I'm a city girl and here are the lessons I have learned in our first year in our little slice of heaven in Belgrove:

You can only ever have a clean house OR a tidy, planted veg garden and happy animals. Both is impossible unless you have many WWOOFers!

Sitting in the paddock in the evening surrounded by happy piggies, horses munching on their hay and cows lying down and chewing their cud feeds the soul like nothing else can! TV or any other gadgets or wine (and I do love my wine!!) don't even come close.

When relying on well water it is a very bad idea to let the garden hose run for three days during a draught just because the piggies so like to play in the mud!

When you do run out of water, sitting in an old bath that is used to water the horses, and a very cheeky Kaimanawa blowing bubbles, is better than a spa bath!

You will see less or lose touch with some of your 'city friends'.

I am not a gardener, I don't care about lawns or flowers but I do love growing food! After a year of saying at the dinner table (and driving my family crazy with it): "We could have grown this!" I'm doing just that. It is a lot of hard work but incredibly rewarding.

With animals involved there are heartbreaking moments. When we lost our orphan lamb I couldn't stop wondering if I'd done something wrong, he was beautiful. He died in my arms sitting on the sofa surrounded by my husband and children. My beautiful cow Izzy lost her first calf because he was a breach birth. Seeing her lick and push her dead calf broke my heart - she was a mother grieving for her baby.

There will be some amazingly wonderful moments with animals involved. The same day Izzy lost her calf, my friend had heard from a farmer whose 2 week old calf lost her mum. We picked her up the same night and the following day Izzy and Missy had bonded. Izzy is a wonderful mum and Missy is a delight to watch. I had to order a cow halter as my 14 year old daughter has decided she wants to ride her. Apparently breaking in a 4 year old spirited Kaimanawa isn't enough.

Memphis my other Jersey has also taken to little Missy - so we're all fussing over her. Memphis is also with calf and we are anxiously awaiting the new arrival. But that is another story - so watch this space!