



Q & A with Lorna Sixsmith

What was it that inspired your two books?

Would You Marry A Farmer? was inspired by the popularity of one of my blog posts. It was entitled Ten pieces of advice for anyone considering marrying a farmer and was written after a session of sorting cattle with my husband whereby I decided that telepathy was a most important skill for farmers' wives. I discovered that although farmers are very different to any other occupation, they are the same the world over and so many women empathised with my blog pos but were also hugely amused by it. Farming is one of those professions where if you didn't laugh, you might cry so I decided to write a book focusing on what life is like married to a farmer, showing the realism of it but yet showing farming folk how we can laugh at ourselves.

How To Be A Perfect Farm Wife seemed a natural sequel. Readers were enjoying the useful information and the humour in my first book. As so many women marrying farmers now come from non-farming or different farming backgrounds, they often struggle with loneliness and lack of knowledge when they marry into a farming family. I also recognised that many farm women felt they were the only one in that situation, the only one who didn't know how to understand her husband's shouted instructions or felt a failure when throwing a meal together for contractors. This book is aimed to show them that farm wives, as well as farmers, are similar the world over, they are an essential half of a team and yes, they are good at what they do.

Who should read these books?

Well, they were both written with the farmer's wife in mind but I've discovered that female farmers, male farmers and non farmers are all enjoying it. City folk enjoy them for the insight into farming life and as both books include historical detail too, that has proved to be immensely interesting.

How did you research both books?

As Brian and I worked as a scientist and a teacher for a number of years, and returned to farming in 2002, the gap from farming meant I could see it with fresh eyes. Having a husband with a good sense of humour helps as we laugh at lot at various situations we end up in. Much of the content is from observations of our own lives. I did a MA in Irish Studies in 1997 and much of the research stemmed from there, building on my existing knowledge and then doing more research. I interviewed farm wives of different backgrounds and ages, attended occasional conferences, read academic papers and books, and the Irish Newspaper Archive was a great resource too.

Where can people buy the books?

Paperback copies can be purchased from my website and all good bookshops in Ireland. If purchasing from outside Irelands, Kennys offer free shipping. It is also available by order from bookshops abroad (via IngramSpark) and on Amazon (via CreateSpace).

Ebooks are available on kindle, nook, kobo and Smashwords.

What is an example of a tip you would give a prospective farm wife?

I have so many tips in my Perfect Farm Wife book, it is hard to choose just one but as most farmers often slaughter one of their own livestock for the freezer, here's one:

Don't name the animal that is going to end up in the freezer, at least not with a "human name". Otherwise, you end up leaving it in the freezer for a long time as you acclimatise to the idea of eating Jack or Susie.



Calling them Mint Sauce, Chops, Rashers, Sausages or Sirloin might seem harsh, but it makes the meat much more appetising than wondering if it is Daisy or Frank that you are scoffing with relish

Did you always want to be a writer?

Writing was always something that I said I would do sometime. When I was a child, I wrote some stories but never did any more. I studied English and History and taught English to secondary school children for a number of years. I started blogging in 2009 and loved it. Blogging is a wonderful way to hone your writing skills, test your ideas on your target market and build a following. It's also a great way to procrastinate so it is important to cut down on the blogging sometimes to start writing the short stories or the book.

Would you recommend the life of a farmer / farmer's wife?

Yes. It can be tough at times. It can be lonely and isolating and it's certainly a challenge getting used to a fluctuating income. However, it's lovely to be able to work with your best friend, have a short commute and bring your children up in the countryside. I really enjoy being self-employed and running my own business from home as well as helping out on the farm. I also love the solitude. I'd wholeheartedly recommend it.