A former urbanite chronicles the journey to becoming a farmer

By CARLA ROBERTS MCNEAL
For the Oregonian

A few miles delved into Oregon’s pastoral landscape, fences are miles wide and the bathrooms aren’t convenient. I’m taking a road and buses since a “snow season” is predicted and also Nepali drops, just in case, since I’m given four speeches. I can’t count on having phone or Internet service there in the mountains. I can’t wait.

I’ve somehow stayed awake for many a 4 a.m. drive to Portland, listening to NPR. I’ve dropped huge suitcases full of books onto shuttles and out to rent a car for parking lots and even into the noontime at the city center. For those who claim are on the lower level at the Portland airport, since those are the most convenient facilities before the check-in counters.

I’ve made the same sort of early morning drive from central Minnesota to the Twin Cities, in bitter cold, through one small town after another, where the only radio stations are Christian. The drives were long and the cattlemen. There are no roads leads to the main roads anywhere, and it is often 20 miles from the nearest gas pump.

They’re all part of this place, where there are other farm animals and no small number of people. And a farm is not just a working farm, but a farm stay. It’s a type of accommodation, best compared to a hotel or a bed and breakfast but with some additional worked options.

It’s a venture that owners Greg and Scottie Jones started when they realized the smaller slice they’d sold out of the city to lead was going to eat up their retirement. The Joneses bought a 1,800-acre farm near Alsea, and the idea that made it possible for them to keep the farm, in another “Country Life: A Pursuit of Farming and Peace.”

I wanted to tell the story of small farms in America,” she said. “I knew as an urbanite I had no clue what the struggles were. So I went out and interviewed those who were doing it, those who run small farms in America and the fact that they need to diversify, and that a great diversification strategy would be to invite urbanites onto the farm.

The book is a collection ofjoining together and edited collection of the humor-filled blog posts Jones wrote for family and friends in their early days on the farm. At one point, in 2002, Jones and her husband, Greg, live on the farm and have two kids living close by, in Lebanon. They also have a grandson, age 5. They appeared toward the end of the book.

“Our girls were pretty mad that they’re all part of this move. They thought they were a bad idea,” Jones said.

Scottie Jones gives Pablo the donkey a brushing, one of his favorite activities. Jones and her husband, Greg, give visitors a taste of the rural life at their Leaping Lamb Farm in Alsea.

The book focuses on the various vendors and vendors that came their way as they figured out farming: lambs, horseback riding, lambing, changing sheep to diversify, and that a great diversification strategy would be to invite urbanites onto the farm. It’s a type of agritourism, best compared to a hotel or a bed and breakfast but with some additional worked options.

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My family members live on the West Coast, and I can’t count on having phone or Internet service there in the mountains. I can’t wait.

In a week, I’ll be home away. Scottie Jones, who with her husband, Greg, runs a working farm it also a farm stay, offering overnight lodging.

What: “Country Life: A Pursuit of Farming and Peace”

Where: Scottie Jones, who with her husband, Greg, runs a working farm it also a farm stay, offering overnight lodging.

When: “Country Life: A Pursuit of Farming and Peace”

Where: Honey Grove Road, Alsea

Learn more: www.leapinglambfarm.com and www.farmstays.org

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Noodling a change

The Joneses had lived for many years in the Arizona desert. Greg was born in that region, and Scottie moved there when he was 9. They met at the end of the book.

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Big Angel De La Cruz finds
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From blog to book

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