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## **In Fields Aplenty**

**KRISTI ANDERSON - BLOG: 1 MODERN MAMA + 1 FEARLESS BOY + THEIR URBAN HOMESTEADING ADVENTURES**

In the Houston suburbs where I grew up, the only type of fields separating the housing developments were either empty or sports-related. By contrast, when driving the back roads of our county to my parents' home about 30 minutes away, the spaces separating the dwellings are a patchwork quilt of family-owned dairy farms, plentiful gardens and well-stocked livestock pastures.

Living in the Pacific Northwest is a far cry from my years in Texas for many reasons, but the two most important ones are related. One is the distinct marking of the four seasons, and the other is the rich abundance of nature's bounty that is offered literally from the mountains to the sea, and the pastureland in between. Whether it's buttery salmon, plump and juicy berries, crisp apples, dinner plate-sized flowers, out-of-your-mind fresh vegetables, or organic meat you're after, you're sure to find it here in Whatcom County. I know the popular saying is "Everything's bigger in Texas," but I think our local farmers would give those good ol' boys down south a run for their money.

Our local community is a grateful lot, and we know not to take this abundance for granted. I suspect this may be because many of us are transplants from other, perhaps less bountiful, parts of the country. It seems that to gain ad hoc citizenship in our town one must vow to 'live local, think global.' So, we support our local farmers, co-ops and farmers' markets and do whatever else we can.

We also devote an entire month to 'eating local,' celebrating all of the seasonal, nutritious food produced right here in our own back yard. Because even though a resounding majority of those living here say it's important to eat locally, the direct sales to our local farmers is still less than 5%. I'm sure this statistic is probably true in any local agricultural community.

Part of this month-long effort this year included the county's [fourth annual farm tour](#), giving those of us living here the opportunity to visit 13 different farms, ranches, gardens, dairies and wineries and meet the people who put our produce on the table.

Mom and I picked out six places to visit on Saturday (after all, we had Jonah in tow) -- some of the places familiar to us, others not so much. With map in hand, we criss-crossed the maze of county roads to see alpacas and bison, pick our own veggies, participate in some DIY crafts, and enjoy local treats like corn on the cob and strawberry sundaes.

I compiled a photo diary of our day, as seen through the eyes of my son, Jonah. He was born here, so he's been surrounded his entire, short little life by this region's breathtaking beauty and ready access to some of the most delicious, fresh food around. Like I said, my home here is a far cry from where I was raised. Knowing where I've come from, I don't want Jonah to take this environment for granted -- so it's important to me to let him see the all the work *and fun* that goes into this lifestyle. He's the next generation of Whatcom County resident, and I'd prefer that as he's one day driving the back county roads, he's still greeted by the same vibrant patchwork of dairies and pastures, instead of dull, barren fields.

This future landscape depends in large part on us. Please do your part and support your local farmers.



