

# Alice



*I feel marginalized in modern society because I choose to be a farmer. Urban people don't understand that at all. They don't even want to understand it. Even though that's where their food comes from, they still don't want to understand it.*

I'm Alice. I was born in Chicago, but I feel that my life really began only when I moved to Devore. I was ten years old and I felt at one with the world, and at one with God.

Not too long after we moved, I was given a goat – Nancy Caprice. She was just so much fun! She had long horns, and I taught her the words “sic ‘em.” One day I gave her the command and she tossed my friend Zelda over her head. She was just a hoot.

When most people think of goats, they think of the odor. Well, okay – for six months of the year the buck gives off musk from his hooves and from his horns. It smells delightful to the female goat, and it smells awful to the rest of us. But, goats are really neat animals.

I've raised all kinds of livestock – cattle and pigs, sheep and goats. And goats are kinda at the bottom of the pecking order in people's minds. The term “pecking order” comes from poultry management, where there's always a boss chicken who picks on the next one, who picks on the next one. And the one who's at

the bottom of the heap gets picked on by everybody.

Humans do exactly the same thing. I think people have to feel good about themselves, and the easiest way to do that is to put somebody else down. There's a tendency of urban residents to look at rural residents as being ignorant, uneducated, and dirty. And granted, we can give that impression. You know back a month ago, when it was raining so hard, I went to church one night in my barn boots, because if I hadn't I would have gotten pretty wet!

It's an interesting life, and it's hard to make people understand, but farmers are not ignorant. I have a Masters degree, and I've written 21 books, and I don't think an uneducated, stupid person could do that. And the land is just so relaxing and peaceful! I have my solitude, I have my peace and quiet. I can hear the freeway, but I can pretend it's a river.

It is a challenge to live out there, because if city folks lose water they call the water company and it gets fixed. I can't call anybody. I have to figure it out. And I have half a



“My mother had told us that because we lived on a farm we were going to have to work hard to prove to people that we were intelligent and well educated. The reason she told us that is not because she had felt the prejudice, but because she was prejudiced. She was born and raised in Chicago.”



Butter churn used by Alice to transform goat milk into cheese.

mile of pipeline from the source to the house. That's a lot of pipeline to try and figure out where the problem might be.

What makes things worse is laws that are being passed by the legislature, and they're being signed by the governor, and they are not the least bit realistic. None of them have any clue what the people who are producing their food have to go through to get it to them.

For example, the whole nature of raising animals has changed since mountain lions were placed on the endangered species list, even though it's on top of the food chain. When goats get scared they clump together, and a lion can go in the middle and kill a dozen without even hardly moving. It's nasty. I lost 90 percent of my herds and flocks to mountain lions between 1994 and 1998.

It really bothers me that so many urban people have this Disney view of wild animals, you know? “Oh we could all get along, love and joy.” No, you can't. But they passed these laws to protect these big animals, and those of us who have less vicious animals pay the price.

They also passed a law in 2014 that said anyone who has a water license has to install a meter to monitor the

amount they take from the spring. That cost me \$2000! And I just got a notice the other day that I have to have the bigger, better meter they want me to. And I'm not even getting anywhere near the amount of water I'm supposed to.

I'm getting older. I used to be able to milk any goat, no matter how much she gave, in less than five minutes. Well now it takes me five minutes to sit on the bench and get her legs set and put the bucket down! A couple weeks ago I went down to look at a senior housing facility in the city. Oh, it was beautiful! But I just felt so oppressed - too many people, too much noise. So, I think I'll stick it out up there as long as I can. Devore is just a little bit of heaven.