



# Milk and Honey Meadows

BY JAMES ROBERTSON

Janelle and Robert Cole had a vision. After their service in the United States Army they moved to Mansfield where they raised their children for about six years. But the country was calling and the Cole's decided they didn't want to raise their children in the city. In 2010 they moved to Malakoff and their vision began to take shape, as a new page in life often starts, with the search of a new home.

"We wanted to have room for our three sons and daughter to be outside playing, woods to explore, and room to raise animals," said Janelle Cole. "So in our search for a home we wanted at least two acres."

The Cole's stumbled upon a 7.5 acre property with a house and lots of growing room so they snatched it up, beginning the tale of Milk and Honey Meadows in Henderson County.

What initially began as just a few chickens to provide fresh eggs quickly grew into the Coles hobby farm. Grass fed calves graze the pasture and bottle fed calves grace the back yard. The Coles raise meat chickens, which are also shown through 4-H, and have also raised turkey and duck in the past.



In 2012, Mrs. Cole was reading an article that talked about goat milk

helping with asthma and because her youngest son has allergy-induced asthma she jumped at the opportunity right away.

"I was anxious to try him on goat milk and see if that helped at all," said Cole. "I read lots of things and within about a week I owned two Nigerian Dwarf dairy goats."

The Coles bred them and milked them and realized that they did not make enough milk for a family of six. So they switched gears, to Nubians.

"We love our Nubians!" Cole exclaimed. "We currently have four Nubian does and have milked two for the past year."

This is where the road of owning goats began to fork. Family and friends kept asking Janelle when she was going to make soap to which she adamantly answered that she had no plans in doing that.

It was at that time that Doug Williams from Grow It Forward Farm in Edom asked her the same question and told her he wanted to sell it for her.

"I was sold," says Cole. "I did not want to have to try and sell soap after making it. Little did I know this stuff sells itself! So I started last fall after spending a day with a friend in Winnsboro learning how to make it."



Goat milk soap provides many benefits especially for people who suffer from dry or sensitive skin or have a skin condition such as eczema or psoriasis. These benefits include alpha hydroxyl acids which help remove dead skin cells, vitamins, particularly Vitamin A, a good natural cream that doesn't dry out skin like some soaps, and minerals such as selenium which is believed by some scientists to have an important role in preventing skin cancer.

That's the goat milk side of the story. The other side of the story is their Bees.

In 2013, her oldest son Jacob received a scholarship through the East Texas Beekeepers Association to learn and keep bees. The next year, her second oldest son Peter received the same scholarship and they added more bees.

Holding their first beekeeping class at their home this past January the Cole brothers taught 12 students, including two youth some of the practices of beekeeping.

"We absolutely love the bees," said Cole. "They are a family hobby! We harvest honey for our own use and to sell locally, since the benefits of local honey are widely known and recognized. We love that by helping other people get their own beehives that we are promoting bees."

Jacob is now serving as the ETBA Ambassador and he visits public schools and civic groups teaching them the charms and importance of the

honey bee.

Janelle loves that she can merge the goat milk and honey together in her soap. She has used propolis, which is a red or brown resinous s u b s t a n c e

collected by honeybees from tree buds and used to fill crevices and seal and varnish honeycombs, in her "Comfrey Healing Salve" and sometimes added it to her lip balms.

"Propolis is used in many countries as an antibiotic so using it in my salves just gives them a little more healing power," says Cole. "Honey is a humectant and draws moisture in, so adding it to my soaps improves the moisturizing ability as well."

The Coles aren't sure what the next step of this adventure holds, but right now they are loving what they are doing.

MilkandHoneyMeadows can be found on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/milkandhoneymeadows](http://www.facebook.com/milkandhoneymeadows). A little birdy (or bee rather) told me they are already making Christmas soaps.

