

It was mid October when Stanley arrived in the mailbox at The Straw Family Farm. It was so windy and dust was blowing everywhere off the gravel road. It was the first time Stanley was thankful that he was locked inside a mailbox while he waited to be picked up. He didn't have to wait long though as Christy came right out and got him, giving the mail lady a wave.

They went straight inside and got Stanley out of his envelope. He was surprised to find four dogs and a pig all eating breakfast in the house. RJ was busy switching his boots after doing the morning chores but he soon joined in on the Breakfast fun. Stanley got something to eat as well. After all, it had been a long trip to get to the farm.

After everyone got breakfast, the pig and two of the dogs were put outside. Then RJ said he had a gift for Stanley. As Stanley opened the box he found a real live cowboy hat and bandana. RJ then explained that in the winds of the Oklahoma Prairies everyone needed a good cowboy hat to keep their hair out of their eyes and the sun and rain off their face. With pride Stanley popped his new hat on his head. RJ also told how in the harsh wind every Cowboy needs a Bandana to put over their mouth and nose so the dust won't choke him up. Without another thought Stanley tied his new bandana around his neck so he would be ready when he went outside.

Just then Christy piped up and asked RJ if he wanted to show Stanley around the farm and introduce him to some new friends. With that RJ grabbed Stanley and they were out the door. Soon Stanley found out that there are lots and lots of animals on this farm. RJ and Christy took time to introduce Stanley to each one. It was hard to remember everyone's name at first but most were so friendly they didn't really care what you called them. Not all the animals wanted to be friends with Stanley though. Some didn't want anything to do with him. Christy said it was because they had never seen anyone that flat before.

When Mr. Zebu was introduced to Stanley, he learned that Mr. Zebu would eat grass from Christy's hand but he wanted nothing to do with Stanley. Mr. Zebu snorted and stomped at Stanley but Christy said it was just because the wind made Stanley flap around a lot and that scared Mr. Zebu. That was okay though because Stanley was a bit scared of Mr. Zebu too. So Stanley was more than happy to admire him from the fence.



After all the fun Stanley had meeting everyone and learning his way around. It was time

for evening chores and dinner. After dinner there was time to sit and chat while Christy and RJ worked on some inside projects. RJ oiled up an old saddle right in the front room. While Christy worked on a hat she was crocheting. Soon everyone headed off to bed. Stanley thought Christy and RJ went to bed too early but they explained to Stanley that each day they have a lot to do. So they said Stanley would need all the sleep he could get to make it through the day. They don't take many naps around here. Stanley shared RJ's room and fell asleep in the comfy bed they had made up for him as he dreamed of being a Cowboy.



The next morning started like the one before. Everyone got up and started the day with chores. On The Straw Family Farm all the animals get to eat before the people do. Hank and Jethro, the outside dogs, come in and ate while Buttercup the pig and the two inside dogs enjoy Breakfast as well As Christy flutters around doing dishes, laundry, sweeping, mopping or any one of the many other chores she does while she feeds the animals in the house, RJ heads to the barn and feeds and hays all the animals outside.

Each day breakfast is followed by Christy informing RJ and Stanley about the work list for the day and everyone heads out to start the day's tasks. The list changes each day and things get crossed off as they are done. At this time of year everyone on the farm is getting ready for winter. Christy has a clipboard with a long list of things that need to be done before the wild wind switches to the north and winter weather sets in. Christy explains that October is what they call a work month on the farm. They don't give many tours and have very few visitors to the farm so they can fix things, add new things, get the animals bred and settled in for winter. There is firewood to chop and repairs that have to be made and poor Stanley notices that each day they work, they do it in a lot of wind. Stanley gets a lot of use out of his hat and Bandana.

On one particular day everyone worked on getting the new fences up. Stanley and Christy spent the morning gathering supplies. Christy took Stanley to town where their first stop was the lumber yard to get fence posts.



The next stop was the local farm store. There they got t-posts and concrete. It was fun and Stanley even got to ride on the forklift that loaded everything into the old work truck.



On the way home Christy and Stanley stopped at the grocery store for what Christy said was a easy lunch. They picked up meat for sandwiches, some cookies and some Pop to drink. Christy said it wasn't a very healthy meal but it was one that was easy to feed in the field were they would be working. And Pop is cheap so if it gets spilled no big deal.





At lunch Stanley found out that he liked Pop but Christy wasn't sure she should have let him have so much as he was starting to run around like a wild man. He tried to unload the heavy rolls of fencing but he was too little so that didn't work. He just got in RJ's way and almost got flattened AGAIN!



Then he tried using the post hole diggers and he was too short so that didn't work.





Stanley did get to help measure the holes so that made him happy but he still ran around wanting to do more.... After that Christy was sure to keep the pop away from Stanley!



Most days were pretty routine on the farm. Chores, Breakfast, work, lunch, roping and dinner before having some down time to chat before bed. Other days there were odd things that would happen on the farm and everyone would stop what they were doing to take care of it. Like once Derf the horse broke through his gate so Stanley and RJ took time to put Derf up and fix the gate. (Derf is Fred Spelled backwards)



Derf is a really cool horse. He let Stanley pet him and everything but Stanley was a little sad that he didn't get to ride Derf.



On another day after the work was done Christy and RJ took Stanley to the arena. There RJ had all the horses haltered and ready to teach Stanley to ride. The horses were very big and with the wind blowing Stanley soon found it was really hard to hold on. He would have both hands full of the horses mane but he still seemed to flap around a lot.



That day Stanley even got to ride a wild mustang. There are two on the farm but only Star is big enough to ride. Caballo still has some growing to do. Stanley's favorite horse to ride however, is named Coop. She had a saddle and bridle on and she seemed to like giving Stanley pony rides around the farm. Stanley was able to hold on better when he rode on Coop so he didn't blow away so much either.





The funniest thing that Stanley got to ride was B'Day. She is a cow. RJ has had her since she was a baby. She is really sweet but RJ still had to help Stanley stay on her back because there isn't even a mane to hold on to when you ride a cow.



Stanley really wanted to ride a long horn cow but Snap Dragon turned out to be one of those animals on the farm that didn't take to Flat Stanley. Poor Stanley, he really did try to make friends with her.



Each day on the farm there is always a lots to do. One of those things is to milk the goats. Holly the goat was so nice that she let Stanley learn to milk her.





Another job that had to be done on the farm was new barred wire had to be strung. This was another job that Stanley felt left out of because he was too small to even lift the heavy spools of wire. But Christy made Stanley feel better by giving him the important job of Driving the truck. It was Stanley's first time driving and it was a good thing that he was in pasture because learning to drive straight is harder than it looks.



Stanley was so enjoying his stay on the farm even with all the hard work to be done. That is until the night of the big storm. Storms on the Prairie are such a beautiful site and Stanley had never seen anything like it. The sky was flashing with huge lightening bolts in the distance and the thunder could be heard booming for miles and miles. It is so flat on the prairie that you can see the storms miles away before they get to you. Christy says that gives her time to batten down the hatches. She says that while the storms kind of look like other storms the prairie winds make them more dangerous as they can bring tornadoes to the farm. With the North wind trying to blow in and the South wind trying to hang around a bit longer the two winds dance and twirl at times and can get pretty scary.

One night a very large black cloud blew in as everyone on the farm finished up their work for the day. At dinner there was talk of who would keep watch and if they thought the weather would get bad or not. It was all kind of scary for Stanley. Christy told him not to worry that she was sure it would just be an everyday storm and not anything more. As Stanley drifted off to sleep thoughts of the storm, wind and tornadoes filled his head. Before he knew it, it was morning and the storm had passed.

The morning started like every other. Stanley woke up to Christy buzzing around the kitchen doing this and that. RJ was already outside trying to get the morning feeding done when all of the sudden RJ burst through the door yelling for everyone to come quick.

Before Stanley could figure out what was going on everyone was out the door. When they stopped and looked around it was a terrible sight to see. There were huge limbs laying on the ground and debris lay everywhere. The barns were still standing so everyone thought that was a good thing. Then Christy went to calling all the animals up to make sure everyone was okay. At the pig pen Buttercup could be heard but no one could see her. Then RJ noticed that the pile of firewood that had been chopped for winter was a mess. And as they got closer they could hear Buttercup's cries for help get louder and louder. Then they found her. It was horrible ... Buttercup was trapped under the pile of wood. RJ, Christy and Stanley all started digging

and throwing wood every which way. Finally they got to the bottom of the pile and Buttercup seemed to be just fine. Except for one little thing ... Like Stanley, She was now FLAT!!



Thankful that Buttercup was okay Christy put her in the house to eat and set out searching for the other animals. Next she headed to the goat pen. She called and most of the goats came running. She looked around and couldn't see Holly. Christy listened really hard and called again. She was sure she heard her. That is when Christy noticed the shade walls on the west fence had blown down in the storm. Christy yelled for RJ and Stanley who came running right away. They lifted the wall and that is when they saw her. Holly let out a baaaa, jumped up and ran off to the milk stand like nothing happened. However, Christy, RJ and Stanley couldn't believe their eyes. Holly didn't realize that she was FLAT too.



After that Christy and Stanley went to milk Holly while RJ headed to the stalls to check everything there. As he moved from pen to pen he saw little things that had blown down but nothing to bad until he got to Coop's stall. When he opened the gate and looked around he



found that the entire wall on the west side of her pen had blown down. All he could see was Coop's friendly face. So he grabbed the wall and with one big heave, he lifted it off her. She got to her feet in no time and went to her trough to see if RJ had brought her breakfast yet. RJ stood there shaking his head as he noticed that Coop was much thinner now too. Even she was FLAT.



As they made their way around the farm they soon found everyone but B'Day. For hours they looked and looked but no one could find her. Christy and RJ got upset but soon realized that they had to go tend to the damage and the other animals. Christy cried for a while as she worked to fix fence and hammer back up stalls. As more of the farm got cleaned up they soon realized that the road had washed out too. They called the county workers who sent big road graters and rollers to fix it.

As the last of the damage was repaired and the sticks and firewood were all picked up one of the county workers came over to where everyone was standing. He had a frown on his face and seemed a bit sad. RJ noticed first and asked if something was wrong. The county worker said that he didn't want anyone mad at him but there had been an accident while they were fixing the road. Christy asked what he meant and he explained that the roller had accidentally run over a cow. As everyone turned around they saw B'Day standing by the side of the road. Everyone was super happy and ran over to love on her. She was no worse for ware but she too was now really FLAT.



By this time RJ and Christy were back to their normal, happy, smiling selves. They spend the bigger part of the day cleaning the farm and putting things back the way they were before the storm. However, the story was far from over. They soon realized that they had to find some new accommodations to keep Buttercup, Holly, Coop and B'Day safe. At first no one gave it any thought and they just put them each in their old pastures. But soon the flat animal struggled to fit back into their herds. Each animal had a different issue to deal with and as it all unfolded Christy, RJ and even Stanley found that a farm is no place for flat animals.

First the wind came up like normal but this time poor Buttercup whose pen is on the north side of the house found herself fighting harder than ever to not get blown away. She held on with all her might but in the end if it hadn't been for Christy running out and snatching her up, she would have blown away for sure. Christy took her in the house to keep her safe but Moose the inside dog was having none of that. So for the time being Buttercup had to be put in the kitchen pen. It isn't that big but for the time being it would have to do.

Meanwhile Holly was having her own issues. You see the other goats thought Holly was something paper and were trying to eat her. She kept having to run from the whole herd. They just wouldn't leave her alone and all they wanted to do was nibble on her. Soon she was out of breath and couldn't find any place safe from both the wind and the herd. Within minutes RJ showed up and took her inside as well. The pen in the kitchen was small but it was the only place safe for a flat goat and a flat pig. The only thing they had to be careful of was the wind from the back door. Each time it opened Holly and Buttercup would have to hold on to the sides of the pen. For the most part everyone thought things would work out.

That is until RJ went to ride. He saddled up Coop and while he had to make some adjustments to her tack everything seemed to be going fine. He took her down in the pasture to bring up the cattle so he could rope and that is when he got concerned. B'Day wasn't with the



herd. They were all in the back corner down in the draw, hunkering down from the wind but she was no where to be found. He took off in a loop calling and searching. The problem is that it is hard to see a flat cow. Unless B'Day turned side ways she couldn't be seen. And it also lead to complications for the herd. B'Day's legs just couldn't cover as much ground as the other cattle so she couldn't keep up. She struggled and struggled but she would be worn out before she could catch up and by then it would be time for them to come back to the arena for roping. Poor B'Day was tired and left behind. So RJ scoped her up and tucked her in his pocket and gave her a ride to the house as they rounded up the cattle. When he got to the house and explained the problem to Christy she said to put her with the others in the kitchen pen.

Man, was that pen getting full but The Straw Family Farm really had no other choice as there was nowhere else to put a Flat herd that was safe from the other animals and the wind. RJ left Christy and Stanley in the kitchen trying to figure out somewhere else to put them all. He headed back to the Arena where he got ready to rope. RJ does his best thinking when he is roping so he herded the cattle through the chutes and backed Coop in the box. With a nod of his head and a jerk of the rope the first calf ran straight as an arrow out into the arena. Coop shot out of the box and was right behind him. RJ swung his rope and it fell perfectly around that calf's neck. However, that is where everything went wrong. Coop tried to stop but the wind started to blow and it pushed her to the calf. RJ was already in the middle of his dismount and he went face down in the dirt. The calf kept running and Coop was way to thin to stop him. RJ was dusting off when he realized just how much trouble Coop was in. He ran and grabbed Whiskey and headed to help Coop. Whiskey caught up to Coop in no time and RJ got that calf roped and tied down in the nick of time. Coop was very hot and sweaty as she had tried to do her job but just couldn't get it done now that she is Flat.

Once RJ had the situation under control in the arena he took the saddle and tack off Coop. He headed to the house with his head hung low. The minute Christy and Stanley saw him they knew something wasn't right. RJ explained that since Coop was now flat she couldn't hold the calf for RJ and that means that they couldn't rope together anymore. Christy told RJ it was okay and to just add her to the pen of animals inside the kitchen and they would figure something else out.



That is when Flat Stanley piped up. He had what he thought was a brilliant idea. You see Stanley knew there was a homestead that had an empty trailer that they used to use for Bunnies. Now they have the bunnies in burrows outside so he thought that the empty trailer would make the perfect place for Coop, B'Day, Holly and Buttercup. They could close the door and be safe from other animals and the wind.

With a new plan, everyone got to work. First thing Monday morning after breakfast Flat Stanley, Flat Coop, Flat B'Day, Flat Holly and Flat Buttercup all loaded up in an envelope and set out for a crazy adventure that they like to call Homesteading. They were on their way to Willow Creek Homestead of Idaho!!!