

"Spotting a farmer used to be as easy as recognizing a cowboy," declared the Crops Master. Pay attention while watching a classic western like *Blood on the Moon* with Robert Mitchum and Walter Brennan; you can rest assured that you will know when you are looking at a cowboy. The everyday outfit of cowboys and farmers was often more similar than different in times past.



I remember when you wore all of the clothes you needed for the day to the farm shop in layers. The basic outfit started with wool socks every day of the year, boots, long pants, heavy tee shirt, and flannel work shirt. From your pockets a handkerchief and pair of work gloves hung. In your pockets you carried a knife, tape measure, hand lens and keys. Then the outerwear began with a hooded sweatshirt or light jacket, followed by a heavy work coat. You put on your favorite farm hat and raingear was always nearby. We worked in the elements just like the cowboys but on iron horses, with a different set of tack. We were lucky if we had an umbrella or canopy on the tractor, and a canvas wrap in the winter.

Often tools would be added to our pockets, and a role of tape for tucking and wrapping boot laces and loose fitting clothing, or patching a wound to keep going for the day. A thermos was placed in the homemade PVC holder on the tractor.

In 1987 it all changed, the Crops Master got an air-conditioned tractor, and his wife called him office boy from then on. Why, he even went to grad school!

Thus, the dilemma, we no longer know how to spot a farmer by the way they dress. Therefore, I believe that an official USA Farmer Badge is in order, issued from USDA by presidential decree. After all, farmers are few and far between in this modern society. Now more than ever the few that we have around, should stand out and be admired. A shiny badge should just about do it; Or we could just dress like farmers again.

"Please, Sweet Bliss," instead a super highway of information, a shockwave to ignorance. We all know everything, a ceaseless barrage, at our fingertips in an instance. I find myself longing for just a moment of ignorance on some topic, without a knowledgeable interruption. Like the magical quietness of a snowfall in a meadow, a ponder walking an unseen a path to a conclusion not yet known.

**Therefore decreed the Crops Master,
"Before you become knowledgeable about agriculture, relish in ignorance; the imaginative can be exhilarating!"**



May your blissful agriculture journey start with a soil as aromatic as the woodlands. Like a miser immersed in cash your whole being is in the till. You, now the farmer, place seeds in a field absent of tares, a witness to the baptism and the new crop revealed. A seer of the tender young growth, pampered with gentle rains and encouraging sunshine, unfold to the majesty of a canopy strengthened with kind winds. The birds sing their songs of praise, and the insects revel in the journey from spring's dawn to winter's sleep. Your farm rewards a hundred fold, a smile of the blessed giver to satisfy your soul.

Rather, I would encourage you take the traveled and knowledgeable path of agriculture. Heal your soil with cover crops, test its qualities and correct its inadequacies. Be watchful over your crop, for birds will pluck it out, weeds overcome, disease sicken and insects devour. Agriculture is not for the blissfully ignorant.

We learn more, and know more, because more is required. Do not become troubled from learning, it can be overwhelming; but remember to be playful with the imagination from time to time. "Every farmer a better farmer" is not just an imaginative aspiration; truly, a journey to worldwide bliss.