

## Herding...Goats

By Allison Griest

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I think baby farm animals are adorable. I remember growing up and seeing baby goats and sheep in the fields in Texas and thinking, "I really want to play with baby farm animals!"

Sadly, I was never successful in convincing my parents to get me a baby farm animal. They were probably relieved when Mary, the goat at my riding stable, curbed my enthusiasm for baby goats in third grade. She head-butted me one too many times. Nonetheless, I still think they're adorable.

Well, yesterday I was in for a surprise on the way home from a friend's farm. I discovered 10 goats to play with! Well, not really play with--they had escaped from their pasture. My first thought was, "Dang it. If only I had remembered to bring my cell phone." Then I realized my cell phone wouldn't have done much good. After all, I don't have the phone number to the farm house up the hill. I pulled off the road and turned on my hazard lights.

Now I've worked cattle (on horseback) a couple of times, but never goats (especially on foot). And unfortunately, my trusty canine pal, Patch, wasn't with me. Patch is a 2-year-old Miniature Australian Shepherd. He became my partner-in-crime in February because he wasn't confident enough to herd the goats at his farm. I wonder what he would have done in this situation. He's gotten a lot more outgoing since all of our obedience classes. I like to think he would have analyzed the situation, found the hole in the fence and proceeded to herd all 10 goats back into their pasture. Then again, maybe not.

Patch missed his golden opportunity to herd the goats back into their pasture. As I stood there, patiently pacing back and forth along the grass in between the road and the fence in an effort to keep the goats off the road, a girl from the farm house came down the road. Just as she was getting out of her car, I realized the problem. The pasture has foal fencing, but the wires are pulling away from every wooden post, creating several holes for the goats to escape through. I walked toward the goats to encourage them to go through the hole in the fence, and they scurried back into the pasture. It was apparent that they had done this before. It took everything in me to not reach down and attempt to pick up the smallest little goat. He (or she?) was so cute!

The girl from the farm thanked me, and I got back in my car and headed home. I was glad I helped prevent any car accidents or goat casualties. Despite the fact that I wasn't on a horse for the adventure, I never would have been on that road if I hadn't been driving home from a ride at my friend's farm. It's fun to think about how horses affect your life in so many ways. What crazy adventures have your horsey expeditions brought you to?

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