

SEW *sustainable*



MEET JANINE

@WHEATANDWILDFLOWER.CA

Janine Duguid lives on a mixed farm at Arnes, Manitoba, with her husband Scott and their three children. Duguid is the owner and maker of Wheat and Wildflower Handmade where she creates beautiful handmade children's clothing and accessories from her home-based studio. Duguid and her family have a cow-calf herd and farm a variety of grain and forage seed crops where they are using regenerative agriculture techniques to improve their soil and sustainability. Duguid also enjoys gardening, reading with a hot cup of tea, and riding horses with her children.

The story of how one woman took her fifteen years of corporate experience and pivoted to start-up a kid's clothing business after she was laid off.

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Agriculture has always been about sustainability. It's a personal value and a way of life that is ingrained in those who make their life and living rurally. Immersed in agriculture growing up, Janine Duguid, owner of Wheat and Wildflower Handmade, a rural business near Arnes, Manitoba, is growing a handmade business from her home-based studio on the increasingly regenerative farm she runs with her husband Scott and their three children. Duguid designs and sews cute and comfy clothes that fit growing kids for three sizes, a business she launched in the fall of 2020. Her Grow With Me Clothing line is made with high quality, durable and natural (plant-based) fabrics and provides her customers with the opportunity to acquire clothing that is stylish, functional, stands the test of time, and... you guessed it – sustainable!

Duguid is a new entrepreneur in terms of business start-up, however she has integrated her 15 years of business skills, gained from her previous corporate career in the Ag industry, into a long-term plan to build a business around her love of sewing and her desire to create quality products.

Like many people who found themselves downsized and out of work during Covid, Duguid looked to her future with optimism and a belief that she could find a new way forward that could replace her previous paid position, a position that involved a lot of people, numbers and systems. When she began considering options, Duguid found a problem she could solve within her own home. Seeing shrunken, twisted clothing sleeves and legs along with unraveling seams in her kids' brand name clothes dismayed her. This was not a good investment in her eyes. Taking stock of how these poorly made, outgrown clothes were accumulating in her own household, Duguid knew there had to be a better way.

This mindset of looking for a better way, is reflective of Duguid in all that she does. From a young age, Duguid always had an eye for bettering herself, and like many rural young people, when she graduated from high school, she dreamed of going on to university. Her initial intention was to become a vet. She entered a program at the College of Agriculture at the University of Saskatoon, and after a year decided to pursue a degree in agriculture. She graduated with a bachelor's degree, with a major in Animal Science.

After finishing her degree, Duguid moved to Winnipeg to begin work in her career. It was there she met Scott, who was attending university, and they eventually married a few years later. During this time Duguid worked her way from a feed formulator, to a supervisor position, and then into a managerial role in her department. After the birth of their first child, Duguid and her husband decided that life on the farm offered more to them than urban living.

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THEY WERE ABLE TO PURCHASE 240 ACRES OF FARMLAND, WHICH IS THEIR HOME FARMING BASE TO THIS DAY.

Duguid continued working, in mostly work-from-home positions, with both the government of Manitoba and in the private Ag sector, as she had two more children, and their farming operation grew.

The Duguids own 120 beef cows and grow a variety of crops, including forage seed, cereals and oilseeds. They also raise leafcutter bees, which aid in the pollination of their seed alfalfa crops. In the past five years they have transitioned more than 50% of their acres to regenerative ag practises and are pleased with how this has benefited their operation and their land. They are building a farm that is becoming more and more sustainable through gardening, composting, rotational grazing, growing cover crops, and implementing regenerative practices. Because the belief in sustainability runs through their farming operation, it made sense that Duguid would consider this important to building her clothing brand as well.

Wheat and Wildflower Handmade is a name based on Duguid's love of agriculture and nature. It reflects the same ideals as the choices her family is making to live more sustainably. As she adds other lifestyle products to her brand, Duguid also sees her business as a way to help her children develop entrepreneurial skills and come up with new ideas for products from their farm as well. Perhaps as a family they will add an agritourism component and maybe one day – a farm store.

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“I’M SLOWLY LEARNING TO LET GO OF PERFECTIONISM AND ACCEPT ALL FORMS OF PROGRESS... BALANCE AND FLEXIBILITY FOR MY FAMILY WERE TWO OF THE REASONS I GOT INTO THIS BUSINESS IN THE FIRST PLACE.”
- JANINE





3 THINGS I CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT

A CUP OF EARL GREY
TEA, DAILY OUTDOOR
TIME AND MY PHONE
(MY CONNECTION TO
FAMILY, FRIENDS AND
MY BUSINESS).



Duguid faces the same challenges other rural entrepreneurs deal with. Rural internet is inconsistent at times. Small business resources are not readily available. Supplies purchased online don't always arrive in the expected timeframes. There are higher shipping costs associated with shipping from a rural postal code. And she must stay current with her website and on-top-of her social media as they are her most consistent way to reach potential customers when there aren't regular in-person markets to attend. Despite these challenges, Duguid loves the entrepreneurial journey.

Managing her day-to-day life, Duguid uses a daily planner and a large fridge calendar to plan out business, family and farm priorities. Flexibility is always key as things can change quickly.

Says Duguid, "I'm slowly learning to let go of perfectionism and accept all forms of progress... Balance and flexibility for my family were two of the reasons I got into this business in the first place."

What advice would Duguid give to another woman who looks at her life and lifestyle as something to pursue for herself?

"No matter how busy life is, find a creative outlet. Even if it's just an hour once a month. Our hearts and minds need an

outlet for creativity and passion. It feels good to say, "I made this." There is such a sense of accomplishment in creating something you can use and enjoy."

She continues, "And, when you head into business, trust that it will work out. Put your heart and soul into it. Don't give yourself an option to fail. Just leave yourself with an openness to change and grow. Change as you need. Improve as you go. Your trail may wander, but your business will grow to fit you and your lifestyle, and you will end up with a business that is uniquely yours."

Timely wisdom from a Trailblazer who is cutting her own path!

Photography has changed how Sara Uruski interacts with the world. She sees the beauty in everything and sees everything as a lens attached to her outlook on life. Her kids are her world. After going on maternity leave in 2020, after the birth of her son, Uruski decided that teaching had to go on the back burner for a while, until her children were older. Fast forward two and a half years later, it was the best decision ever. Currently, Uruski is renovating an old 1940's red barn that is located on the family's property. It will become her studio. During renovations she has been photographing clients in the barn for a very rustic look. The natural lighting is perfect and her very first client actually had to climb up a ladder to get to the second level! Uruski is very thankful for her family and her clients, who she thinks of as family now too.

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