

MATLOCK FARMS

WINTER 2026 ISSUE

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Editor's Letter

Winter has a way of asking fewer questions.

By the time it settles in fully, there's less appetite for big plans and loud declarations. The days are shorter. The work is steadier. What needs doing becomes clear, and what doesn't quietly falls away.

This issue was shaped by that clarity.

On the farm, winter isn't a pause—it's a recalibration.

Strength looks different now. It's about durability instead of output. Warmth is practical. Making things by hand becomes less about creativity and more about care. Love shows up in shared work and quiet presence, not grand gestures.

That's the winter we wanted to honor here.

You'll find pieces in this issue that move at a slower pace. They aren't meant to be skimmed. They're meant to sit with you—between chores, beside a pot on the stove, near a fire that's already burned once today. The recipes are forgiving. The crafts are useful. The reflections are rooted in real days, not ideal ones.

We didn't set out to document winter as something to endure or escape. We wanted to live inside it for a while—to notice what it asks of us, and what it gives back when we listen.

If this issue does anything, we hope it offers a sense of steadiness. A reminder that winter doesn't need fixing. It needs attention. It needs patience. It needs us to meet it where it is.

Thank you for being here with us in this season.

Kim Matlock



A photograph of a person wearing a dark jacket, a hat, and tall boots, walking a black dog on a leash along a dirt path. The path is covered in fallen autumn leaves. In the background, there is a white barn with a cupola, a pond, and trees with yellowing leaves. A wooden fence runs along the left side of the path.

Strong Through the Cold

Staying Fit Around the Farm All Winter

Winter has a way of stripping things down to what actually matters.

There are no long daylight hours to hide behind, no bursts of frenetic activity to mistake for progress. The cold makes every movement honest. It asks the body to work deliberately, the mind to stay present, and the day to unfold at a pace that cannot be rushed.

On the farm, winter fitness doesn't arrive through resolutions or programs. It comes quietly, through repetition, responsibility, and showing up even when the weather suggests you shouldn't.

Fitness Without an Audience

There's a particular kind of strength that forms when no one is watching.

Carrying feed buckets through frozen ground. Breaking ice at the trough before sunrise. Wrestling stiff gates that don't care how cold your hands are. These are not glamorous acts, and they don't fit neatly into tracking apps or step counts. But they build something deeper than surface-level conditioning.

Winter farm work develops functional strength—the kind that supports joints, stabilizes the core, and reinforces balance. Every uneven step across frozen pasture requires attention. Every lift demands proper posture. The cold has no patience for sloppy movement.

Over time, the body adapts. Muscles engage more efficiently. Breath deepens. You learn to conserve energy without becoming sedentary. The result isn't bulk or speed—it's durability.

Walking as Foundation

One of the most overlooked forms of winter fitness on the farm is walking—unhurried, attentive walking.

Fence checks. Animal counts. Evening loops around the property as the light fades. These aren't just tasks; they're opportunities for sustained, low-impact movement that keeps joints supple and circulation steady.

Cold-weather walking strengthens stabilizing muscles, improves balance, and encourages cardiovascular endurance without strain. It also offers something no gym can provide: awareness. You notice changes in the land, the animals, and yourself.

Winter walking isn't about distance. It's about consistency.

WINTER WARM-UP

5 Minutes That Matter

- High-knee walk in place
- Slow, wide-arm circles
- Arm swings
- Gentle torso twists
- Deep breathing



Winter walking works best when it stays unhurried. Mind your posture, keep your steps steady, and stay consistent even in the cold.

Strength Through Carrying

Carrying is the quiet backbone of farm fitness.

Hay bales, feed sacks, firewood, water containers—each one demands coordination between hands, arms, core, and legs. Unlike controlled gym lifts, farm carrying is irregular. Weight shifts. Ground conditions change. The body has to respond in real time.

This type of work builds grip strength, joint integrity, and mental focus. It also teaches respect for limits. Winter cold magnifies fatigue, and knowing when to take two trips instead of one is part of staying strong long-term.

Strength, in winter, is not about proving something. It's about preserving capability.

Rest Is Part of Training

Winter fitness is incomplete without rest.

Shorter days naturally encourage earlier evenings. This is not a failure of discipline—it's alignment with the season. Muscles recover more effectively when sleep is prioritized. Joints thank you when days are balanced between effort and stillness.

Rest doesn't mean inactivity. It means intention. Light stretching by the fire. Gentle movement indoors. Warm meals that replenish rather than deplete.

Winter is when the body consolidates strength. What you build slowly now becomes the foundation for spring's demands.

CARRY SMART, NOT FAST

*Five Simple Steps to
Make Lifting Safer*



- Split heavy loads into multiple trips.
- Keep weight close to the body.
- Engage the core before lifting
- Turn with feet, not spine.
- Gloves with grip matter more than you think.

Mental Strength in the Quiet Months

Physical strength is only part of winter fitness. Mental resilience plays an equally important role.

Cold, isolation, and shorter days can test motivation. Some mornings, stepping outside feels heavier than the work itself. Developing routines helps anchor those days. So does reframing the season—not as something to endure, but as something to inhabit fully.

Winter strips away noise. What remains is rhythm: chores, meals, rest, repetition. In that rhythm, mental endurance forms. You learn to work without urgency, to find satisfaction in completion rather than accumulation.

This quiet strength carries forward.

Strong, the Right Way

To be strong through the cold is not to conquer winter. It is to cooperate with it.

It means moving enough to stay capable, resting enough to stay whole, and listening closely enough to avoid harm. It means valuing steadiness over intensity, consistency over spectacle.

On the farm, winter strength is earned quietly. And when warmer days return, it is already there—waiting, dependable, and earned one cold morning at a time.





Love, Made Simply

A Farm-Style Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day has a way of arriving already exhausted.

By the time it shows up in stores and feeds, it's loud with expectation—flowers that won't last, gifts chosen for appearance, dinners planned around reservations instead of appetite. It asks for spectacle at a time of year that quietly asks for rest.

On the farm, February doesn't have much patience for that.

Winter is still holding firm. The days are short. The ground is cold. Animals don't care about calendar holidays, and the work still needs doing. Love, in this season, looks less like grand gestures and more like showing up—steady, warm, and present.

And that's exactly why Valentine's Day belongs here, if you let it.





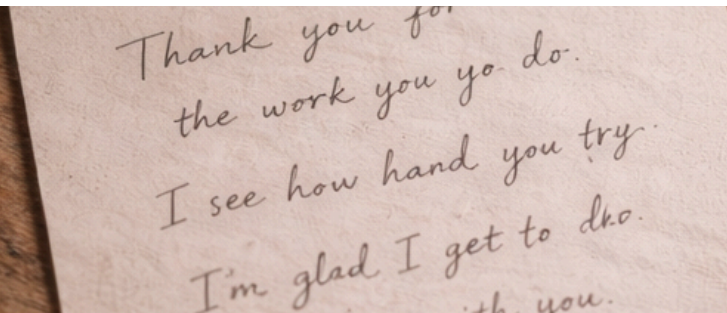
Lowering the Volume

The first step toward a farm-style Valentine's Day is lowering the volume.

No elaborate plans. No pressure to impress. No obligation to manufacture a mood that doesn't match the season. Winter doesn't want extravagance—it wants sincerity.

Love in February feels best when it fits between chores and supper. When it can be held alongside cold hands and tired muscles. When it doesn't require rearranging life to prove itself.

This kind of celebration begins by deciding that enough is already enough.



Notes That Last Longer Than Flowers

When the world is quieter, small truths land harder. A handwritten note, left on a counter or tucked into a coat pocket, carries a weight that text messages can't quite match.

It doesn't need poetry. It doesn't need length. It just needs honesty.



Food That Feels Like Care

If there is a centerpiece to a farm Valentine's Day, it's food—but not the kind that arrives boxed or plated for display.

It's food that warms. Food that fills a kitchen with familiar smells. Foods that can be shared without ceremony.

A simple meal cooked intentionally carries more meaning than anything ordered last-minute.

Soup simmered slowly. Bread baked in the afternoon so it's still warm by evening.

Pepper jelly often makes an appearance this time of year. Not as a product, but as a presence. It's sweet, a little sharp, and familiar—exactly right for winter.

Food becomes an act of care when it's chosen thoughtfully and shared without distraction.



From the Kimpossible Farm Table



NOT
VEGAN

6-8
SERVINGS

30 MIN

CHICKEN & VEGETABLE SOUP

A Winter Pot That Takes Its Time

This soup is meant to simmer while other things get done. It's flexible, deeply comforting, and better the next day

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 carrots, sliced
- 3 celery stalks, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1½ pounds bone-in chicken thighs or breasts
- 8 cups chicken broth (homemade if you have it)
- 2 cups water
- 2 potatoes, diced (optional but grounding)
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme (or a few fresh sprigs)
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- Optional additions:
 - frozen peas or green beans
 - chopped parsley
 - leftover rice or noodles

DIRECTIONS

1. Start the base
2. Heat oil or butter in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion, carrots, and celery. Cook slowly until softened, about 8–10 minutes. Don't rush this—this is where the flavor starts.
3. Add garlic
4. Stir in garlic and cook for 30 seconds, just until fragrant.
5. Build the soup
6. Nestle the chicken pieces into the vegetables. Add broth, water, bay leaf, thyme, and a generous pinch of salt and pepper.
7. Simmer slowly
8. Bring to a gentle boil, then reduce to a low simmer. Partially cover and let cook for about 45–60 minutes, until the chicken is tender and pulling away easily.
9. Shred and finish
10. Remove chicken, shred it, and return it to the pot. Add potatoes and any optional vegetables. Simmer another 20–30 minutes until everything is tender.
11. Taste and adjust
12. Remove bay leaf. Adjust seasoning. Add herbs or grains if using.



Warm Hands, Slow Hours

Winter Crafts Worth the Time

Winter changes how work feels.

The pace slows—not because there is less to do,
but because the body and the light demand something different.

Hands stay busy, but movements become smaller.
The work moves indoors.

This is the season when making by hand makes sense again.

Warm Hands, Slow Hours

Candle Pouring:

STEADY, USEFUL, FORGIVING

Candle making is a winter craft for a reason. It asks for warmth, patience, and attention, but not perfection.

You don't need elaborate molds or complicated fragrances. Simple jar candles, poured steadily and intentionally, are more than enough.

Winter candle making works best when it's small-batch:

- One or two scents
- A few jars at a time
- No rush to finish everything in one session

The process itself becomes part of the rhythm. Melting wax slowly. Measuring fragrances carefully. Waiting for temperatures to settle.

Candles made this way aren't just decorative objects; they're functional light for dark months. They sit on kitchen countertops, beside tables - *not as accents*, but as companions.

Pepper Jelly & Preserves:

SMALL BATCHED, NO PRESSURE

Winter is not canning season - but it is preserving season.

This is when you revisit what was put away earlier in the year. Pepper jelly jams, pickled vegetables, sauces. Not to stockpile more, but to refine what you know already works.

Winter jelly making is about:

- Smaller batches
- Familiar recipes
- Minor adjustments, not experimentation marathons

It's the perfect time to tweak heat levels, sweetness, or texture without the pressure of a full harvest waiting behind you. One pot, one afternoon.

Pepper jelly, especially, benefits from winter attention. Flavors mellow. You notice things in January that you didn't have time for in August. These jars become winter gifts - thoughtful, useful and genuinely appreciated.



Mending & Repair:

QUIET WINS



Winter exposes what's been ignored.

Loose buttons. Split seams. These aren't failures - they're invitations.

Mending is one of the most grounding winter crafts because it improves daily life.

Winter evenings are ideal for this. Hands busy. Mind relaxed. Something tangible made better by the end.

Kitchen Projects that Don't Rush

SLOW HEAT, STEADY RETURNS

Winter cooking crafts succeed when they're allowed to stretch.

Bread dough rising slowly. Broths simmering all afternoon. Granola baking gently while the house warms. These aren't "projects" in the modern sense—they're background processes.

You don't hover over them. You check in. Stir occasionally. Adjust heat. Let time do the work.

Winter cooking rewards calm attention.





Winter. Well Lived.

Finding Rhythm When the Farm Slows Down

Winter has a reputation for being something to get through.

It's framed as an obstacle—cold to endure, days to count down, a pause before real life resumes. Even on the farm, where seasons dictate so much, winter is often treated as the waiting room between harvest and planting.

But winter doesn't arrive empty-handed. It brings its own instructions, if you're willing to read them.



A Different Kind of Full

Winter days are shorter, but they *aren't lacking*. They're full in a *quieter way*—*chores done deliberately, meals cooked with intention, evenings that stretch instead of rush.*

Slowing without Stopping

Living winter well doesn't mean doing nothing. Animals still need feeding. Water still freezes. Wood still needs stacking. Tasks are grouped thoughtfully. Movements become economical.

*Winter strips away excess
and leaves the essential.*

This slower pace isn't laziness. It's adaptation. When work is done fully, then allowed to end. When evenings belong to rest without guilt.



Winter doesn't ask you to become someone new.
It asks you to pay attention.

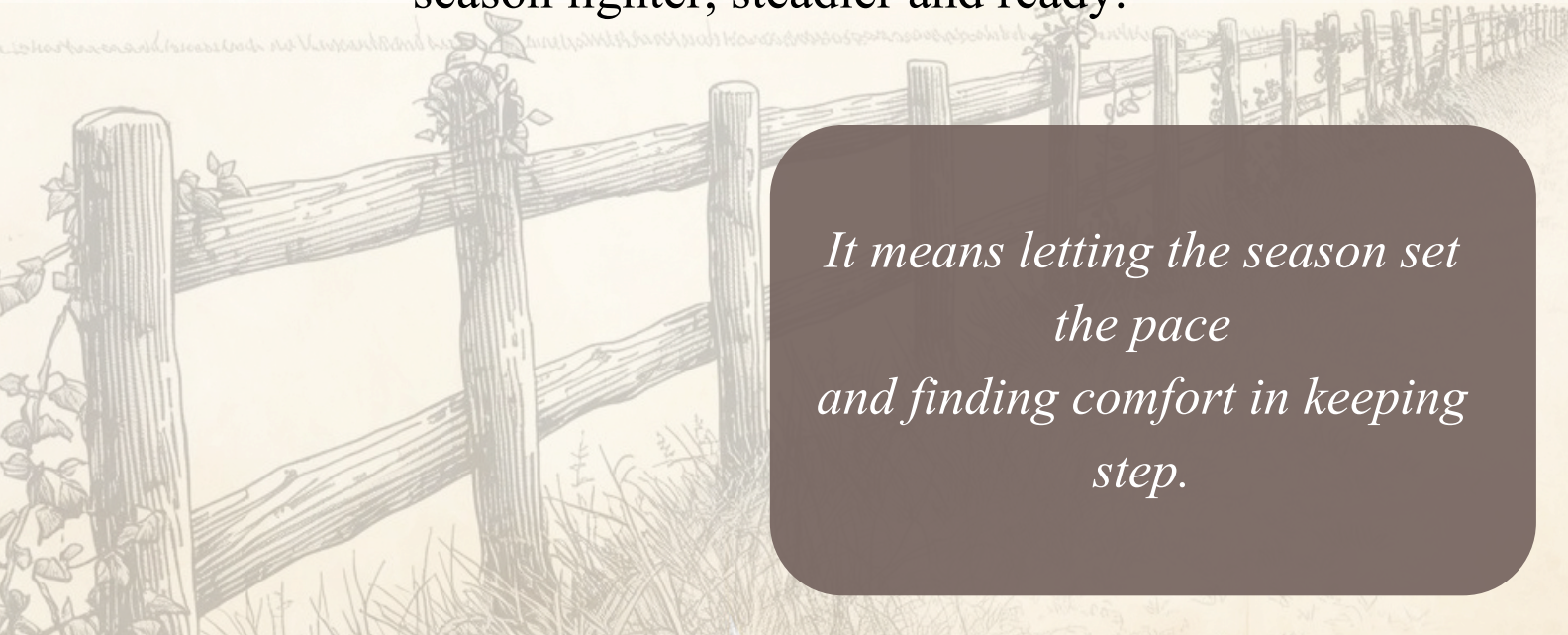
To what slows naturally.
To what endures without effort.
To what you miss when everything gets loud.

When spring comes - and it always does - you don't leave
winter behind.

You bring forward what it taught you: restraint, care,
patience, and the knowledge that not everything needs to
grow at once.

Winter isn't a pause in living.
It's where living is distilled.

And if you listen closely, it sends you into the next
season lighter, steadier and ready.



*It means letting the season set
the pace
and finding comfort in keeping
step.*