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Pain drives woman to try goat milk, start making products

By CASEY MURPHY cmurphy@tylerpaper.com Sep 1, 2013

Being raised on a farm in West Texas, Nettie Patterson always has been a "doer."

A broken hip led to fibromyalgia and constant pain that slowed her down until she found new ways to manage her illness. That led to her starting Udderly-Natural out of her barn in Troup, where she makes a variety of products from goat's milk.

Mrs. Patterson, 53, was raised on a farm in Lubbock. She and her husband of 33 years, Pat, raised their two children in Richardson, where she worked for DalMac Construction Co. for 18 years. When their children left the nest in 2005, they moved to Troup. Patterson, a Tyler native, works for Larson Manufacturing Co.

In 2008, Mrs. Patterson fell off her sister's horse and broke her hip in three places. She was immobilized for 12 weeks, and although she healed without surgery, she said things began happening to her body that she couldn't figure out. She felt like she had the flu all of the time and was depressed.

In late 2009, she was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia, which can be brought on by stress or a traumatic experience, she said, adding that it has a host of different symptoms.

Through research and trying different things, as well as help from doctors, chiropractors and health foods, she is now able to control the pain, she said.

But it has been a long learning process.

Being raised on and living in Troup on a working farm, Mrs. Patterson was always "a doer," she said. One day while working in the barn, she started crying, dropped to her knees and prayed to God about the pains he could no longer bare, she said.

Mrs. Patterson decided to start a ministry for women in First Baptist Church of Mixon suffering from fibromyalgia and other chronic illnesses. She started Angel Hugs, a support group that met once a month. About 100 women from the community, as well as people on its website, were involved in the ministry, she said. About 15 to 20 women met monthly and talked about what they could do despite their afflictions. They volunteered for several nonprofit organizations.

"When we can take our focus off of ourselves and reach out to others, it's amazing how much better it can make you feel," Mrs. Patterson said.

While running the ministry, Mrs. Patterson said she got an email from a pastor in Kenya, requesting Bible studies for women of his church. Angel Hugs sent the group Bibles, and Mrs. Patterson and three other women traveled to Africa to visit.

In July, Mrs. Patterson ended Angel Hugs Ministry to focus on her business venture.

"Some ministries are only for a season," she said. "It did what it was supposed to do."

Mrs. Patterson started Udderly-Natural in October.

Because of her fibromyalgia, Mrs. Patterson's condition is worsened by many things, including cow's milk, she said. Jackie Brown, of Jacksonville, has a goat farm and told her she believed goat milk could help her. Ms. Brown also had been making soaps from goat's milk for years, she said.

Mrs. Patterson began drinking the milk and using the soap and saw positive effects. She decided to try to make products such as lotions and creams from goat's milk to help with joint pain and other symptoms of fibromyalgia. She came up with Heavenly Hugs, a therapeutic lotion that helps with sore muscles, arthritis, joint pain and other ailments. She also makes other creams, as well as bath and body washes and soaps, body and facial sugar scrubs, lip balm, deodorant and salves.

"Everything I make has goat milk in it," she said, adding that she uses essential oils and all natural ingredients. "Because I've made these changes, I'm better."

Mrs. Patterson has seven goats and makes her products in her barn. She sells her merchandise in three local stores: Karen's Health Food in Whitehouse, Steele's Feed and Seed in Troup and Eastex Trading Post in Longview. The products also are available at www.udderly-natural.com or by calling 903-969-8127.

Ms. Brown makes all of the soaps for the business and Mrs. Patterson's sister, Lessie Wilder, of Brownwood, helps with promotions and advertising. She said her husband is also a big part of the business, helping with its marketing and accounting.

"This is God's business," she said. "I'm just the steward of it."