

# Does the farmer really want a wife? Rural women prove to be twice as keen as men to meet their perfect match.

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With the eagerly-awaited comeback of the TV show *Farmer Wants a Wife* (<http://muddymatches.typepad.com/news/2009/02/the-farmer-wants-a-wife.html>) about to hit UK screens later this year on Channel Five, we will once again be reminded of the plight of farmers and the difficulty they have in finding love. However, according to countryside online dating site (<http://www.muddymatches.co.uk>) MuddyMatches.co.uk, twice as many rural women are signing up in search of love so, either the farmer doesn't really want a wife, or he just hasn't looked in the right place yet.

Since sisters Emma and Lucy Reeves launched the site in March 2007, more than 20,000 people have signed up with a desire to meet new people who share their interest in the countryside but the girls have noted with interest that just over 65% of their membership base is now made up of women.

"We're forever reading stories in the press about the lack of single women (<http://www.muddymatches.co.uk>) in rural areas and the wacky lengths to which some men have gone to attract ladies to their region", says Lucy, "but what we seem to be experiencing is completely the opposite, so we are often left feeling slightly bemused by these reports."

Having turned their attention last year to 'offline' social events (<http://www.muddymatches.co.uk/events>) such as sailing trips, clay shoots and activity weekends, the girls also noticed a similar theme. "We would sell out of female places within a week or two of advertising the event", says Emma, "but it would take much longer, and a lot more badgering on our part, to fill the male places."

The black-tie Mud Lovers Ball (<http://www.muddymatches.co.uk/mud-lovers-ball/>) they are holding at the end of February, for example, is no exception; the female tickets sold out a month before the event and there is now a waiting list of more than a hundred women hoping that more female spaces will be made available when the last of the male tickets are snapped up. "It's a great shame", says Lucy, "but we often have to stop selling female tickets to our events until we can guarantee we have got enough men to match the girls who have already bought tickets. We have always had a roughly even male-female ratio at our events but the girls often miss out if they don't get in there early and the guys definitely make us work for it!"

In short, there is simply no excuse for rural men (<http://www.muddymatches.co.uk>) to be lonely this Valentine's Day and, if the farmer really does want a wife, he now knows where to find one.

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- The Mud Lovers Ball is being held in Northamptonshire on 28th February and has already attracted more than 250 people from across the UK. Male tickets are still available for £65 at [www.muddymatches.co.uk](http://www.muddymatches.co.uk).