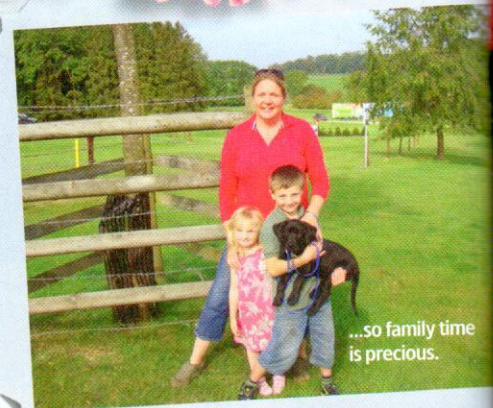


## the good times



The Deanes' summers are hectic...

'We fit in a mini holiday at home, setting up a tent in one of the fields'



...so family time is precious.

### My summer is... camping in the garden

**Hannah Deane, 35, is married to farmer Ian, 38, and has two children, Joseph, 8, and Harriet, 4. They live in Norfolk.**

While most families look forward to the summer so they can relax, ours is when everything goes crazy. With two kids, two dogs, a cat, three horses and chickens, life is busy anyway. Add in 18 paying guests, weekly wedding parties and a bunch of farm workers and it's manic. But I wouldn't change it for the world.

We live on a 360-acre farm in Norfolk, five minutes from the coast and close to the Norfolk Broads. It's an irresistible draw for tourists and means our B&B is fully booked all through the summer. The accommodation, Dairy Barns, is just across the farmyard and I greet all the guests with tea and Victoria sponge, and cook them a huge breakfast in the morning, while the children ride their bikes around the yard. We also host country-style weddings for up to 80 guests, which

I organise from start to finish, and of course, summer is the busiest time for that.

August is also harvest time, so it's perfectly normal for me to come downstairs in

my pyjamas at 6am and find a group of farm workers in my kitchen discussing the weather.

So, somewhere within these months of madness, we need to find a little calm for the children, which is why every year we fit in a mini holiday at home and set up our tent in one of our own fields. We can't spend too much time there because we've got to earn our living back at the house, so we usually leave the tent up for a few weeks and try and get back as often as we can.

We'll start by lighting the barbecue and grilling some sausages. Then, as dusk rolls in, we light our chiminea, toast marshmallows and play a few old-fashioned games, like ludo or dominoes.

There's no point in trying to get the children to bed until it's dark, so we usually snuggle into our sleeping bags at the same time, drifting off to sleep with the sounds of nature all around us. On a clear night, I like to stay outside by myself for a few minutes longer, just to take it all in and really enjoy the peacefulness. Last year, I was staring up at

the stars when a barn owl swooped low over my head, oblivious to me sitting there. It was a magical moment.

We're woken up at the crack of dawn by our cockerel, who crows from the top of the apple tree. Sometimes it's so loud it feels like he's in the tent with us. Then the swallows and housemartins start up, and I lie in my cosy sleeping bag listening to the chatter of everything around us.

Often I have to get up early to cook breakfast for our guests, leaving the others in bed, but if I'm lucky, my mum helps out, and then brings bacon sandwiches and waffles down to the tent, which makes it feel like a proper holiday.

Our lives border on madness in the summer, so taking time out to enjoy it with the children is always special. Just doing something different – even in my own garden – feels like a holiday. And anyway, Norfolk is so perfect in the summer, I wouldn't want to be anywhere else.

■ Visit [dairybarns.co.uk](http://dairybarns.co.uk) for info on Hannah's B&B.

'On a clear night, I like to stay outside and enjoy the peacefulness'