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67 ACRES | JACK COUNTY



MCBEE RANCH

\$3,950/Ac

Located in northern Jack County. It is heavily wooded with primarily oaks, a few scattered mesquite. The terrain is gently rolling across most of the ranch with good elevation change. The highest point is located along the south portion then generally slopes south. Access is off FM 2190 and a private deeded all weather road. Electricity is available on the property and well water is available. Additional acreage available. Various size tracts available.

100 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



STANFIELD RANCH

\$2,500/Ac

The Stanfield Ranch is about half wooded and half farmland. The east half along Zachary Lane is farmland. The west half is primarily wooded with mesquites, a few scattered oaks, with rolling to sloping terrain and great views. There are two stock ponds and a seasonal creek. The Little Wichita River is approximately 1 mile south and the Red River is approximately 2 miles east. For the most part this ranch is surrounded by large acreage neighbors. Electricity is available and well water appears available.

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ON THE COVER

Females have always played a crucial role in agriculture, and it is a role that is constantly evolving. More and more, women are stepping into roles predominantly filled by men, including Jenny Johnson, ranch manager for Timmerman Land and Cattle in Electra, Texas. (Photo courtesy Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

School closings. Empty shelves. Soaring unemployment rates. Death counts.

Our lives have been turned upside down and there are few who have not felt the effects of

COVID-19, and that includes those of us in the agricultural industry. It is an industry whose people now have to find a way to keep themselves and their families healthy - because, let's face it, there is no telecommuting in the ag world. The industry will continue meeting the demands of consumers who have changed the way they buy and consume food, while also dealing with the economic implications those changes have brought.

There are many unknowns during this time as we face a pandemic unlike any other in history. What I do know is the agricultural world is resilient. It is an industry of hard working Americans who have always carried this country on their back, and they will continue to do just that as we feel the effects of COVID-19 in the years, and maybe even decades, to come. Unlike many of the challenges faced in the past, we now have the advantage of technology to stay connected, and I hope we can use it to support one another with ideas and encouragement.

To be completely honest, I'm not sure where our society will be when this issue reaches your hands, but I pray grandparents are once again hugging their grandkids, children are playing at the park and consumers are dining in their favorite restaurants. I also know whether we are still in the middle of devastation or moving forward, the agricultural community will be facing up to the challenge with the hard work, dedication and honor it has always shown. Until then, our thoughts and prayers go out to those on the front line, fighting this pandemic, and to all of those affected.

As always, our contributors are full of wonderful things this issue. I hope that during this scary and uncertain time, the articles within the pages of this issue will bring you some peace and happiness, if only for a few minutes. To subscribe by mail call 940-872-5922 and make sure to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram and Twitter. Wishing you all the best this May.

Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com



CONTENTS



pg. 23 Rodeo feels the effects of COVID-19



pg. 32 Jenny Johnson



pg. 13 Ag Elsewhere: Montana



pg. 50 Home Sweet Home

10

Back at the Ranch

Calves are busy chasing their mommas, and being a part of this miracle of life is what it is all about.

28

Equine Infectious Anemia

What is a Coggins test, and why is it so important? Why is the test only good for one year?

45

The Bees Knees

“God looked down on his planned paradise and said, ‘I need a caretaker.’ So God made a farmer.”

46

On the Road with Dave

Dave Alexander urges us to take some time to dig into our musical archives this month.

54

Grazing North Texas

The plant family that includes water lilies and lotuses is a common invader in our livestock water.



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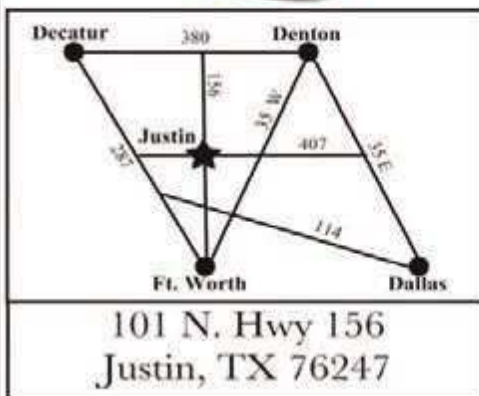
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North Texas Farm & Ranch

Published by Dani Blackburn [?] · 29 mins ·

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Agriculture Council of America: National Ag Day

33 mins ·

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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

Proud to Be a Part of it All

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

What a wonderful spring thus far, and thankfully all my friends in Central Texas finally got the moisture needed to get their spring going, albeit a little later than normal.

Watching the young calves running around with their moms in hot pursuit, the first-time mommas having the instinct to immediately take care of their first born and being a part of this miracle of life is what it's all about, and we are beyond proud to be a part of it all.

Next up is giving all these youngsters their first vaccinations, which include blackleg, an IBR vaccine that is safe for the mothers of the nursing calves and a deworming, which for us is safeguard in the spring. We also tag our calves at this time, which gives us the opportunity to keep up with what they have needed and received in regards to antibiotics or general health related needs.

While we are enjoying all the benefits of a wonderful spring and abundant rainfall, so are the weeds. In our neck of the woods, May 10 seems to be the best time to apply herbicides to get both the early germinating weeds and the late germinating weeds, as well as cockleburrs and dove weed. Spraying then allows us to use a cheaper herbicide such as weed master at one pint per acre. Spraying later will require at least twice as much herbicide per acre.

Either way, using a surfactant also is extremely important which works to decrease the surface tension of the water droplet and lets it lay flatter on the leaf and increase surface contact. You can think of this like a basketball sitting on a



A calf nurses in the tank. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)

concrete surface versus a pancake sitting on the same surface. If you need to spray earlier because of potential drift onto nearby susceptible crops, like my wife's roses, you may need to spray earlier using a herbicide with long residual activity, which means it will control weeds not only by direct contact, in the case of weed master, but acts as a pre-emergent as well. While this is a great tool, it's also a lot more expensive.

Herbicides may also be added to liquid fertilizer as well as dry fertilizer, which is an easy way to apply and also reduce the drift problem in the case of applying with dry fertilizer. Either way, applying herbicides for weeds, in my opinion, is the most economical tool we have for increasing

forage production. It's all about getting more sunlight to the grass since grass doesn't grow in the shade, and weeds have the ability to be a little taller than our grass as a result of being able to capture the sunlight first.

With spring breeding underway, this may also be a great time to put the pencil to what you can do to limit your financial inputs in your pursuit to produce a high-quality protein food from grass. While sitting down with a pen or pencil in our hand is the least of our favorite things to do, it reveals a lot about our actual costs of production.

What's essential for one is not essential to others. If I had to categorize our priorities, they would be health and well being

of our animals, calving on an annual basis, forage availability, and producing enough pounds of calf to sell to cover the annual cost to maintain its momma, plus profit.

We all have our wants and needs, which may be entirely different from one another, but if you must be profitable to survive, you need to know and see what you can do without, to keep things going. While that's no fun what so ever, it's essential to our very existence.

Enjoy this wonderful spring and its abundance of high-quality forages, the new babies running across the fields with their tails high and be thankful you're getting to do what you love.

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Archer County



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RANCH, RODEO and Randomness

By Pepper Stewart

Do You Know the Backstory of Benny Binion?

Benny Binion, gambler, convicted murderer, casino owner, and friend to many a wayward cowboy. Benny was born in 1904 and raised in Grayson County. His parents kept him out of school due to precarious health. Despite having no formal education, he was worth an estimated 75 million dollars when he passed away in 1989. His father, a horse trader, let him accompany him on trips.

Binion's FBI file reveals a criminal history dating back to 1924, listing offenses such as theft, carrying concealed weapons, and two murder convictions. Binion moved to El Paso when he was 17. There, he began moonshining, for which he was twice convicted. In 1928, in fear of legal consequences, he gave up moonshining and opened a number of operations. While he was in El Paso, he also learned to gamble, a favorite pastime of the traders waiting on the campgrounds.

In 1931, Binion was convicted of murdering an African American rum-runner, Frank Bolding. This was the origin of Binion's "Cowboy" nickname due to the method used in the murder. Binion received a two-year suspended sentence. Binion would later kill Ben Frieden, a numbers operator in competition with Binion. By 1936, Binion had gained control of gambling operations in Dallas, with protection from a powerful local politician.



(Courtesy photo)

On September 12, 1936, Binion and a henchman reportedly stalked Frieden and emptied their .45s into the unarmed man. Binion then shot himself in the shoulder and turned himself in to police, claiming that Frieden had shot him first. Binion was indicted, but the indictments were later dismissed

on the grounds that Binion had acted in self-defense.

In 1938, Binion and his henchmen allegedly killed Sam Murray, another of his competitors in the gambling rackets. Binion was never indicted for this murder, and charges were dropped against his henchmen.


By the early 1940s, Binion had become the reigning mob boss of Dallas. He then sought to take over the gambling rackets in Fort Worth. The local mob boss of that city, Lewis Tindell, was murdered shortly afterwards.

The Chicago Outfit made a successful move into Dallas after World War II. Binion lost his fix with the local government after the 1946 elections, and fled to Las Vegas.


While in Dallas, Binion had begun a long-running feud with Herb Noble, a small-time gambler in Dallas, which continued after Binion moved to Las Vegas. Binion demanded that Noble increase his payoff to Binion from 25 to 40 percent, which Noble refused to do. Binion posted a reward on Noble's scalp that eventually reached \$25,000 and control of a Dallas crap game. Many tried to kill Noble, but he escaped or survived numerous attempts on his life, although sometimes with gunshot wounds. Eventually Noble's wife was killed in a car bombing intended for him. In retaliation, Noble planned to fly his private plane to Las Vegas to bomb Binion's house, but was restrained by local law enforcement before he could execute his plan. Finally, Noble was murdered when a bomb planted in his mailbox exploded when he stopped his car in front of it to collect his mail. Binion lost

Continued on page 17

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Continued from page 14

his gambling license in 1951, and was sentenced to a five-year term in 1953 at Leavenworth federal penitentiary for tax evasion.

In Las Vegas, Binion became a partner of the Las Vegas Club casino, but left after a year because of disagreements about limits on bets. In 1951, Benny purchased the building which had previously housed the Las Vegas Club, and opened it as the Westerner Gambling House and Saloon.

In 1951, he purchased the Eldorado Club and the Apache Hotel, opening them as Binion's Horseshoe Casino, which immediately became popular because of the high limits on bets.

He initially set a craps table limit of \$500, 10 times higher than the limit at his competitors of the time. Because of the competition, Binion sometimes received death threats, although eventually casinos raised their limits to keep up with him. Additionally, the Horseshoe would honor a bet of any size as long as it was the first one made.

Binion was in the vanguard of Las Vegas casino innovation, being the first in the downtown Glitter Gulch to replace sawdust-covered floors with carpeting, dispatch limousines to transport customers to and from the casino, and offer free drinks to players. Although comps were standard for high rollers, Binion gave them to all players. He also shied away from the gaudy performing acts typical of other Las Vegas casinos.

Binion, in a Nevada oral history, said he followed a simple philosophy when serving his customers: "Good food, good whiskey, good gamble."

Binion was known to be generous to patrons. For many years the Horseshoe had a late night \$2 steak special, with most of the meat for the steaks coming from cattle on Binion's ranches in Montana. The Horseshoe also

is believed to be the first major casino to offer 100-times-odds at craps (a patron with a bet on the pass or don't-pass lines could take or lay up to 100 times their bet in odds). The Horseshoe was one of the more profitable casinos in town.

One of the tourist attractions in Binion's was a large horseshoe with \$1 million in \$10,000 bills, embedded in plastic.

Binion was forced to sell his share of the casino to pay approximately five million in legal costs, resulting from his trial and conviction. His family regained controlling interest in the Horseshoe in 1957 but did not regain full control until 1964. Benny was never allowed to hold a gambling license afterwards, although he remained on the payroll as a consultant.

Binion styled himself a cowboy throughout his life. He almost never wore a necktie and used gold coins for his cowboy shirts. Despite being technically barred from owning guns, he carried at least one pistol all his life, and kept a sawed-off shotgun close by. His office was a booth in the downstairs restaurant, and he knew many of his customers by name.

Binion and his wife Teddy Jane had five children: two sons, Jack and Ted, and three daughters, Barbara, Brenda and Becky.

Jack and Ted took over as president and casino manager, respectively, in 1964. Benny's wife, Teddy Jane, managed the casino cage until her death in 1994. In 1998, Binion's daughter, Becky, took over the presidency after a legal battle, and Jack moved on to other gambling interests. Becky's presidency saw the casino sink into debt. In 2004, federal agents seized \$1 million from the Horseshoe's bankroll to satisfy unpaid union benefits, forcing its closure and eventual sale to Harrah's Entertainment. It now operates as Binion's Gambling Hall and Hotel under the ownership of TLC Gam-

The World Series of Poker

In January 1949, Binion arranged for Johnny Moss and "Nick the Greek" Dandalos to play a head-to-head poker tournament which ended up lasting five months, with Nick the Greek ultimately losing a reported two million dollars. The 42-year-old Moss had to take breaks to sleep occasionally, during which the Greek, then 57, went over to the craps table and played. After the final hand, and losing millions of dollars, Nick the Greek uttered one of the most famous poker quotes of all time, "Mr. Moss, I have to let you go."

After years of arranging heads-up matches between high-stakes players, the seed of an idea grew. Binion invited six high-rollers he knew to play in a tournament in 1970. They would compete for cash at the table, after which they would vote on a winner. Johnny Moss, then 63, was voted champion by his younger competition and received a small trophy. The next year, a freeze-out format with a \$10,000 buy-in was introduced, and the World Series of Poker was born.

Binion's creation of the World Series helped the game of poker spread and become popular. He actually underestimated how popular it would become: in 1973, he dared to speculate that someday the tournament may have 50 or more entrants; the 2006 main event alone had 8,773 entrants.

ing Group.

Ted was under nearly constant scrutiny from the Nevada Gaming Commission from 1986 onwards for his involvement in drugs and associating with known mob figures. His gaming license was revoked in 1989, and he died in mysterious circumstances a few months later. Ted's live-in girlfriend and a man with whom she was having an affair (Sandra Murphy and Rick Tabish) were charged and convicted of murder, but the verdict was later overturned. They were retried and acquitted.


Benny never forgot his Texas roots and was a key player in getting the National Finals Rodeo to move to Las Vegas. He never forgot the cowboys after they arrived; he always paid the entry fees for all of the cowboys for their championship event. When the casino closed, Boyd Gaming took up the tradition that Binion

started by continuing to pay all the entry fees. Every year during the NFR there is a large rodeo stock auction called "Benny Binion's World Famous Bucking Horse and Bull Sale."

Benny Binion was also the owner of the 1946, 1947 and 1948 National Cutting Horse Association World Champion, Bred By Binion, ridden and trained by George Glascock. The solid black 15 hand gelding is the only horse to capture the NCHA World Championship three years in a row.

Binion died of heart failure at the age of 85 on Dec. 25, 1989 in Las Vegas. Poker great "Amarillo Slim" Preston suggested as an epitaph, "He was either the gentlest bad guy or the baddest good guy you'd ever seen." He was posthumously inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame in 1990. ~

Source:

Memories of Dallas 

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LAND MARKET REPORT

By Jared Groce

MARCH 2020 RURAL LAND SALES


“Well, that escalated quickly!” Probably the best comment I have heard since the COVID-19 issue has turned the nation, and indeed, the world, on its ear. The United States went from the lowest unemployment rate in history to the highest unemployment rate in history in less than three weeks, and it is still climbing.

So what has this done to the real estate market? I get five to 10 calls a day asking that very question. The short answer in our area is, not much. As you will see below, there are still people buying and selling real estate with the only real changes being in social distancing.

Showings are being done differently – either by virtual tour or without anyone else around, and closings are being done remotely instead of in title offices.

Of course, some sellers, especially those selling homes, do not want anyone inside of their homes during this time, therefore, we are seeing some people pulling their property off of the market instead of waiting it out. This further reduces the amount of inventory that is available, and the demand is still high. Will this supply and demand imbalance cause a faster escalation in property prices? My crystal ball broke a long time ago, so I don't have that answer, but logic says that it certainly could.

One thing is agreed upon by most experts in the land industry – when this is over, we are going to see a mass exodus from the metropolitan / urban / suburban areas of high population density. People who have been trapped inside their homes for weeks are pondering, “Why didn't we buy that little place out in the country a few years ago?” There will likely be a mixture of urban dwellers who will buy a rural property as a place to bug out to on the weekends (or during a pandemic) as well as those who want to permanently move to the country.

We have been monitoring web traffic to real estate sites and have seen a sizeable increase in the amount of hits that listed properties are receiving. People are working from home now and have time to surf the web for that place in the country that they wish they had already bought. Now that it has been determined that a lot of employees can indeed work from home, the distance from the office will not make as much difference in the future. These are certainly uncharted waters that we are currently navigating. I hope you and your family weather the storm with ease. 

COOKE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
WHITESBORO	10.00	\$13,000	100%	839
VALLEY VIEW	13.49	\$20,756.12	94.92%	179
WHITESBORO	46.41	\$7,433.74	98.6%	31
GAINESVILLE	368	\$7,914.40	95.49%	177
AVERAGES	109.475	\$12,276.07	97.25%	307
2019 AVG	43.287	\$8,944.21	91.24%	262

5 PROPERTIES TAKEN OFF MARKET

3 PROPERTIES WENT TO CONTRACT PENDING STATUS

13 NEW PROPERTIES ENTERED THE MARKET

DENTON COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
KRUM	20	\$12,000	80.01%	115
AUBREY	10.17	\$36,381.51	98.67%	324
DENTON	34.502	\$52,170.89	92.31%	361
PILOT POINT	125.212	\$17,490.34	100%	151
AVERAGES	47.471	\$29,510.68	92.74%	238
2019 AVG	77.526	\$29,944.47	93.52%	122

NO PROPERTIES TAKEN OFF MARKET

5 PROPERTIES WENT TO CONTRACT PENDING STATUS

8 NEW PROPERTIES ENTERED THE MARKET

MONTAGUE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
BOWIE	10	\$9,000	90.45%	35
FORESTBURG	47.36	\$3,695.10	73.9%	90
SUNSET	43.95	\$11,035.27	81.51%	1,194
AVERAGES	33.77	\$7,910.12	81.96%	440
2019 AVG	40.233	\$4,760.09	89.58%	228

5 PROPERTIES WENT OFF MARKET

4 PROPERTIES WENT TO CONTRACT PENDING STATUS

7 NEW PROPERTIES ENTERED THE MARKET

WISE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
DECATUR	10.01	\$11,888.11	100%	7
SPRINGTOWN	19.04	\$6,565.13	100%	1
DECATUR	20	\$7,250	90.63%	91
CHICO	15	\$9,800	86.52%	611
PONDER	10.1	\$16,831.68	91.89%	137
DECATUR	24.27	\$10,300.78	100%	472
DECATUR	21.564	\$12,836.21	92.27%	51
BOYD	23.285	\$14,887.95	99.25%	139
AVERAGES	17.909	\$11,294.98	95.07%	189
2019 AVG	31.123	\$11,388.77	89.31%	170

6 PROPERTIES TAKEN OFF MARKET

5 PROPERTIES WENT TO CONTRACT PENDING STATUS

15 NEW PROPERTIES ENTERED THE MARKET

Information from North Texas Real Estate Information Service (NTREIS) for raw land data, 10 or more acres, ag exempt, for the month of March 2020. SP/LP = Sell Price to List Price ratio. DOM = Days on Market.

Theileria orientalis genotype Ikeda: An Emerging Cattle Disease?

By Barry Whitworth, DVM / Area Food / Animal Quality and Health Specialist for Eastern Oklahoma

Theileria orientalis genotype Ikeda is a hemoprotozoan. A hemoprotozoan affects red blood cells and leukocytes. *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda has been associated with severe bovine disease in Japan, New Zealand and Australia (Watts, Playford, & Hickey, 2016). In August 2017, the protozoan was found associated with illness and death in cattle at a ranch in Virginia (Oakes et al., 2019). These cattle displayed clinical signs of weakness and anemia. A preliminary diagnosis of anaplasmosis was given. Blood samples taken from the animals were tested for Anaplasma, Babesia and Leptospira. Results from the test revealed the cattle were all negative; however, a blood protozoan was detected. This protozoan was identified as *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda (Oakes et al., 2019). Since this original herd outbreak, other herds of cattle in Virginia and West Virginia have been found to be infected with the organism.

In Australia, the Asian longhorn tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) has been identified as a possible vector of *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda (Hammer, Emery, Bogema, & Jenkins, 2015). In 2017, the United States Department of Agriculture's National Veterinary Services Laboratories confirmed the presence of *Haemaphysalis longicornis*, which is commonly referred to as the Asian longhorn tick or bush tick. In an effort to understand how the tick got to the United States, USDA officials discovered the tick had been found in West Virginia in 2010. The tick has been confirmed to be in Arkansas, Connecticut, Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland,



(Courtesy photo)

New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia (USDA, 2020). Some evidence exists for other possible insect vectors for *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda. Needle transfer is another possible route of transmission of the organism (Watts, Playford, & Hickey, 2016).

If the Asian longhorn tick is ever found in Oklahoma, Dr. Justin Talley, Oklahoma State University Extension livestock entomologist, believes the tick will live east of I-35. The tick will likely be found in vegetation that is high in humidity in areas such as woods, brush or tall grass. Ticks are usually found where large numbers of wildlife congregate such as a deer trail. Dr. Talley

and Dr. Bruce Noden have written an excellent fact sheet about the longhorn tick. The fact sheet can be found at <http://entopl.okstate.edu/pddl/2018/PA%2017-16.pdf>.

Cattle infected and sick with *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda will have clinical signs of fever, weakness, anorexic, and exercise intolerance. If cattle are forced to move, they may stagger and gasp for air. If stressed too much, the cattle may collapse and die. When examining cattle, the gums, eyes or vaginal mucosa may appear white or yellow in color. Reproductive losses including stillbirths, and late term abortions may be seen as well as reduction in milk production (Spickler, 2019). Since *Anaplasma marginale* and *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda both

display similar clinical signs, one difference that has been noted in the two diseases is *A. marginale* infected cattle usually display aggression and *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda do not. Still, a laboratory test would have to be performed to differentiate the two diseases. In other countries, therapies have been developed to treat this organism. Unfortunately, no approved treatments are available in the United States. Also, there are no vaccines for this disease. The best defense to this disease is to control ticks. This usually requires a combination of insecticide treatments and pasture rotation to avoid areas such as woods and brushy areas where ticks live.

Theileria orientalis genotype Ikeda is not likely to arrive in

Oklahoma anytime soon and in reality, may never become a major problem in Oklahoma or the United States. However, producers need to keep in mind the natural progression of cattle in the United States is east to west and south to north.

Oklahoma is unique in the fact large numbers of cattle move from the southeast United States to graze on grass and wheat in our state. From there, the cattle go to the feedyards. The tick and organism could easily be transported to Oklahoma on a load of stockers headed for grazing or to a feedlot. If a producer would like more information on *T. orientalis* genotype Ikeda, they should contact their local veterinarian or Oklahoma State University Extension Educator or visit the Center for Disease Control and Prevention at https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/25/9/19-0088_article.

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Rodeo Feels the Effects of COVID-19

By Phillip Kitts | Photos courtesy PRCA

By this time everyone in the world is aware of the serious situation that has evolved with the emergence of COVID-19. The fact is you do not have to go very far to find a new statistic or news regarding the virus. One of the challenges that come with all this news is the fact that it is so hard to decipher what news is legitimate and what news is false or nothing more than an effort to get attention.

At this point the fear and worry has even reached the rodeo world. With nearly every pro rodeo and bull ride in the United States being canceled, the initial effects are being felt. The rodeos that have made the effort to reschedule their event later in the year have developed their own issues. Many of the rescheduled rodeos are moving to weekends where

many personnel and retailers are already scheduled. With this log-jam of events later in the year, a lot of schedules are being directly affected with events falling on the same weekend. This translates into many people having to miss rodeos they depended on for their schedule.

At the competitor level, the folks who earn paychecks getting up and down the road have seen a complete stop in pay. The contractors who base their lives by hauling livestock to rodeos are in the same boat; with their trucks not rolling there is no income to pay the bills. In both cases the before mentioned of rescheduled rodeos will have a direct impact on these folk's ability to earn money this year. It is still unclear if it has been analyzed on how it will work in late summer when athletes are not

able to get to some of the smaller rodeos because they are committed to large payout events. This means competitor numbers could be affected.

There is a group of people who are feeling the same effects that are probably being over looked at most all levels. Beyond the main players in rodeo and rodeo production, there is a long list of contract personal that rely on rodeos to sustain their livelihood. This list covers anything from judges and soundmen to entertainment personnel; these only cover a few of the folks effected. In addition, there is a plethora of retailers who are feeling the discomfort of things, people like photographers, vendors, publications, and equipment makers who are facing the fear of what is to come.

The effects of the situation on

these folks are obvious; if they cannot be at events, they lose money. When they lose money, their future becomes affected. However, the effects of all this may last longer than what we may expect. It is possible the impact of the situation could flow over for years to come.

Rodeos are starting to see sponsors and funding from the community back out of their financial commitment to the events. This same funding is often committed to paying contract personnel who play a key role in putting on the rodeos around the nation. Another concern that is quickly coming to the forefront is the same rodeos that have sponsor-fears are facing the fear of the unknown attendance. Nearly all of these rodeos figure in a great amount of their

Continued on page 24

**Continued from page 23**


income on fans attending the events. With the ongoing fear of large groups being an issue there is a measurable worry that even after the threat goes down, the inherent fear will have a direct effect on how much attendance rodeos will see.

The first prediction many have is that rodeos that are able to continue and have their event will most likely have to cut back on the contract personnel they use. In turn, many of the people who rely on being hired by rodeos around America will feel the initial crunch when they no longer have an assignment. In the category of individuals like photographers and others who rely on the retail perspective, things will get even grimmer. Competitors and sponsors who normally spend plenty of money will most likely be forced to cut back on spending, and in turn these retail individuals will feel the effect.

Let's break this down and paint a picture. Currently, most of the consumers who purchase rodeo-based products are not collecting much if any pay at all. Any amount of financial security they currently possess is being reserved to sustain their lives. The longer the situation lasts, the more they will have to focus their reserve money to pay daily life bills. Once these people get back on the road and rodeo begins to go into full effect, the remaining funds folks would normally spend will be limited. In turn, the folks who rely on their spending will continue to feel the crunch when the money spent on retail type items will be limited.

How long will this effect go on is very hard to say. If rodeos continue to struggle to put their events on and the athletes are limited to necessity spending, the retailers that rely on that income will continue to feel the effect.

Is there a light at the end of the tunnel? This question is next to impossible to answer. At a federal level nearly everything possible is being done in order to stimulate the economy and provide Americans with some money to spend. At the immediate level, the reality is there is not much that can be done at the lower levels to support these folks who rely on rodeo retail money. Everyone can hope the current situation does not last an exorbitantly long time, provided things get rolling again soon the long-term impact may be reduced.

The pending question is what others can do to help, and the unfortunate answer is there is not much one can do. If you have the funding to purchase from these retailers, do so. If the funds are not available, support them by helping them find opportunities and help them promote what they do and what they have to offer. 



How long the effects of COVID-19 will go on for the rodeo world is hard to say.



Everyone can hope things get rolling again soon and hopefully the long-term impact on rodeos may be reduced. (Photos courtesy Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

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Roping with Catfish

By Krista Lucas

Texas is known to produce some of the greatest timed event contestants, and north Texas specifically is home to one cowboy who is quickly moving up in the professional ranks. Catfish Brown, of Collinsville, Texas, is a 26-year-old tie-down roper who currently sits sixth in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world standings.

Brown credits his dad for getting him started in the sport, and he learned to love horses and calf roping at an early age. He was introduced to horses and roping at the young age of five by his dad who had roped most of his life. Brown's real name is John, but he has gone by the nickname Catfish since he was a little boy. The nickname came about after a fishing trip with his dad.

"When I was six, I caught a 12 pound catfish on a snoopy rod, and my dad told me if I didn't take a picture with it, he would call me catfish at my next baseball game," Brown said. "I didn't hold it, and it all started from there."

Brown has been an athlete all of his life. He grew up being involved in sports and played defensive back and running back on his high school football team. During his senior year, Brown signed with Southeastern Oklahoma State University, in Durant, Okla., to continue his football career, but ultimately chose to rodeo instead.

Brown experienced success early on in his professional career. He won the 2014 Resistol PRCA Tie-Down Roping Rookie of the Year and finished 28th in the world standings that year. Brown's previous accomplishments and hard work have led up to the 2020 season. He had a good showing at San Antonio and hopes to carry that momentum into the future. Helping him make these runs is a horse Brown calls "Spanky."

"He is only seven and hadn't been away from home too much when I got him last July. A very good friend of mine owns him, and I'm thankful every day for both of them," Brown said. "He's constantly evolving and becoming a better calf horse, but even on his worst days he doesn't take much away from me. I was taught a horse that likes his job is like an airplane, and when an airplane crashes they investigate the pilot."

Any top athlete will say it is important to set




Catfish Brown of Collinsville, Texas, is a 26-year-old tie-down roper who currently sits sixth in the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association world standings. (Courtesy photo)

goals, and Brown is no different. He is excited to see what the future holds, for himself and potential sponsors. Setting a good standard is important to Brown as he chases his Wrangler National Finals Rodeo dreams, and he is representing the western industry well, in and out of the arena.

"My future goals are to reach my full potential in the sport of calf roping inside the arena

and also help set the bar for the professional rodeo athlete outside of the arena."

This is Brown's best year to date, and it is looking like he has a good chance of qualifying for his first WNFR. Even though Brown and other rodeo athletes have had to take a break from the rodeo road, Brown will continue to train and prepare to hold on to his spot in the top 15. 

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Equine Infectious Anemia:

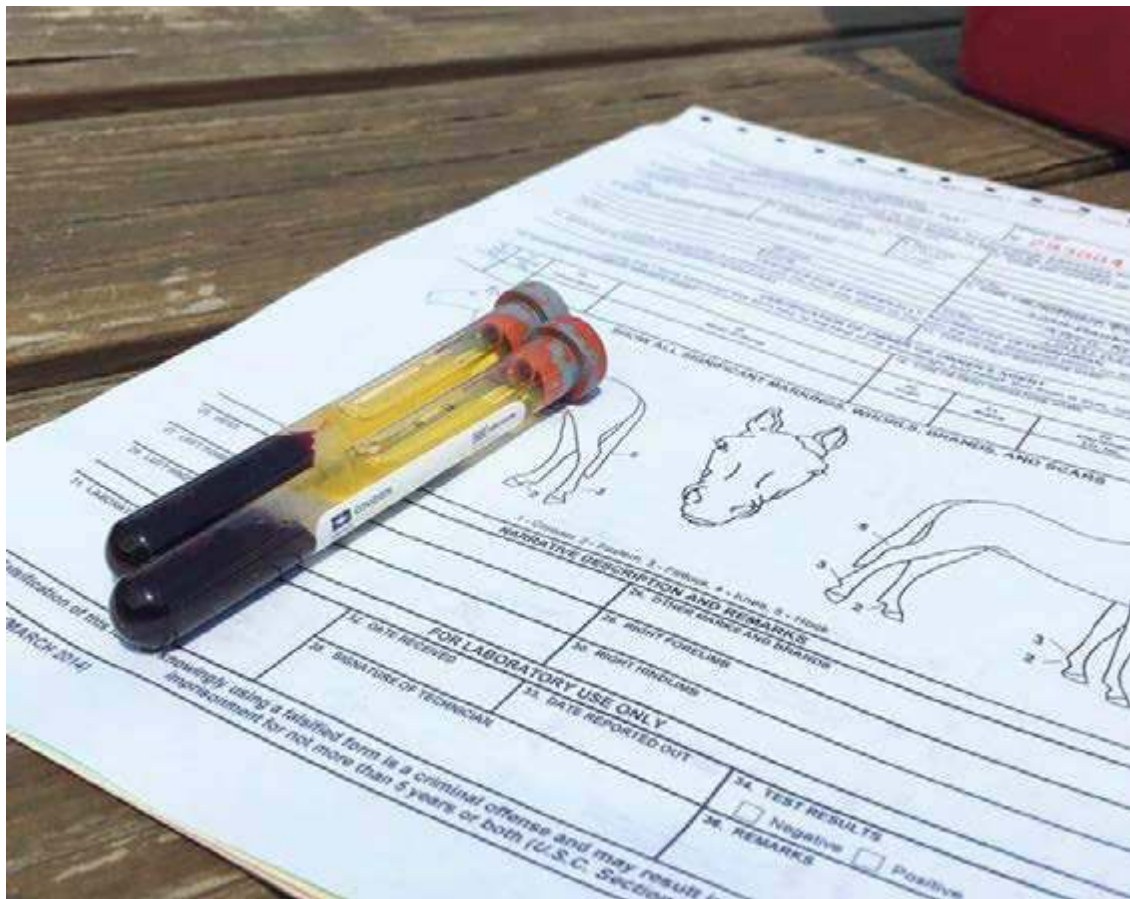
Why do we test and why should you care?

By Garrett Metcalf, DVM

What is a Coggins test, and why is it so important? Why do I need a Coggins test if I am moving my horse(s) out of state or to an event? Why is the test only good for one year? This article will discuss the history of Equine Infectious Anemia and why it is a very important disease to keep under control. It also will discuss the route of transmission from one horse to another and the symptoms that a horse will have if it gets the disease.

Equine Infectious Anemia has been known by many names: Swamp Fever, Slow Fever, Mountain Fever, Equine Malarial Fever, and Coggins Disease, or EIA. It is a lentivirus from the family Retroviridae, and can infect all members of the Equidae family from ponies, donkeys, mules, and horses. EIA has been recognized as a disease for centuries, but it made its big emergence in the 1930s and reached its height of devastation between the 1960s and 1970s. More than 10,000 horses were identified to be infected in 1975, and many died. Today the disease is less prevalent, and horses that do have the disease are nearly all asymptomatic carriers of the disease, showing no signs. These horses act as reservoirs of the disease to spread to others.

The most common transmitting vector for EIA is biting flies, most commonly horse flies or deer flies. These flies lacerate the skin of horses to suck up a blood meal. The blood of an infected horse will remain on the mouth parts of these flies for a short period of time but long enough to be transmitted to an uninfected horse. Other ways of transmission is sharing hypodermic needles between horses, and it has even been found to be



(Courtesy photo)

transmitted from mare to foal in utero. Other minor routes of transmission can be from semen, milk and possibly be aerosolization of infectious material.

The clinical signs or symptoms of EIA are often nonspecific and usually the only sign is a fever. In severe cases horses will become weak, depressed, have increase dheart rate and respiration rate, ventral edema, anemia, and bleeding from nostrils, and blood in their stools. Some cases will die during the acute phase of the disease, but those that recover will become asymptomatic persistently infected carriers. EIA is difficult to differentiate from other fever-producing diseases such

as anthrax, influenza and equine encephalitis.

There is no treatment and no vaccines for EIA. The viral genome of EIA rapidly mutates, making it very difficult to create an effective vaccine to EIA. Once a horse contracts EIA, the horse will always have the disease.

The only method to stop the spread of the disease is by prevention, and the only options to manage infected horses are to quarantine the infected horses at least 200 yards from healthy horses or to euthanize them. That is why testing is key to controlling the spread of this disease. Coggins testing is required once or twice a year depending on the state you





live in, before traveling out of state, before entering an event, or sale of horses. It is always recommended to get a negative Coggins test before you introduce a new horse into a herd setting to maintain an EIA-free herd.

The Coggins test, developed in 1973 by Dr. Leroy Coggins, a graduate of Oklahoma State College of Veterinary Medicine in 1957, helps detect infected horses with EIA using the AGID method, or Agar Gel Immunodiffusion Assay. Dr. Coggins developed this test while studying viruses at Cornell University. Today, the AGID test has been replaced mostly by the ELISA method, which is the most common test, used in reference labs around the country. The original method of testing of AGID is still considered the "gold standard" internationally.

If a horse is moved internationally they are required to get a Cog-



(Courtesy photo)

gins test with the AGID method. A negative Coggins test is required before a health certificate is issued for travel. Generally most states require a negative Coggins test within one year, but some require it every six months. Veterinarians accredited by the USDA are the only veterinarians allowed to do Coggins testing and issue health

certificates. Health certificates are issued to insure the horses that are traveling to events or crossing state lines are healthy and allow a level of traceability if a horse does become sick. Most health certificates are issued for 30 days, but some are only issued for 10 days. A Coggins test requires hand drawn or digital images of

your horse, identifying markings, address the horse resides, breed, age, sex, and owner's information to complete the test. Today with a service called GlobalVetLINK hand drawn images are replaced with digital images uploaded into the Coggins form.

Luckily, with lots of hard work on behalf of veterinarians, laboratories, and state officials and due diligent horse owners, EIA is rather under control today, but there are still new cases of EIA discovered routinely.

Also, there are many horses that do not receive testing, leading to possible reservoir of horses asymptotically carrying EIA. Remember, even though it is sometimes inconvenient to get your horse's Coggins test performed, you are doing your part to help control and prevent the spread of this terrible and incurable disease. [®]

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WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Worth the Effort

I'm not sure why writing about the passing of my very favorite cow has been so very difficult for me to do. I'm not usually at a loss for words. She was certainly worth my effort to give her the tribute she deserved.

Even though I've been married to a cattle rancher and living on his family's ranch for almost 40 years, it was only a few months ago when I embraced the title of "cattle rancher" for myself. And it was my dear "Sis," as I called her, that made me feel welcome in this world and in her pastures.

I say her pastures because I'm pretty sure my husband would agree when I say she was the leader of our herd. My husband said she was probably the oldest, too.

Sis would immediately gather her sisters and guide them in the right direction when she saw us coming to move them to a new pasture. Always the first through a gate if she could be. Always the last to leave the area where cubes were spread out so not to leave any uneaten behind. Always unafraid of humans and happy to get her head rubbed.

Sis was a good mamma having a calf every spring. She was blessed with strong and healthy, beautiful calves every year.

It was only a week before her passing that I told my husband Sis could never be taken to the sale barn. I wanted her to live out her years on the ranch of her birth. I wanted more time with this gentle giant. I needed more than another week.



"Sis" made Annette Bridges feel welcome in this world and her pastures. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

When we found her lying on a bed of hay, we thought she had already traveled over her rainbow bridge. But it turned out she was still breathing, although unable to move. I informed my husband I was calling a vet. I had to see if there was anything that could be done for my beloved Sis. If not, I needed her departure to be

as gentle as possible. My friend deserved that.

It was a year earlier that I had been faced with a similar decision for my beloved 17-year old dachshund. I told my husband to never, ever ask me to make such a decision for a dear pet again. I wasn't sure my heart could survive.

While waiting for the vet to ar-

rive, I texted my daughter with the sad news about my dear Sis. I told her I didn't know if I could be with Sis during the agonizing wait. My very wise daughter reminded me it wasn't about me, but about my Sis and what she needed.

So I stood by my sweet Sis and told her how much I loved her. I thanked her for being my bovine friend and for making me feel welcome at a time when I desperately desired to feel wanted and at home in her world.


I've had many opportunities in the past few years to discover I was stronger than I ever imagined I could be.

Caregiving of aging and terminally ill siblings, parents, and pets require tough love kind of decisions and actions.

No, none of us want to be in this position. I often lamented, "Why me?" Why did I have to be the one who had to say so, or do so or speak at memorial services?

I remember standing at the podium at my momma's memorial service sharing the many lessons I was blessed to learn from my amazing momma, when I felt her southern belle strength running through my veins.

I felt that strength again as I stood by my sweet Sis. My friends, love makes us brave. Love gives us the strength we need. Love overcomes our fear. Love really is all you need to do whatever is required of you.

You are missed my sweet Sis and dearly loved. I am thankful for the time we had together. Thank you for being my friend. 



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Since the beginning of time, females have played a crucial part in farm and ranch operations. From Native American women who oversaw the harvesting of crops for their tribes to the wives and daughters who stepped up to do what was needed on their home farms as men went off to fight in World War II, the female gender has always played a crucial role in agriculture, and it is a role that is constantly evolving.

More and more, women are stepping into roles predominantly filled by men, including Jenny Johnson, who serves as ranch manager for Timmerman Land and Cattle in Electra, Texas.

Born and raised in Wyoming, Johnson spent her childhood on her grandparent's ranch in the southeast corner of the state, next to the Colorado border.

Johnson fell in love with agriculture early on and was a member of 4-H and FFA throughout her high school career before judging and showing on the intercollegiate level. After graduating college in Cheyenne, Wyo., Johnson moved into the cutting horse industry, which eventually brought her to Texas through various cutting horse trainers.

After seven years in the industry and a lot of time on the road, she decided it was time to try something new that would allow her to spend more time at home. She went to work for an equine surgical facility in Weatherford, Texas. She spent seven years there, and a brief time at the 6666 Ranch, before going to work at a vet clinic in Wichita Falls that allowed her to work with both large and small animals. When she least expected it, Johnson was given the opportunity to become the ranch manager for Timmerman Land and Cattle.

"It was kind of perfect timing in my life where everything was kind of up in the air," Johnson recalled. "Timmerman wanted a woman to manage his ranch. He found me through word of mouth and offered me a position I would have been dumb to turn down."

Timmerman Land and Cattle is part of a much bigger operation with locations in Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado. In Texas, the Timmermans run cattle on the ranch formally known as the Hudson Ranch.

"They are a fantastic family to work for," Johnson said. "They understand it, and they understand hard work and dedication, but at the same time, they include your family and want your kids to grow up and take over what you do."

It has been almost seven years since Johnson first set foot on the ranch. Her previous experience with the vet clinics paid off dividends when it came to vaccinations and the health of the animals on the ranch.

"It probably helps me quite a bit, probably more than I realize it does. Sometimes it got me in trouble because you kind of overthink it and overanalyze instead of just letting Mother Nature handle it," Johnson laughed. "But there are a lot of the vaccination protocols and things to know to keep your medicine safe, and all of that was an easy transition. The basic knowledge you learn of the animals plays into a big part of your everyday work, from an animal being sick to being lame or anything like that."

However, despite Johnson's vast knowledge of the animals, there was a small part of her that doubted her ability to do the job when she first began.

"There is an army of people who have helped me be where I am today. It was intimidating, I think, when I first got into it. I asked myself, 'Am I really going to be able to do this? Am I really going to be

Continued on page 34



Jenny Johnson is thankful her job allows her to spend time with her son, Cedar. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

Continued from page 33

able to make this happen?" But with the people who were standing behind me and the success that has happened from that, it isn't so bad. I was worried about the respect issue from other men, other cowboys, other ranchers, but I think as a whole with the agricultural community, as long as you are trying and you are doing the best you can with the situation you have, everyone is going to be supportive of that," Johnson explained.

Johnson has a list of workers she relies on, many of whom have been nothing but kind.

"I know respect is earned and not given, and you can't come out here and ask those guys to do something you wouldn't do. When you get up in the morning and you're willing to work just as hard as everyone else, they're like 'Okay, this girl is legit.' There are a lot of things physically that

"Respect is earned and not given, you can't come out here and ask those guys to do something you wouldn't do... When you're willing to work just as hard as everyone else, they're like 'Okay, this girl is legit.' There are a lot of things physically that women can't do, but you just improvise."

women can't do, but you just improvise. It may be a wreck, but you improvise," Johnson laughed.

Johnson said when she first started, she had a goal of roping and doctoring one of the yearlings in the wheat pasture all by herself,

but quickly realized that was a silly notion considering she is five feet tall and 100 pounds.

"I had these personal goals, but I came to realize it is okay not being able to or being expected to do some things because there

is always another way. I think that is one of the things that was a learning curve. As long as you get it done, it doesn't matter how you got there," Johnson said.

Another part of the job that took a bit of adjusting in the beginning was going from a structured, nine to five job to one that came with twists and turns on a daily basis.

"When Timmerman hired me, one thing he said to me that has always stuck out is, 'Don't be afraid to change direction.' I didn't really know what that meant coming from a job where you clock in and out every day and is very structured. When I started, I would go into the day with an itinerary but by the end of the day I'd throw it out the window. You can't be afraid to change direction and go a different route. It didn't take me

Continued on page 36

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**Continued from page 34**

long to figure out what that meant, but that was probably some of the best advice I got,” Johnson said.

While it was a struggle in the beginning to learn her day might not go as planned, in the end, it was liberating.

“It becomes very freeing to slow down and enjoy it. There are a lot of things you can miss. You can find something every day to slow down and enjoy,” Johnson said. “If something doesn’t work, just go a different route. There are things we have done that are maybe unorthodox, but they work.”

For example, the cattle are gathered by helicopter due to the type of cows and range conditions. It is more feasible financially and much quicker. The ranch also has a vigorous feed program set up, or feed route, as Johnson likes to refer to it.

“We feed these cattle a lot, especially this winter. Coming into it, it was so dry, so we bumped our feed program up quite a bit. We don’t feed any hay out here: it is just the forage that is left over and of course, the mineral and everything like that is out,” Johnson said.

The cattle also are hormone free and the ranchers work closely to follow guidelines to ensure the quality of meat.

“I don’t get into the dollar signs, but I would hope how we treat these calves helps the Timmermans in the long run. The bottom line is always in the back of your mind. We are trying to up our production and keep costs down, but there are so many things that are handicapping us in the middle that past generations didn’t have to worry about. The price of fuel, corn prices falling up and down, cattle prices, coronavirus – let’s throw that in there for a corkscrew. Let’s go ahead and see who is going to survive this. Because this economy can’t survive without the agricultural industry; it won’t



Jenny Johnson has been asked on more than one occasion why she gets out of the truck to feed the cattle, but it is one of her favorite parts of the job. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

happen,” Johnson said.

Water samples also are taken to measure the salt count, along with grass samples to help them blend their mineral to be more utilized by each cow.

“You have to truly be a steward of the land and know your animal husbandry. It is amazing to me how many people are involved. When you have a baby calf that is just born, you have someone like me who comes out and sees these calves every day. You brand them and now we are ready to wean, and they go to the wheat and somebody there looks at them every day and tends to them and doctors them. Then they go to the feed yards and there is a whole crew of people who look at them and go through them every day. I don’t think the common person realizes the number of people it takes to be from A to B,” Johnson said.

Branding is done in May, and in the fall, calves are weaned from the ranch and moved to another location on the east side of Wichita, where they will be fed wheat, and

from there, they go to their own feed yards.

The cows are Johnson’s favorite part of the job, and perhaps it is her nurturing side that has launched her to success in this job.

“Some ask me why I get out and feed the cows, but I truly enjoy and love the cows,” Johnson explained. “There are certain cows in every pasture I look for every day, and I wonder where they are. I have literally taken off and gone and looked for them because it is a passion. I truly just enjoy the cows. You recognize them, you know them, and you know their patterns and you know how wild or gentle they are. When it is time to wean and ship off the cows, it is guaranteed I am probably going to cry at least once a day.”

Another part of her life where her nurturing side shines is as a mother.

The manager explained she is fortunate she has a job where her 13-year-old son, Cedar, can tag along.

“Short term, I am lucky enough he can go with me every day, but then in the long run it is fortunate because he becomes such good help. I call Cedar super cowy; he rides, and he can just feel it out. You’re a team, you become a team, you really do,” Johnson said.

The mom said the pair enjoy poking fun at one another and have fun together.

“He is good help and I love it when he comes. He probably doesn’t love it as much as I do,” Johnson laughed. “This job frees you up. If you have a football game, you can get all your stuff done and get to the game. It has eliminated a lot of stress from when I was at the vet clinic. I am fortunate that my kid can be such a vital part of my every day.”

Johnson said her hope is that her son has learned important life skills.

“I am actually super glad he is out of school right now because he is my right-hand man. I hope the skills he has learned will set



Jenny Johnson enjoys photography and even entered a recent art show. She enjoys taking photos of her cows, one of her favorite things in the world.



One of Jenny Johnson's favorite photos she has taken. (Photos courtesy Jenny Johnson)



Jenny Johnson and her son, Cedar. She hopes the skills he has learned will set him up for success in the future. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

him up for success in the future," Johnson explained.

Johnson also has been able to continue her passion for working with horses and recently competed at the World's Greatest Horse Woman competition, which she plans to go back to next year. The competition included cutting, roping, working cow horse and reining, but her favorite is the working cow horse, roping and ranch horse competitions.

Johnson encourages other

"How can you not believe in God when you do something like this every day?"

women who are considering a job that maybe they are unsure of or doubting their own ability to take a chance.

"It takes a lot of drive and it takes a lot of commitment. It

takes a lot of try. It's a 'you have to take the good with the bad' and make it work, but it is absolutely within anybody's reach; it just depends on how bad you want it," Johnson said.

It is a job that Johnson is thankful for.

The ranch manager looks forward to getting up and going to work each and every day.

"My favorite part of the job is when the cows really start calving and coming in here every day and seeing the new babies, the different babies and the different colors of the babies," Johnson said. "It is like a fresh start. How can you not believe in God when you do something like this every day?"



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Morel mushrooms are small and tree-like. They are often found under trees and in shady areas along rivers, but you have to keep your eyes peeled because they can be hard to spot. Once you see one, just use your fingernail to break the mushroom off from the roots.

Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Newlin

Fried Morel Mushrooms

Servings: 6 | **Total time:** 1 hour and 30 minutes

Ingredients:

- 12 morel mushrooms (or however many you find.)
- Salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1/2 seasoning salt
- Vegetable oil

Many people hunt mushrooms in early springtime. Just be sure to research which ones are edible and which is not. It is a fun activity to do with family or children.

Directions:

- Wash mushrooms in cool water, slice in half lengthwise and cut off the roots. Soak cleaned mushrooms in cool salt water for one hour.
- After they have soaked, lay mushrooms out on a paper towel to air dry. While they are drying, whisk egg and milk together in a bowl until incorporated.
- Mix flour, salt and pepper on a plate. When mushrooms are dry, soak in milk bath for five minutes. Heat a quarter inch of oil in a sauté pan over medium heat.
- Next, dip dredged mushrooms in flour mixture until coated. Gently lay mushrooms into pan and cook for four minutes on each side or until golden brown.
- Once they are removed from pan, salt to your liking. Serve with your favorite dipping sauce. 🍷



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By Jesse Kader

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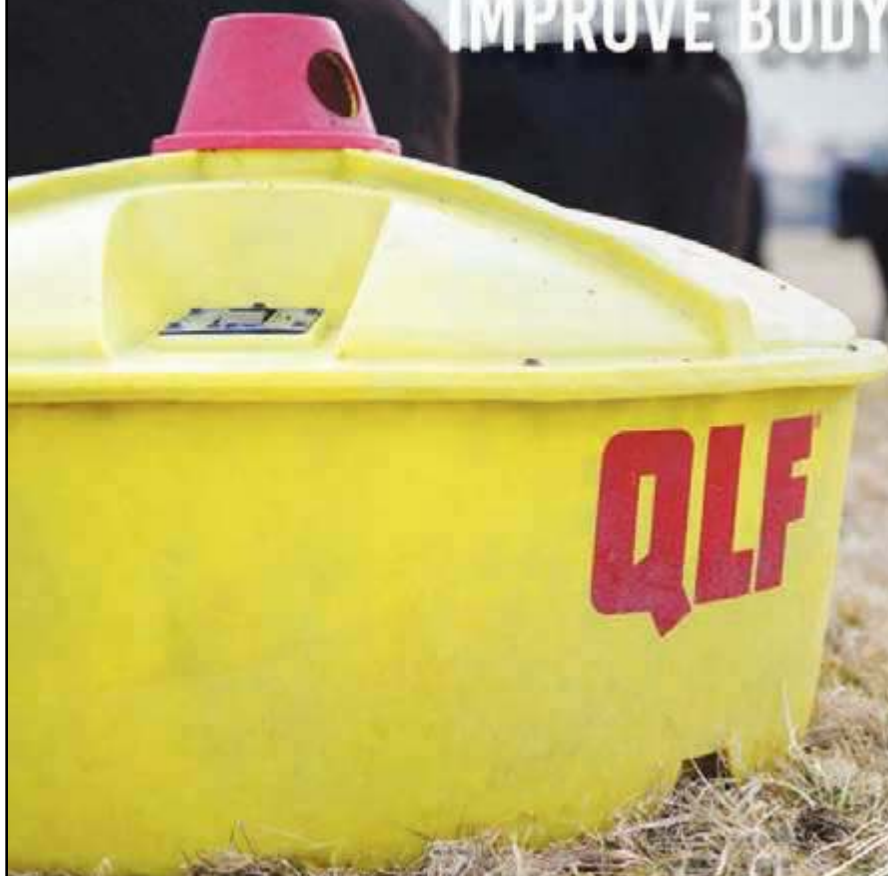
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THE BEES KNEES

The Golden Cows

By Ryndi Perkins

Throughout all the chaos in the world I've seen a quote that has stuck with me. "And on the eighth day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, 'I need a caretaker.' So God made a farmer."-Paul Harvey.

It has brought a lot of light into my life as I watch everything unfold. I get to see the work that goes into being successful in the cattle business; however some do not get to see that.

A farmer or rancher raises a cow from the time it is born on the same ranch. She is known by an ear tag number and produces offspring to sell in order to make a living for the farmer or rancher. When her time is done and she is well past the age to produce offspring, her teeth are little to nothing, and her build isn't the same as it used to be, it is time for her to produce one more time but in a different way.

She, along with the rest of the cows that are ready to be sold, is taken to a sale barn, where they will be bought for a packinghouse. Yes, it is gruesome, but it is how the world works. A buyer is taking a risk on how much to buy the cow for, depending on the demand for the cow, her weight and condition she is in. These buyers are out freight to get them to the packinghouse, and the risk of the cow not making it to the packinghouse.

Once these cows are harvested and put on the supermarket shelf, the price per pound is sold for a tremendous amount. Somewhere between the buyer and the packinghouse this cow must have be-



A quote by Paul Harvey has brought a lot of light into Ryndi Perkins' life. (Photo courtesy Ryndi Perkins)

come a golden cow. I understand a packinghouse is out the cost of employment, packaging and paying the packinghouse buyers their small commission, but I could only imagine the profit a packinghouse is making off of a cow.

Being in the cattle world, some days it's a struggle to make ends meet. I cannot understand how a packinghouse can make so much, all while the seller and buyer are coming in hot on the struggle train.

To some it's easy to go to the supermarket and pick up meat and pay the price, but to me it is a sickening feeling. I see the work that goes into getting these cows to packinghouses. I see the looks on a rancher's face when their check is little to nothing. I see the defeat in a packer buyer's eyes when he goes to buy groceries

for his family. I see a world that is so consumed by money it is sickening.


If you want to pay less for meat, charge less for meat. It is wrong for the person who puts in the work to get paid nothing, but someone else is making the big bucks.

The questions are out there. Why do these cows become golden cows on supermarket shelves? Why are farmers and packer buyers not paid fairly when their hard work is put in?

I realize this is an ongoing controversy or maybe it is political. It is like a storm that is brewing more each day; I want people to see what I see. I want them to see men working their fingers to the bone to make sure their families are provided for and get paid nothing for their work. I want people to see

that without the farmer, rancher and cattle buyers our meat industry would be nothing. They sacrifice everything into a business that is dying out because people can't make a living anymore.

I sometimes wonder why one of the father figures in my life keeps on in this business, and I realized why in Paul Harvey's message when he said, "Somebody who'd bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says he wants to spend his life 'doing what dad does.' So God made a farmer."

To me this quote is something to live by in the toughest of times in the industry and a reason to keep on when we are given the short end of the stick. We all must keep the livelihood going. 



On the Road

WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



Howdy, North Texas Music Fans!!

I hope this edition of NTFR finds you safe and making the best of this recent crazy situation. Never before in my lifetime have we experienced such an event.

I have had the honor of contributing to this wonderful magazine since 2016. This is the first time that I'm not "on the road" or sharing my performances with friends and Texas music icons.

Fortunately, I have been able to take this time to relive and enjoy some music and events from my past. Music is like medicine.

In fact, in some ways it's better than medicine. There are never any side effects, and it has a purpose in all our lives.

I urge all of you to take some time this month and dig into your musical archives and find something that will make you happy. Take your thoughts away from the world and just relax with something you really enjoy.

We are so blessed to have the World Wide Web and to be able to log on to so many different events, especially when it comes to music. YouTube, iTunes, and Facebook keep us connected. So many of my musical friends are sharing live performances every day.

Music is a universal language that we can all share. Like the old song says, "Forget your troubles; come on get Happy." Make the best of these times. Let a little music help you get through this. You'll be glad you did.

I'll be back next month and hopefully will have some great info for you as most all of our events are rescheduling for the summer. Be safe.

Happy Trails. 🤠



Dave Alexander on stage with his good friend, Randy Travis, in concert in 2017. (Photos courtesy Ernie Stripling Photography)

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Montague Starts New Tradition

Dani Blackburn

Most North Texas rodeo events are steeped in tradition with many a representation of the town and history of which they are a part.

The small town of Montague, Texas, has no problem with history as its roots run all the way back to 1858.

It remains a small town and serves as the county seat for Montague County; however, it has no rodeo to call its own, but those with the Montague County Cowboy Church are hoping to change that.

It is an idea that the pastor of the church, Joe Caballero, began praying about more than two years ago, but he knew it wasn't the right time. When Trevor Dobbs took over the arena team, and James Newsom jumped in to help, he

realized it could be done.

"It will be Montague's first open rodeo. The other towns in the county have an annual rodeo, and one thing about the cowboy church is we are big in community involvement. We want to try to pull the community together, not just Montague, but every town in Montague County, which is why we refer to ourselves as the county's cowboy church. We have always been involved in the rodeos that take place and help each rodeo association. It might pull some other folks in and other churches in to come out and have a good time," Caballero said.

The two-day rodeo event will be at 7:30 p.m. May 29-30 and include mutton busting, ranch bronc riding, tie down roping,

breakaway roping, team roping, junior barrel racing, senior barrel racing, double mugging and bull riding.

There also will be barrel racing and team roping jackpots each night with added money to average winner. The church has added \$500 per event and will be providing buckles to the mutton busting champion each night.

The first-ever Montague Rodeo is a Big L Rodeo Co. Production and to enter, contestants must contact Dale Lyons at 580-276-7151.

There also will be a large grand entry each night to kick off the events and calf fries will be available by the Montague County Cowboy Church Chuckwagon Team.

"We are really excited about this, it is going to be one of our first really big events," Caballero explained. "We are just hoping we can get it done and that COVID-19 is not going to jeopardize it. Everyone has been working hard, building new pens and so forth, and working with the contractor. It has been a lot of effort and work involved and I just hope everything works out."

While the event is new, the organizers hope it goes back to the old ways to a time when churches put on functions and drew people to social gatherings.

"I think God is setting this up to be a good comeback after being held up for a month and a half. It will give everyone the opportunity to come out and come to a good

ol' rodeo," Caballero said. "We just love pulling people together and with the church being behind it, the event will create a good wholesome atmosphere to bring children. You won't have to worry about them and can have fun. You can't beat a good ol' rodeo."

The event is a way for the church to give back to the community it loves so dearly.

Admission will be \$10 and children 12 and under, \$5. However, children have the option of getting into the rodeo with a canned food item, which goes towards the church's food bank for the community.

The proceeds from the event will be put into the church's youth program and events for the younger generation of Montague County.

"We want to try and give back to the kids living in the community and get some activities for kids to do along with the church service on Wednesday nights. We want to teach these kids," Newsom said.

Caballero explained while there is plenty of activities for adults, they are hoping to teach kids to ride horses, do barrels and poles and much more.

"We want some sort of school, but we need funding to help better educate the children in western heritage culture all while investing good morals and a foundation to build their life on," Caballero said. "We hope it all plays out."

The preacher hopes it is an event that continues for years to come as the younger generation grows up.

"I am hoping and praying as the next generation in the church grows up and has families of their own they will take over and get the same enjoyment we are getting 25 years later. We hope they raise their kids up in the same kind of environment," Caballero said.

For more information, visit the Montague County Cowboy Church website at <https://montaguecountycowboychurch.org>.



James Newsom, Joe Caballero, Tami Dobbs and Trevor Dobbs have worked hard to create a new rodeo tradition for Montague, Texas. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



Funds raised from the rodeo will be poured back into the youth of the community. Pastor Joe Caballero hopes the event is one that continues for generations as the children grow up and have families of their own. (Courtesy photo)

Watch the sun rise and set about every 45 minutes from the International Space Station's live webcam. (Photo courtesy www.nasa.gov)

Home Sweet Home

By Mandi Dietz

“Home is where the heart is,” is a quote credited to Gaius Plinius Secundus, aka Pliny the Elder, a Roman military commander, author and naturalist; it resonates more now than before.

Staying home need not be boring, causing weariness and restlessness, but instead a time for reflection, rest and growth.

Thanks to modern day technology, people can experience much from the comfort of home. From distance learning to virtual field trips, people can travel around the world via live video feed from web cams capturing zoo animals, international landmarks, museum tours, beaches, and even the international space station.

With the touch of a button, go exploring. Online resources abound.

Take any of 11 virtual farm tours including milk and cheese, dairy, egg production and processing, apples, pigs, sheep, oats, grain, and feed from <https://www.farmfood360.ca/>.

Visit the Louvre Museum in



Explore the world with virtual field trips, including live zoo cams, like this cute otter feed from Monterey Bay Aquarium. (Photo courtesy www.montereybayaquarium.org)

Paris, France at <https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne> and the Great Wall of China at <https://www.thechinaguide.com/destination/great-wall-of-china>.

Watch the live cams of wildlife; San Diego Zoo's pandas, polar bears, koalas, penguins, tigers, butterflies, and more at <https://zoo.sandiegozoo.org/live-cams>; Monterey Bay Aquarium's otters,

birds, sailboats, open-sea tuna, turtles, sharks, glowing moon jellies, kelp forest, and coral reef at <https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>; Houston Zoo's rhinos, giraffes, elephants, and flamingos at <https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/>; and Georgia Aquarium's beluga whales and gators at <https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/>


[beluga-whale-webcam/](https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams).

See the sun rise or set about every 45 minutes from the international space station at https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/nasatv/iss_ustream.html.

It's quite easy to please the senses with sights and sounds of faraway places.

In lieu of virtual travel, some might prefer to learn something new such as cooking, exercise, music, and dance from an abundance of complimentary, educational videos available on YouTube. It's also possible to enjoy roller coaster rides from a variety of theme parks.

People without the internet can still find adventure at home in an array of sorts like good books and movies, phone calls with family and friends, cooking, music and dance, nature and outdoors, gardening, games, writing, and art.

Enforced time at home is when creativity kicks in, and it's possibly when one remembers something we should already know about home sweet home. 

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Confessions of a HUNTER

Not Laughing Anymore

By Andy Anderson

It is pretty normal for me to harvest several game animals a season and to go fishing to stock my freezers for an annual supply of food. I also stock other supplies to last us a few days should the power go out after a big storm or some other unforeseen act that would disrupt regular trips to the store for supplies.

I always found myself on the laughing end of people's jokes about "hoarding" ammo, dry goods, fuel, generators, and having so many guns. I have security set up; I practice with my family about emergency drills and much more. I have honest conversations about the realities of the world we live in, that at any time, the things we enjoy today could be gone tomorrow.

Then here comes COVID-19, better known as the coronavirus, a global pandemic that shut the country down. Shelter in place orders were given, loss of jobs and common toilet paper became a valued commodity. Grocery stores emptied out overnight; fear gripped an entire country in just a few days. People who didn't believe in guns suddenly found themselves at the gun store wanting the protection, security and peace of mind, and they were seriously disappointed to realize they had to wait. The gun laws they advocated for to keep them safe suddenly didn't work for them. Things were getting crazy and social media wasn't helping.

I went to the grocery store to pick up a few things for the next few weeks. Bread was sold out along with milk, eggs, meats; everything was gone. I made my way to the flour and yeast, then around the store picking up things I could use to make my own bread and dry goods that would store easily and feed the family for



several days. A lady standing next to me was in a panic about there not being any bread. I suggested she get some flour and make her own. She sighed and thanked me, grabbed a couple bags of flour and rounded the aisle out of sight. I bought just what I needed, no more than that, and headed home.

That night we ate dinner as we always do; some form of venison, a modest portion of fried potato as a side and carried on as usual. That evening I fielded numerous calls from friends and family, all asking what to do, if I could help with their certain needs, if I had any ammo I could sell them. I did what I could for everyone who asked for help, and each thanked me for the advice or the resources.

Just like that, I was no longer the crazy guy. I was the one everybody was going to for help, security and peace of mind. It was and

has never been about being right. The thing is, all hunters think like me, vets with the training and experience after years of war think like me, and I learn from them. Our senior citizens who survived the Great Depression and World War II, who are the greatest generations ever, taught us all what to be prepared for and how to prepare for it; some listened, some didn't. The "Boomers" of the world are now helping those who laughed, mocked and made fun of them.

I hope COVID-19 teaches us more than good hygiene and social distancing practices, that we learn to prepare and train for future emergencies. Make a plan, learn to hunt, fish, to build a fire and find shelter; it could always be worse. Smoky the Bear said, "It's up to you to prevent forest fires," and it's up to you to protect yourself and family as well. 🐾



Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

American Lotus

Farmers and ranchers are in a very close partnership with Mother Nature. If we really pay attention, she presents us some interesting scenarios.

For example, though they are totally different types of plants, water lilies and prickly pear have a lot in common. They both have strikingly beautiful flowers, both plants are edible, both of them are invaders into their respective habitats, and too much of either one can be an obstacle we have to deal with.

Many north Texas ranches rely on excavated ponds for livestock water. Any time a pond contains a significant amount of shallow water so sunlight reaches the bottom, some type of pond weed will develop. The plant family that includes water lilies and lotuses is a common invader in our livestock water.

Water lilies and lotuses are in the same plant family, but they are two separate genera. There are easy ways to tell them apart:

- A primary difference is water lily leaves commonly float on the surface, but lotus leaves can grow above the water line.

- Water lily leaves and flowers are thick and waxy, while lotus leaves and flowers are thin and papery.

- Water lily leaves have a distinct notch in the leaf, while lotus leaves are more rounded.

- Water lily flower petals are pointed, and lotus petals are more rounded.

These photos are from Clay County, and this plant is common



The leaves and flowers of American lotus both stay above the water surface. The leaves in the background are floating because the pond filled with water. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)



Grazing Value of This Plant

American Lotus

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Of limited grazing value for livestock due to accessibility.

across north Texas. American lotus is adapted to a wide area, from Honduras north through Mexico, across the eastern United States and into Canada.

American lotus is a perennial, and it is cold tolerant and heat tolerant. It can grow in any

pond or slow moving stream that contains shallow water areas. It prefers water with a depth of about 12 inches. Germination can occur from the large lotus seeds. Tubers, or roots, are established in the mud, and long slender stems extend upward. Leaves and flow-

ers are both emergent in that they grow above the water line.

Lotus flowers are fragrant and yellowish white with rich gold centers. They open in the morning and close by late afternoon, then open again the next day.

Lotus is an edible plant and has a history as a food source. The large tuberous roots, the size of a human arm, were baked like sweet potatoes. The leaves were eaten like spinach, and the large seeds were ground into flour. Stems taste somewhat like beets and were usually peeled before



being eaten.

There is a large world-wide industry of cultivating lilies and lotuses in water gardens. According to Jerry Parsons, Professor and Extension Horticulturist with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, cultivation of these plants dates back as early as ancient Egypt. Today, anyone with determination and a little money can have a water garden.

In 2011, the 82nd Texas Legislature designated the water lily "Texas Dawn" as the official Texas State Water Lily. Texas Dawn is a hybrid developed by Texas resident Kenneth Landon, a world-renowned expert in the field of water lilies and the director of the International Water Lily collection in San Angelo.

Ducks and other wildlife utilize the large acorn like seeds of American lotus, and submerged portions of all aquatic plants provide some form of wetland habitat. Many of us have tried to pull a bass out of a group of water lilies or lotuses, and I'm sure others have had better luck than I did. Although there can certainly be benefits to lilies, lotuses, and other aquatic plants, they also can infest ponds to the extent that the pond is not functioning correctly.

While the rest of the world works hard to grow these plants, ranchers sometimes need to control populations in their stock ponds. Once it gets a foothold, American lotus can spread aggressively in wetland areas.

The primary issue that encourages American lotus, and most other water weeds, is shallow water. Look closely at a good livestock pond and you will find the deeper water is basically free of infestation.

Any pond will have a certain amount of shallow water that encourages water weed growth, depending upon the terrain at the pond site and how the pond was constructed. Some ranchers who enjoy and utilize wetland habitat

may prefer to have ponds with significant shallow water area.

Almost all livestock ponds have a certain life expectancy. Siltation, or movement of soil into the pond bottom through rainfall runoff, is a natural occurrence. How fast siltation occurs into each pond, and how deep the pond was to start with, determine the length of time the pond will contain adequate depth for dependable water for livestock.

Ponds that develop infestations of water weeds over a large percent of the surface may not have adequate depth to remain a viable water source for livestock during drought periods, especially in western north Texas where evaporation rates are higher.

Mud, or silt, from the pond bottom, can be removed to deepen the water, but this is a very expensive process. It is often more economical to construct a new pond rather than try to remove the silt from an old one.

Most of us do not have the funds to continually construct deep water livestock ponds, so we must try to keep existing structures functioning and providing good drinking water for livestock, for as long as we can. Control of pond weeds like American lotus may be necessary, and it can be accomplished.

There is currently no feasible biological control. American lotus can be cut and removed, but this process is usually temporary because lotus can reestablish from seeds and roots.

American lotus can be safely controlled by chemicals. This must be done carefully. If a pond containing a large amount of any pond weeds is treated to remove all of the vegetation, a fish die-off could occur.

When the dying weeds decompose, they use up the oxygen in the water, and fish can suffocate. If possible, treat only a portion of the area, wait about two weeks, and treat another portion. ®



The American lotus flower has rounded petals, while plants in the Water lily species have pointed petals. (Photo courtesy Tony Dean)

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THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

Mexican Sunflower

Colorful and a Pollinator Champion

Flaming orange flowers always catch my eye, and the old-fashioned Mexican sunflower is still one of the best. There may be a revival happening with this plant that I have failed to notice.

I belong to Facebook groups dedicated to butterflies and pollinators, and it appears the Mexican sunflowers are bringing them all across the country. It really did my heart good to see so many people growing this flower that I have hardly thought about since Fiesta del Sol was chosen as an All-America Selections winner in 2000, 19 years ago.

The Mexican Sunflower is known botanically as *Tithonia rotundifolia* and is indeed from Mexico and South America. Fiesta del Sol is a truly compact version that did very well in our trials with Mississippi State University. We had it planted with the Mexican bush sage, *Salvia leucantha* and the large African marigolds, which are really from Mexico, too.

After I started watching the reports and photos with butterflies, I decided to scope out plants and see how the pollinators of Georgia liked them. It seems just about almost every species of butterflies love this flower as do bees and hummingbirds. If you are like me and into pollinators, too, then we all need to put this flower in our habitats.

I like the combinations I am seeing as well. There were part-

Continued on page 58



All sorts of pollinators will come to the Mexican Sunflower. (Photo courtesy Norman Winter)

Continued from page 57

nerships with the icy blue *Evolvulus* flowers and others with the native mistflower, *Conoclinium coelestinum*, which also is a butterfly magnet.

I promise if you have success with the old-fashioned tall zinnia, you will find success with the *Tithonia*.

It seems they are not as prevalent at the garden center as they use to be, but seeds are always there, which means we can sow them much like a zinnia.

Plan on giving your finished transplants plenty of room. Crowded conditions with poor air circulation usually lead to unhappiness, much like it does with every other plant.

As mentioned, *Fiesta del Sol* will reach two to three feet tall. *Torch* is a six foot plus monster I still love. It's fun shooting photos of butterflies looking up to flowers on plants taller than you.

Sundance is a beautiful variety in name and color and is touted as reaching four feet tall. Let me admit I have not grown it. Most gardeners, while they say they love it, will also say it too gets much taller. *Goldfinger* is reported as compact as is a stunning mix called *Arcadian Blend*.

Prepare beds by incorporating three to four inches of organic matter and two pounds of a slow release 12-6-6 fertilizer, per 100 square feet of bed space. Direct seed, or set out transplants that have little to no color showing.

Thin seedlings to the correct spacing as recommended for your variety for the vigorous growth that is about to occur. The largest ones I have been watching are three to four feet wide, so you may really want a little wider spacing. Mulch when the seedlings are large enough or after setting out transplants. Side-dress the young plants in six to eight weeks with light applications of fertilizer.

The Mexican sunflower looks like the quintessential cottage garden flower especially when partnered with blue salvias and zinnias. The *Fiesta del Sol* variety also would excel artistically as the thriller plant in designer mixed containers.

Whether you choose a named variety or go generic, you can expect Monarchs, Swallowtails, Sulphurs, and even the intricate Hairstreaks. You also will have hummingbirds that will make the garden a spectacle of nature.

You will be asking yourself how you could have ever forgotten this beloved flower. Follow me on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy. 🌱



Butterflies love the Mexican Sunflower.



A sleepy orange butterfly on a Mexican Sunflower. (Photos courtesy Norman Winter)



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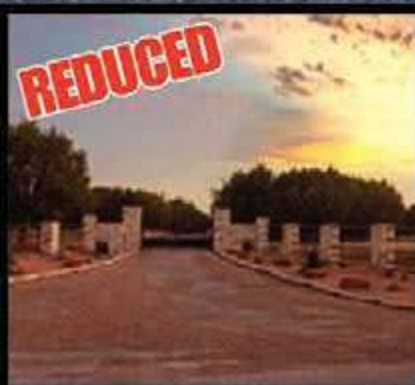
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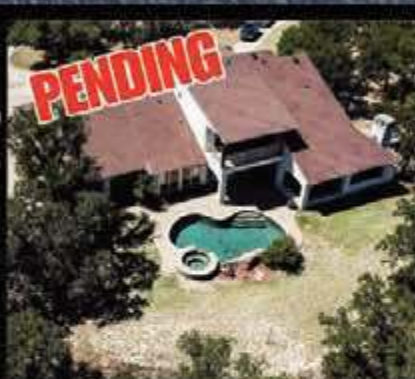
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