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Volume 8 Issue 11

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ON THE COVER

On the cover is silversmith Matt Litz, known for his trophy buckles and the specialty, one-of-a-kind pieces he loves creating for customers near and far. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

Welcome to the September issue of North Texas Farm and Ranch magazine.

Fall is right around the corner and with it, all the beauty nature brings with changing leaves, colorful landscapes and cool breezes. As nature begins to

change around us, it is time for us to shift into preparations for the coming winter. Rayford Pullen urges us to get our seed in the ground for our fall pastures, while Lindsey Lambert and Lindsey Monk give us glimpses of agriculture in Colorado and Montana.

Turn the pages to see how rural land sales have held up in our area and learn about diseases that could effect your livestock.

Annette Bridges inspires by turning trash into treasure, as does Andy Anderson when he tells a story of courage. Lacey Newlin provides a recipe for chicken primavera spaghetti squash boats, Judy Wade shares an important aspect to our ecosystem and Dave Alexander has a behind-the-scenes look at three young Texas musicians.

Meanwhile, Mandi Dietz gets outdoors with a visit to Lavender Ridge Farms in Gainesville. Stay outdoors and learn more about the Vine mesquite in your pastures with Tony Dean and Lo and Behold in your garden with The Garden Guy.

In rodeo, Phillip Kitts looks back on the popularity of recent events, and Krista Lucas brings us an up-and-coming barrel racer by the name of Brittany Mayfield.

Speaking of our writer and copy editor Krista Lucas, we would like to extend a very warm congratulations on her marriage last month. We wish you a lifetime of love and happiness.

If you have a story idea for an upcoming issue, we would love to hear from you. Email editor@ntfronline.com. 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 September.

Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
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North Texas Farm & Ranch

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As we begin to turn the corner on the summer of 2020, there have been some very interesting events taking place and changes emerge since COVID-19. My longtime friend, Ray Benson of Asleep At The Wheel, has taken his exposure to the coronavirus in stride. I have often joked there are not many things tougher than a road travelling musician. READ MORE: <http://ntfronline.com/?p=9475>

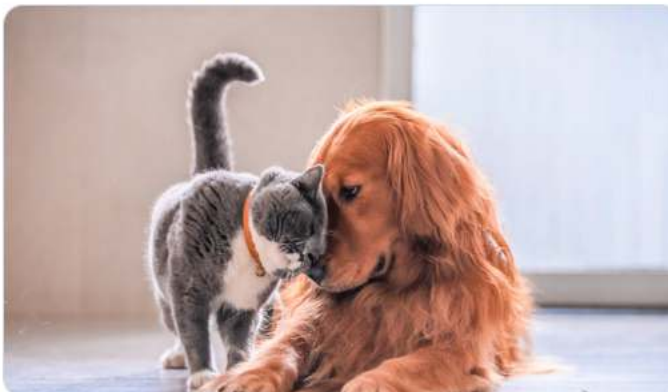


TWITTER FEED



NTFR Magazine @NTFRMagazine · Jul 12

By now, most people have been saturated with COVID-19 information. Even with what is known about the virus, much of the information about COVID-19 is still unknown. This is especially true for how the virus interacts with animals. READ MORE: ntfronline.com/?p=9514



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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

Fall officially begins in September each year and is the month in North Texas that we like to get our seed in the ground for our fall pastures. With growing days limited by shorter day length and colder temperatures, it is imperative to have our seedlings emerging as quickly as possible to take advantage of the really good temperatures and day length before they become our limiting factors in having our cool season annual pastures.

While our intentions are good, when we're farming outdoors, we still have to deal with the weather, heat, rainfall and insects, such as armyworms. Now if you are in this business, you have got to be an optimist. The pessimists are not going to do anything because something bad could happen and, in fact, it does on occasion, but not to the extent we quit because it might happen. If you want to lessen your chances of something going wrong, farm indoors, get a greenhouse and find out you are in charge and if something does go wrong, it is probably your fault.

In the world of cattle, it seems as though cattle prices throughout the summer have held together enough we have been able to pay our bills and keep our notes current, thank goodness. Our program has been to stay current in our marketing and basically business as usual.

Next up for us is pregnancy testing our heifers and cows and not allowing open spring calving cows or heifers that did not breed to hang around here through the fall and winter after we wean their calves. We need to get them off the payroll if they are not pulling their weight. We will be weaning calves soon and giving them their IBR and blackleg boosters and



It is imperative to have our seedlings emerging as quickly as possible to take advantage of the really good temperatures and day length before they become our limiting factors in having our cool season annual pastures. (Courtesy photo)

deworming them before we decide which ones will be kept as replacement heifers and/or bulls.

On another note, I had a buddy ask what a good yearling weight for cattle is. This got me to thinking and a rush of thoughts went through my head regarding his question. My first thought was that I don't really know, or what our weaning and yearling weights were compared to other breeders. It was probably directly related to how much we feed our calves after weaning and when we start.

In other words, the more you feed your calves after weaning the heavier the yearling weights. First, we do not feed our heifers after weaning, but we do grow our bulls on feed during the winter to average three pounds per day of gain. When green grass arrives in the spring, no more feed. To put this in perspective, if you

have weaning weights that average 650 pounds and immediately begin feeding them to gain three pounds per day after that, you would expect a yearling weight of 1,150 pounds.

In our case, we usually begin feeding our bull calves about the first of August after weaning them in May, or at eight to nine months of age, which would be 650 pounds, plus 300 pounds of gain on feed, plus pasture gain of about 100 pounds, for a total of 1,050 pounds. The last thing we want to do is get our bulls fat, which will result in them falling apart when turned out with cows in a pasture and fend for themselves on grass.

We also feed our bulls on pasture, 20 to 80-acre native grass traps, to prevent feet and leg problems common to bulls fed in feedlots. While we could get four

to five pounds of gain on a free choice ration, we elect to keep gains lower so our bulls will be in better shape and able to hold their condition after they are turned on cows. Regardless, fat seems to sell and if that's what buyers want, then that's the way it will be.

In the case of our heifers, we breed them when they are 14 to 16 months old, and we want them to weigh 800 to 850 pounds, or thereabouts. If a heifer has a weaning weight of 600 or so pounds, that means her yearling weight needs to be approximately 750 pounds. We want our heifers to be large enough to have a calf on their own, and with another nine months to grow that is not a problem.

If you are after a lot of weight, feed them a lot; if you are after functional cattle, don't overdo it. It's a wonderful time to be in the cattle business. ©

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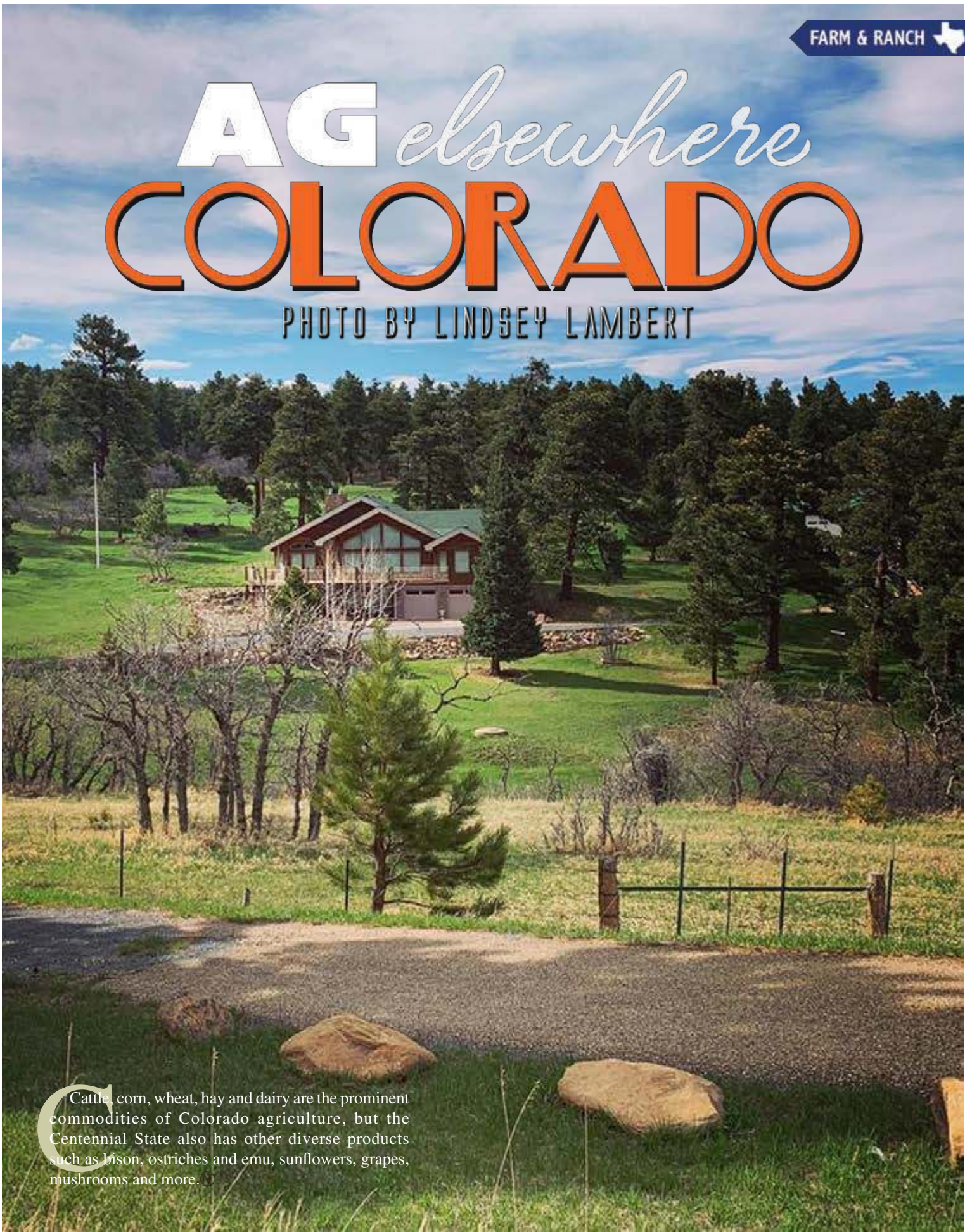
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AG *elsewhere* COLORADO

PHOTO BY LINDSEY LAMBERT




Cattle, corn, wheat, hay and dairy are the prominent commodities of Colorado agriculture, but the Centennial State also has other diverse products such as bison, ostriches and emu, sunflowers, grapes, mushrooms and more. 🌾

AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK



A Another Big Sky sunset! It's been really dry up here and the hoppers are eating everything, but life goes on. 



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-Brock Toler, Back Forty Bison

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RANCH, RODEO and Randomness

By Pepper Stewart

Are Ghosts Really Among Us?

There are many people who believe in supernatural, paranormal ghosts and spirits. Are you one of those? Have you personally had an experience with something you couldn't explain?

Many religions are based on it with massive followings worldwide of spirits and beings people have never seen but fully submit to daily.

What kinds of spirits are out there, only good and evil, or are there additional ones in the mix? In my youth I watched plenty of the *Twilight Zone* episodes, and it always got my mind spinning. Tales of ghosts and spirits have been around since the beginning of time in folklore, bedtime stories, and campfire tales.

My thoughts on the subject are similar to a wasp nest; if you poke at it you just might get stung. Same with poking at spirits; if you get a hold of one it might not be what you expected.

My wife is a believer, but I'm skeptic, and we often travel to places to stay in the haunted rooms and tour active sites.

We take along a bag of paranormal investigation equipment hoping to capture some activity, but it's not been easy.

For those active paranormal places, it just so happens the night we are there the ghosts are out for the night or on vacation. Depending on where you are, here is a short list of the most active haunted places we have visited:

Miss Molly's & Stonehouse Hotel in the Stockyards, Fort Worth, Texas



Pepper Stewart

The Tudor Rose Inn. (Photo courtesy Pepper Stewart)

Haunted Hill House in Mineral Wells, Texas

Excelsior House in Jefferson, Texas

The Tudor Rose Inn in Gloucestershire, England

The Black Horse Pub in Pluckley, England

Kytellers Inn in Kilkenny, Ireland

Some say it's just your mind playing tricks on you, while others fully believe we are not alone on


this earth. I've never had anything happen to me or seen any supernatural activity at any of these haunted locations.

I'll admit it does feel a little creepy walking around these places mainly in the dark, which adds to the unknown.

Being in the dark makes it easy for your mind to wonder and paranoia to kick in. I've often thought why does it have to be nighttime, why are the lights off, do ghost and

spirits only come out at night?

Too often my mind wonders maybe a little too much; could it be that I'm trying too hard not to see anything, or do the spirits only reach out to those who seek them? There is possibly a spirit right behind you reading along with you.

Some of you have had something happen you couldn't explain so tell us about it. I'd like to hear your story. 

LAND MARKET REPORT

By Jared Groce

JULY 2020 RURAL LAND SALES

Rural land sales are still at a fevered pace, even in the dog days of summer. The mass exodus from the populated metro areas, along with a large supply of investors who are looking to park cash in a solid investment is what is keeping our inventory levels down and demand high. We are seeing inventory levels that are much lower than July 2019, thus the number of transactions in the following

counties are down by a total of 17. I am confident that if there were more inventory, there would be many more transactions.

Favorable weather conditions and all-time low interest rates have helped through the dog days of summer so far, and the interest rates are not expected to change for a long time. The weather on the other hand, well, that's anyone's guess.

COOKE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
GAINESVILLE	12	\$4,583.33	93.32%	38
VALLEY VIEW	12.98	\$11,016.95	97.28%	36
GAINESVILLE	10.77	\$13,927.58	100%	50
COLLINSVILLE	11	\$15,454.55	91.89%	82
COLLINSVILLE	21	\$8,250.00	100%	11
VALLEY VIEW	20	\$8,925.00	99.17%	69
GAINESVILLE	26.82	\$7,270.69	86.67%	142
COLLINSVILLE	26.723	\$12,448.98	113.15%	15
VALLEY VIEW	20	\$17,000.00	188.89%	63
VALLEY VIEW	43.68	\$8,484.43	92.88%	351
VALLEY VIEW	38.29	\$11,269.26	100.35%	85
VALLEY VIEW	35	\$14,000.00	98.2%	1,317
WHITESBORO	160.23	\$5,304.87	96.05%	131
DECATUR	308.67	\$2,984.37	99.5%	22
AVERAGES	53.369	\$9,970.97	98.68%	66
JULY 2019 AVG	41.759	\$10,977.29	94.87%	104

DENTON COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
SANGER	10	\$15,700.00	99.37%	70
JUSTIN	10	\$23,000.00	88.8%	174
NORTHLAKE	10.06	\$24,850.89	97.85%	141
DENTON	10.722	\$51,762.73	92.65%	308
CROSS ROADS	11.345	\$49,184.66	99.64%	275
SANGER	43.75	\$16,411.43	95.75%	331
AVERAGES	15.98	\$30,151.62	96.8%	225
JULY 2019 AVG	53.835	\$21,195.75	96.93%	186

MONTAGUE COUNTY				
AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
NOCONA	13.89	\$5,939.52	92.28%	18
BOWIE	12.09	\$8,933.00	100%	6
BOWIE	15.09	\$8,217.36	96.67%	145
BOWIE	10	\$12,400.00	99.2%	62
BOWIE	15	\$9,066.67	93.79%	388
BOWIE	14	\$10,000.00	95.24%	63
FORESTBURG	67.29	\$7,489.97	85.16%	34
AVERAGES	21.051	\$8,863.79	94.62%	62
JULY 2019 AVG	125.334	\$5,691.72	91.16%	104

WISE COUNTY

AREA	ACRES	\$/ACRE	SP/LP	DOM
CHICO	10.01	\$7,492.51	97.4%	102
DECATUR	13.5	\$8,888.89	92.66%	266
DECATUR	10.01	\$15,484.52	97.48%	137
POOLVILLE	18.76	\$8,315.57	97.5%	64
DECATUR	29.883	\$9,369.88	94.92%	26
AVERAGES	16.433	\$9,910.27	95.99%	119
2019 AVG	13.51	\$15,413.34	96%	55

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



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316 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



PRICE REDUCED

BYERS FARM

\$2,150/Ac

This is a productive farm located west of Byers fronting Airport and Raymond Evans Rd. There is 265 acres of farmland, broken down into a north 76 acre field and south 188 acre field. The balance is located between the two fields. It consists of native grasses, has a seasonal creek, mostly cleared with some mesquites. The entire boundary is fenced and each field is cross fenced. Other improvements consist of livestock corrals and a small wooden barn. At the improvements is a water well and an electric meter.

4,972 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



NEW LISTING

EAST JOLLY RANCH

\$1,695/Ac

This ranch consists of 4,972.54 acres of prime ranch land located between Jolly and Henrietta. The land consists of rolling grassland with moderate mesquite coverage, over 550 acres of improved grasses, 12 pastures with several grass traps, above average surface water, outstanding interior road system, great fences, 2 sets of working pens, a brick ranch house, windmill and Dean Dale Water. Rarely do ranches of this caliber become available.

1,292 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



PRICE REDUCED

BELL SCOTT RIVER RANCH

\$1,999/Ac

The Bell Scott River ranch consist of 1,292 Acres with nearly 1.5 miles of Red River Frontage. It is primarily heavily wooded river bottom with approximately 35% being farmland and improved Bermuda pastures. Improvements consist of a frame house, workshop, equipment shed, hay barn, 2 sets of livestock corrals, fenced and cross fenced. There are two water wells and electricity on the property. Its located between Charlie and Byers with easy access from FM 171 to Airport Rd, to Raymond Evans Rd. This is a well rounded recreational property.

97 ACRES | JACK COUNTY



MCBEE RANCH

\$3,795/Ac

Located in NW Jack Co. Primarily heavily wooded with oaks and mesquites with thick underbrush, level to rolling topography with Roper Branch creek extending through the property. A ridge dominates the west half and there is a large rock hill at the NE portion. There are no ponds, but several great locations for constructing ponds. Access is off FM 2190 and a private deeded all weather road. Electricity is on the property and well water appears available. Additional acreage and various size tracts available.

473 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



MESQUITE HILL HUNTING RANCH

\$2,450/Ac

This is a prime turn-key hunting and fishing property located in Clay County, northwest of Petrolia. Its primarily densely wooded with mesquite, scattered open areas and a heavily wooded creek bisecting the property. It has rolling elevation changes offering great views. There are 6 ponds, 3 of them were recently built with a max depth of 25 feet, 1 to 3 acres and were stocked with bass, catfish and crappie. There are 12 blind and feeder set ups that will convey with the property. Electricity is available.

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- Casa Del Rio - House & 157 Acres - Wichita Co - \$890,000
- George Farm - 490 Acres - Wichita Co - \$1,795/Acre
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- Kanon Hilltop - 30 Acres - Jack Co - \$3,975/Acre

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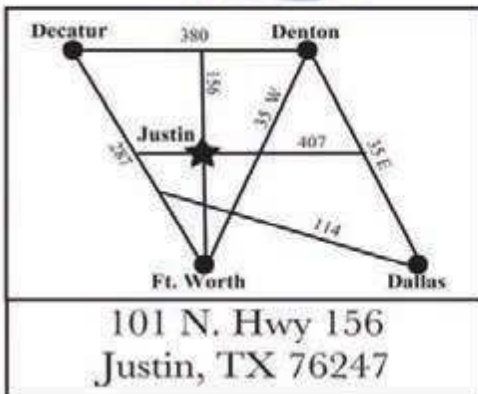
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Actinobacillosis (Woody Tongue) and Actinomycosis (Lumpy Jaw)

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

Actinobacillosis and Actinomycosis, both of which are better known as “woody tongue” and “lumpy jaw” respectively, are two common infections seen in cattle. Occasionally, both of the bacteria are seen in other animals such as sheep, pig, horses, and dogs. In cattle “woody tongue” is associated with the tongue, head and neck regions of cattle. “Lumpy jaw” is manifested as a bone infection in the upper and lower jaws or other bones in the head region of cattle. On rare occasions, both organisms may be found in other areas of the body and internal organs. There is a tendency by some to lump them together as one disease, but they are two separate diseases.

The bacterium that causes “woody tongue” is called *Actinobacillus lignieresii*. The microorganism does not survive long in the environment. It can live around five days outside the animal host. *A. Lignieresii* is part of the normal flora of the oral cavity and upper gastrointestinal tract of cattle. The bacterium gains entrance to tissue through abrasions or penetrating wounds. This may occur with abrasive feeds or hays.

Actinobacillosis has two forms. One form is small circular swellings scattered in the subcutaneous tissue or lymph nodes around the head, jaw and neck area. These swellings enlarge and form thick walled abscesses. If they rupture, white or slightly greenish pus is discharged. Unless treated, the disease will progress and be fatal. The other form is the classical “woody tongue.” In this form the tongue is swollen and firm when palpated. The first thing a producer may notice is excessive drooling. These cattle have difficulty chewing, which may result in rapid weight loss. The tongue may protrude from the mouth.

Actinomyces bovis is the bacterium responsible for the disease “lumpy jaw.” The bacterium is a normal inhabitant of the oral cavity, upper respiratory tract and digestive tract of animals. Similar to “woody tongue” the organism gains entry to tissue through damage to the oral cavity by sharp objects such as stickers, grass awns or foreign bodies. Another avenue for the bacterium to gain entry to the



(Courtesy photo)

oral tissues includes erupting teeth.

Once *A. bovis* gains entry to the tissues in the oral cavity, there is a low-grade inflammatory reaction. This is followed by proliferation of scar tissue and inflammatory cells that result in a tumor-like mass. This mass invades the bony structures of the head. The most common sites of infection are the upper and lower jawbones of cattle. The infected area may swell and be very hard. There may be some abscesses associated with the lesions. Radiographs of the infection reveal a honeycomb appearance of the bone. The disease is chronic and is followed by anorexia and weight loss. Without treatment the animal will die.


Diagnosis of Actinobacillosis and Actinomycosis is usually based on clinical signs and physical examination. Additional laboratory tests may be run to confirm the diagnosis.

The standard therapy for both conditions is sodium iodide repeated at seven to 10 day intervals until resolution of clinical signs. If the treatment is started early in “woody tongue,” two or three treatments are usually sufficient. “Lumpy jaw” may require more treatments. Treatments can be continued until signs of iodide toxicity. Signs of iodide toxicity are excessive tear production, anorexia and lacrimation. Producers need to be aware that sodium

iodide has been shown to cause abortion in cattle, but this is a rare occurrence. Besides sodium iodide, many veterinarians will use additional antibiotics to treat both conditions. For the best treatment advice, producers should consult with their veterinarian.

Producers need to be aware that both of these conditions require multiple treatments to have any chance of success, and treatment failures with both conditions are common. Once abscesses are found in the skin on lymph node with *A. lignieresii*, prognosis is poor. In cases of “lumpy jaw” with extensive bony lesions, the best outcome possible is to stop the development. The animal will still have a swollen jaw.

There is no vaccine for *A. lignieresii* or *A. bovis*, so producers should follow biosecurity protocols. Sick animals should be isolated until well. All feed and water troughs should be cleaned and disinfected. If several animals are infected, the source of the cause of abrasion in the mouth should be identified and eliminated.

If cattle producers would like more information about “woody tongue” and “lumpy jaw,” they should contact their local veterinarian or Oklahoma State University County Agriculture Extension Educator. 



The Race is On

By Phillip Kitts

Everyone knows how much the 2020 rodeo year has come upon its own set of challenges, and the reality is every person connected to rodeo has felt the strain over the last few months. Some are asking how this is going to impact the rest of the season. Well, as the summer starts to come to an end the race is on, and it is creating a fun few months for athletes and fans alike.

It seemed like when things rolled in June the flood gates opened, right about the time Woodward, Okla., rolled the dice and put on what turned out to be a massive few days of rodeo the rest of the country took as inspiration. Since June there has been a good share of rodeos that unfortunately have had to cancel, but nearly as many have pulled up the bootstraps and made it happen. This can-do attitude has come with a lot of rewards. Rodeos that generally see strong numbers of competitors are seeing record numbers. The reason is a lot of these athletes must get somewhere and make money and the contenders for the National Finals Rodeo need to start accumulating money toward a qualification for NFR.

The silver lining of this is some of the smaller events are getting attention from big name competitors, and the small-town events are getting big time action. Spanish Fork, Utah, was one of those rodeos that felt the inspiration to put on their event, and boy, did they. Spanish Fork is traditionally a major player in the year end results for the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, and this year they kept that reputation. Due to county restrictions, Spanish Fork would not host their normal 8,000 fan capacity venue and was forced



As the summer starts to come to an end the race is on, and it is creating a fun few months for athletes and fans alike.

to reduce their numbers to 6,000. All five nights of action saw them reach their maximum capacity of fans while those fans were treated to seeing nearly every one of the top 15 cowboys in the world. In the end of their event, it was a who's who of rodeo and 30,000 thrilled fans.

Another rodeo that felt the thrill of taking the risk was Sidney, Iowa. This rodeo celebrated their 97th year of rodeo and carries an exceptionally long history of being a mainstay to future NFR athletes. In all, the main difference this year for Sidney was not in the ranking of the competitors. Over the years it has been common to see the top 15 athletes filter through their event during the five nights of competition. In Sidney's case there was a significant change in the number of competitors. Normally the Sidney, Iowa, rodeo is

capable of hosting all of their slack runs in one short day in between performances. With the mass amount of numbers that entered this year, the committee had to expand their slack program. This resulted in adding additional slack on Wed., July 29, of more than 40 athletes. They then kept their traditional slack day of Fri., July 31, where they nearly tripled their normal numbers in steer wrestling, tie down roping and team roping. With the large amount of timed event entries, what is normally an hour session turned into a several hour marathon. If this was not enough, they still had to host a second round of barrel racing on July 31 in which they ran another group of more than 40 racers.

In the end, a lot of credit should go to the stellar group of volunteers who stood their ground and did not miss a beat with the

additional time needed to host their event.

The big story from Sidney, Iowa, was the crowds. The Iowa curriculum for COVID-19 had no limitations on how many people can attend the event but insisted that social distancing be honored. The days leading up to the first performance nearly every measure that can be imagined was put into place. With all of the additional taskings that went into preparing for the event, one could sense the concern. Would the numbers in the crowd be worth all the hard work? When the first performance came the concern was not alleviated: night one crowds were far from record breaking, but the total numbers were definitely in the respectable ranges. As nights two and three rolled around, things started to look promising. Then things took a massive change.




Night four saw a near capacity crowd and something new to nearly everyone in rodeo. Over the last few months everyone in rodeo has used the statement, "It just does not feel the same." This sentiment had become common vernacular when describing events around the nation since the pandemic came around. Well, Sidney just might have changed that. The night four crowd seemed to be just like years prior with the addition that this crowd may have been one of the biggest the small Iowa town had seen in years.

Going into the last performance, many were just not sure what to expect. The question had come to be, "Would the last night be bigger or had the event peaked at a respectable point?" As Saturday, Aug. 1, came around, the answers were obvious. With the crowds close to capacity, even more so than several years before,

Sidney, Iowa, lived up to its name of Rodeo Town USA. The biggest success was that during two and a half hours of action the feel, the sensation and the heart of rodeo had come back to what so many had known in the past.

With the month of August going into full swing, the cowboys of the PRCA and the cowgirls of the Women's Professional Rodeo Association are getting back to action and running hard to get to their next big chance.

This change is a much-needed change for all of the contractors, officials and personnel who rely on the sport in order to support their lives. If Sidney, Iowa, has set the tone for what will happen the rest of 2020 in rodeo, then there is going to be a lot of thrilled small towns and a lot of rodeo athletes and personnel who will be happy to start to see the world returning to normal. 



Fallon Taylor is one of many rodeo competitors getting back to action. (Photos courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

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Barrel Racer Brittany

By Krista Lucas

Brittany Mayfield has been setting the amateur rodeo world on fire lately, battling for the number one spot in the United Professional Rodeo Association barrel racing standings. Heading into August, Mayfield sat in the number three spot with close to \$8,000 won.

The Blue Ridge, Texas cowgirl has been riding horses since she was a little girl.

She started out competing at local jackpots and play days and bought her first UPRA card in 2017.

Mayfield stays extremely busy not only hitting up the rodeos but also taking in quite a few outside horses for training and selling.

"I really enjoy both sides of it. I love going to the rodeos and being able to compete, but I don't haul a ton of young horses," Mayfield said. "I do haul horses that have been started and need to be seasoned. It is such a cool feeling to watch those horses grow throughout the year."

Mayfield also holds down a job at a psychology clinic in McKinney, Texas where she is in charge of inventory, customer service and product control.

"I have 10 to 12 outside horses in for training at a time, so after work each day I care for, ride and haul them to jackpots or rodeos," Mayfield said.

Mayfield is fully committed to her craft, and the result has been seeing her name at the top of the Cinch UPRA standings.

Her name also is seen at a jackpot nearly every night of the week, with rodeos throughout the weekends.

She currently competes on a 12-year-old gelding, registered name Kendall, and a seven-year-old mare, registered name Crystals Got Class.

"Both horses have so many



Heading into August, Brittany Mayfield sat in the number three spot in the United Professional Rodeo Association barrel racing standings with close to \$8,000 won. (Courtesy photo)

great qualities, but they both excel in different ways," she said. Figuring out each horse's strong points is what has made Mayfield excel in the arena herself. She is having her best year yet; even with all of the ups and downs 2020 has had to offer.

"My biggest win so far this year would have to be winning the Ride TV series at Fort Worth," she said. Usually, she tries to go to as many rodeos as possible, but this year has had a little different

feel to it.

"I am just so thankful we are able to rodeo again and everything the rodeo committees are doing to make it possible," Mayfield said.

Mayfield has some big goals she hopes to accomplish in the second half of 2020, both in and out of the arena.

"I would love to make the circuit finals or qualify for the American semi-finals," she said. "Those have been two pretty big goals of mine the last couple of

years, and I really feel like I have good enough horses now to make it possible. I would also like to get my real-estate license in the next year."

Mayfield is sponsored by Greenville Discount Tire, All Around Veterinarian Services, Keep Um Movin', and Supple Steed and Wellness Specialist. Look for Mayfield at the 2020 Cinch United Finals Rodeo, where she will be running down the alleyway for the third time.



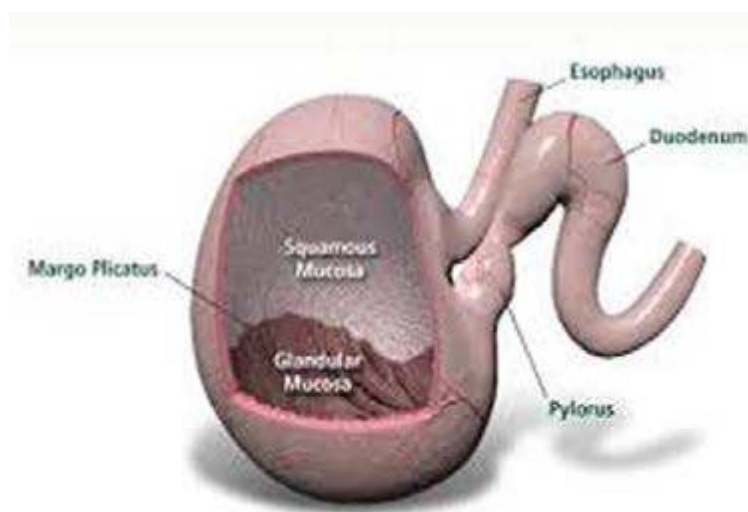
Equine Gastric Ulcer Syndrome: Symptoms, Diagnosis and Treatment

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM

Just about every horse owner has heard of or had to deal with gastric ulcers in a horse. The topic comes up between horse owners and veterinarians almost daily, especially among high performing athletes. Gastric ulcers in horses have long been an underlying performance hindering issue for equine athletes for decades. With more research, different feeding techniques and good treatment options, gastric ulcers can be well managed in the majority of horses.

Gastric ulcers are a very painful sore or erosion of the protective barrier to the very acidic gastric secretions of the stomach. Many people with gastric ulcers experience a prolonged burning sensation in the abdomen especially while eating, decreased appetite, nausea, and bloating. There has been a really well documented link to bacteria called *Helicobacter* in humans to gastric ulcers, but no such link has been made in horses.

The anatomy of the horse's stomach also makes it unique compared to other species and sets itself up for gastric ulcers. The most commonly ulcerated area of the horse stomach is called the squamous region (upper part of the stomach), which is lined with squamous epithelial cells compared to the glandular region (lower part), which is the region that produces the gastric acid. The squamous region is ulcerated the most frequent because of the lack of protective mechanisms it has to the extreme acidic pH of the gastric acid in comparison to the glandular region. A demarcation between these regions of the stomach called the margo plicatus



is where the most ulceration is usually found.

NSAIDs such as phenylbutazone or flunixin meglumine use can put a horse at risk of gastric ulcers. The longer the use and the higher the dose of NSAIDs the greater the risk of ulcers will be. NSAIDs also put horses at risk of colonic ulcers, but this is a separate issue and should not be confused with gastric ulcers. The treatment for gastric ulcers is not the same as the treatment for colonic ulcers and colonic ulcers can lead to more serious consequences for the horse.

Symptoms of Gastric Ulcers

For the most part, gastric ulcers can have very vague and subtle symptoms horse owners or even veterinarians would write off as not significant or miss them all together. A common scenario owners report about their horse with gastric ulceration is the horse not feeling well, not performing well or not eating well. Whenever a horse is under more stress from hauling frequently to events, under greater workload and is not getting a very consistent steady diet, this

can lead to issues arising with gastric ulcers. Common symptoms of gastric ulcers are listed below:

- Cinch pain or girth pain
- Biting at sides
- Not eating grain well, eating grain slowly or refusing grain all together
- Losing weight
- Poor or dull hair coat
- Decreased performance
- Attitude changes
- Loose feces
- Low grade colic symptoms

There can be many diseases or conditions that can lead to these symptoms so it takes thorough history and previous treatments to help sort out if these signs are consistent with gastric ulcers.

Horses are made to be continuous eaters, but for convenience of the owners or horse caretakers, they are generally fed meals, especially stalled horses. This practice of feeding horses two to three meals a day, which is consumed in a matter of minutes, leads to a long period of time a horse's stomach is empty and horses are continuous producers of gastric acid. This meal style feeding practice can

lead to risk for gastric ulceration. However, there are methods of feeding horses differently to help combat this risk.

Diagnosis

The most reliable and proven method to diagnose gastric ulcers is by visualizing the gastric lining of the stomach with a gastroscope. This is a long endoscope that is passed up the horse's nose into the esophagus and down to the stomach.

In order to see the majority of the stomach the horse must be fasted off of feed and hay for 12 hours and withheld from water for four hours before the exam is performed. Sedation is required and usually the nose is twitched to pass the scope to the stomach. The scope is driven and pushed around in the stomach to visualize the inner lining of the stomach and to grade ulceration when identified. The grading scale is a zero through four, with zero being normal and four having extensive diffuse ulceration.

Treatment and Prevention Options

The gold standard of treatment of gastric ulcers is with omeprazole. The drug omeprazole, known as Gastroguard, is the most superior treatment of gastric ulcers and the only FDA approved drug for this condition. The drug binds to the proton pump, which pumps out the gastric acid and disables it permanently, but the stomach has a fast regenerative ability and quickly replaces the pump within 24 hours with a new proton pump. Although the pump is replaced, omeprazole effectively and quickly raises the pH of the gastric fluid to a more basic level. Depending on the severity of the gastric ulceration,



the treatment course can vary from 14 to 45 days. In order to get the ulcers to heal, the pH needs to be held at a more basic level over a prolonged period of time. Other drugs and home remedies have been used to treat ulcers but with very little success and with no scientific proof.

Feeding methods and changing husbandry practices to mimic pasture grazing have been shown to be helpful in decreasing the risk of ulcers and other problems such as colic. Slow feeders that spread the meals out over longer period of time are the key to mimic pasture grazing in a stall or dry lot setting. Other recommendations are to only exercise a horse on a full stomach preferably with alfalfa in their stomach. The higher calcium in alfalfa acts as a buffer and the mechanical effects of roughage in the stomach keep the gastric acid from splashing up on the more



Gastric ulcers are a very painful sore or erosion of the protective barrier to the very acidic gastric secretions of the stomach. (Courtesy photo)

vulnerable area of the stomach where ulcers occur. Therefore, having a hay bag with alfalfa or feeding alfalfa cubes before an event or a workout can be helpful in preventing gastric ulcers.

There are several grain products currently that have addi-

tives to help buffer the pH in the stomach and lower the acidity for a short period of time. Since the horse is a constant producer of gastric acid the buffering effects of these products are very short lived but can be helpful. One particular produce and feed additive made by

Purina is called Outlast.

Other methods to prevent gastric ulcers is to preventively treat before, during and a few days after a stressful event such as hauling, competing or undergoing hospitalization.

A lower dose of omeprazole is the most effective prevention around these stressful events. This product is available as Ulcergard made by the same producers of Gastrogard. Using the other methods mentioned before also can be used during stressful events to further help prevent gastric ulceration.

Gastric ulcers can be a performance limiting issue in many breeds and disciplines of horses, but fortunately it is an easily diagnosable and treatable condition. By applying some of these tactics to prevent gastric ulcers, you can help your horse avoid ulcers before they start. ®

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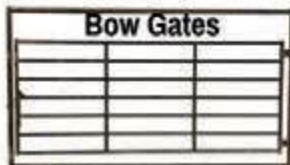
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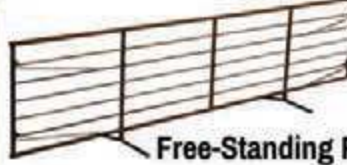
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# The History of Agriculture

## Put Your Knowledge to the Test

Agriculture is the science or practice of farming, including cultivation of the soil for the growing of crops and the rearing of animals to provide food, wool and other products. However, any farmer or rancher will tell you agriculture is so much more than just the soil on the ground or the meat in your fridge. Agriculture has fed the world for hundreds of years, through good times and difficult seasons, with practices passed down through generations of families who worked their hands to the bone in an industry they loved. The influence of ancient agriculture can still be seen in the way we do things today, but with such a broad past, can you truly know everything there is about the history of agriculture? Take the quiz below to see.

1. In what region did the earliest farmers live?

- A. *Fertile Crescent*
- B. *Southern Asia*
- C. *Greece*
- D. *Europe*

2. The Third Agricultural Revolution led to great technological growth between the years 1950 and 1960. What is another name for this period?

- A. *The Growth Revolution*
- B. *The Great Soil Revolution*
- C. *The Agricultural Expansion*
- D. *The Green Revolution*

3. What did Edward Winslow bring back to Plymouth in 1624?

- A. *Wheat*
- B. *Cattle*
- C. *Corn*
- D. *Soybeans*

4. The first large-scale irrigation systems were developed in Southern Russia, but where did



the very earliest known methods of irrigation begin?

- A. *Venezuela*
- B. *Egypt*
- C. *Africa*
- D. *Spain*

5. After the Civil War, what region became the wheat-growing center of the country?

- A. *South*
- B. *Eastern*
- C. *Pacific Northwest*
- D. *Great Plains*

6. Who invented the first gasoline-powered tractor?

- A. *Henry Blair*
- B. *John Froelich*
- C. *Thomas Jefferson*
- D. *Eli Whitney*

7. What invention revolutionized the beef industry?

- A. *Railroads*
- B. *Cotton Gin*
- C. *Refrigeration*
- D. *Automobiles*

8. About how many farms were there in the United States during 1935?

- A. *50,000*
- B. *1 million*

C. *25 million*

D. *7 million*

9. In what year were girls allowed to join Future Farmers of America?

- A. *1927*
- B. *1982*
- C. *1955*
- D. *1969*

10. What decade saw the largest increase in corn yields in the United States?

- A. *1988-1998*
- B. *1917-1927*
- C. *1933-1943*
- D. *1892-1902*

11. What percentage of the workforce did farmers make up in the year 1840?

- A. *70 percent*
- B. *95 percent*
- C. *30 percent*
- D. *50 percent*

12. What is thought to be the earliest cultivated fruit crop?

- A. *Bananas*
- B. *Figs*
- C. *Oranges*
- D. *Strawberries*

13. What period is referred

to as the "golden age" for the American farmer?

- A. *1897-1920*
- B. *1881-1896*
- C. *1924-1941*
- D. *1841-1856*

14. Who was the first mule breeder?

- A. *James Logan*
- B. *Abraham Lincoln*
- C. *Alexander Hamilton*
- D. *George Washington*

15. What was farmers' main problem in 1933?

- A. *Dust*
- B. *Lack of rain*
- C. *Overproduction*
- D. *Crop prices*

### Answer Key:

1. A. *Fertile Crescent*. The earliest farmers are thought to have lived in the Fertile Crescent, a region in the Middle East, which includes modern-day Iraq, Syria, Israel, Jordan, Palestine, south-eastern Turkey and western Iran. It is important to note scientists continue to study the complicated start to agriculture.

**Continued on page 31**





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## Continued from page 28

2. *D. The Green Revolution.* The Third Agricultural Revolution is also known as The Green Revolution, a period of great technological growth in agriculture that led to large increases in crop production around the world.

3. *B. Cattle.* Edward Winslow was a passenger aboard the Mayflower and leader of Plymouth Colony. He made many trips to England and in 1624, he brought the first cattle back to America.

4. *B. Egypt.* The first known systems of irrigation evolved in 6000 BC in Egypt and Mesopotamia. When the Nile River flooded, Egyptians diverted the water into fields to help grow crops.

5. *D. Great Plains.* After the Civil War, new technology changed people's perception of the Great Plains. They no longer viewed it as a wasteland with no trees to be found, but as an area

ready to be settled. Steel plows and dry farming techniques allowed farmers to grow wheat in the hard soil and windmills pumped water from the ground.

6. *B. John Froelich.* In 1892, John Froelich invented the very first gasoline-powered tractor in Clayton County, Iowa. The invention was followed just four years later by the first oil-engined tractor, made by Herbert Akroyd Stuart.

7. *C. Refrigeration.* The invention of refrigeration revolutionized the cattle industry by providing efficient transportation for chilled, packaged meat, saving tons of money from the old way of transporting livestock.

8. *D. Seven million.* In the year 1935, there were around 7 million farmers in the United States. Today, that number has dropped drastically, with only about 2 million farms in the coun-

try in 2019.

9. *D. 1969.* While the FFA was founded in 1928, it was not until 1969 that females were allowed to join the organization.


10. *C. 1933-1943.* Of the four answer choices, the greatest yield in corn crops occurred from 1933 to 1943. Rapid adoption of double-cross hybrid corn began in the late 1930s, in the waning years of the Dust Bowl and Great Depression. Today, corn is America's largest crop, with 91.7 million acres planted in 2019.

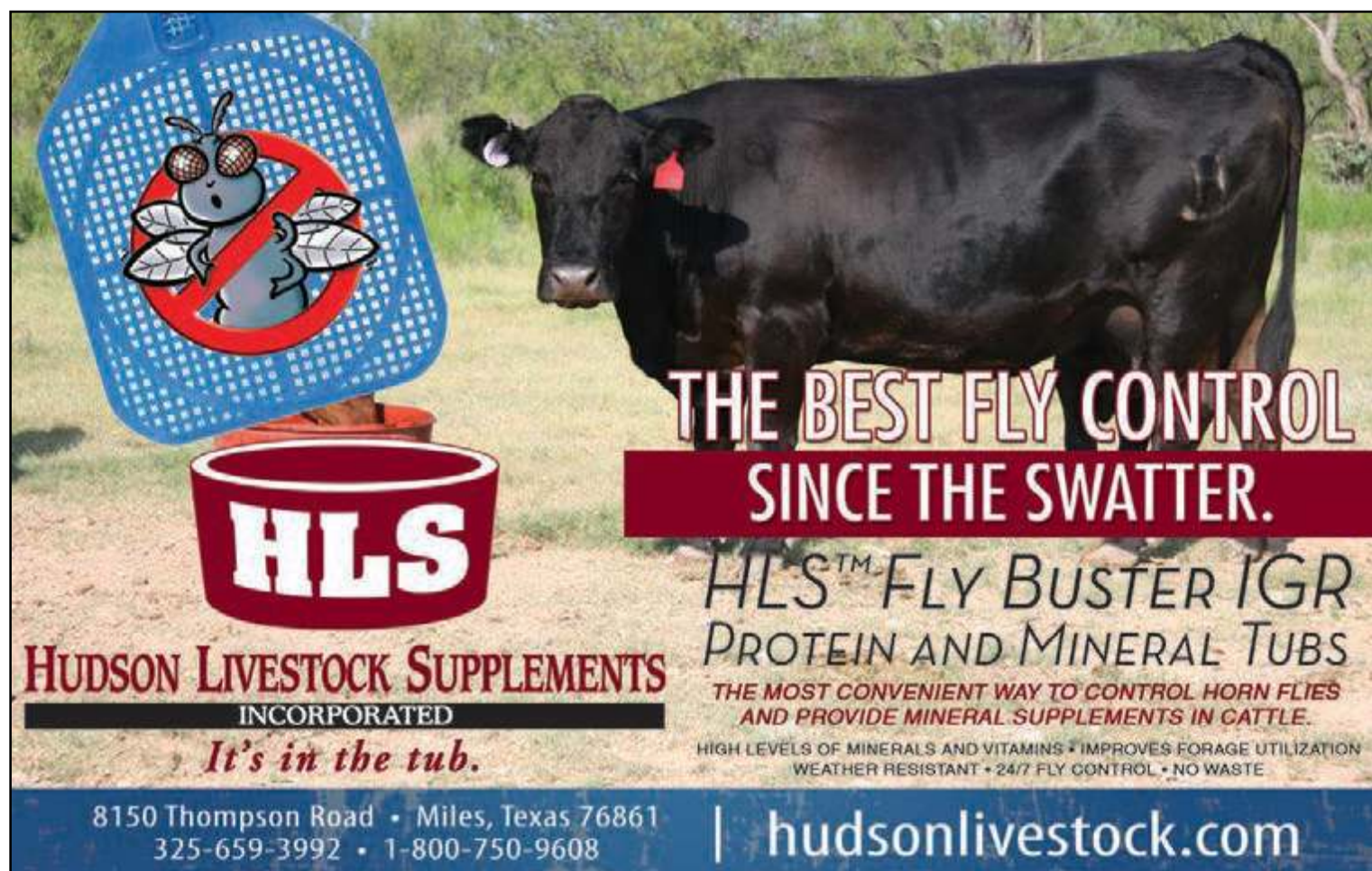
11. *A. 70 percent.* In 1840, farmers made up 70 percent of the country's workforce. Today, that number has drastically decreased to just 1.3 percent of the work force.

12. *B. Figs.* Discovered in the ruins of a prehistoric village near Jericho, figs are believed to have been the earliest known fruit crop.

13. *A. 1897-1920.* Farmers began growing more crops by increasing acreage due to a demand in Europe and a growing population in the United States.

14. *D. George Washington.* The first president was gifted a mule in 1785 by King Charles III, which George Washington named 'Royal Gift.' He liked the animal so much, he spent the last 15 years or so leading up to his death breeding mules. The mule was America's favorite plow animal up until the invention of the tractor.

15. *C. Overproduction.* During World War I, farmers worked to produce record crops and livestock. When the stock market crashed and prices fell, they began producing even more in an attempt to pay their living expenses, but between overproducing and the falling prices, many farmers went bankrupt and lost their farms. 



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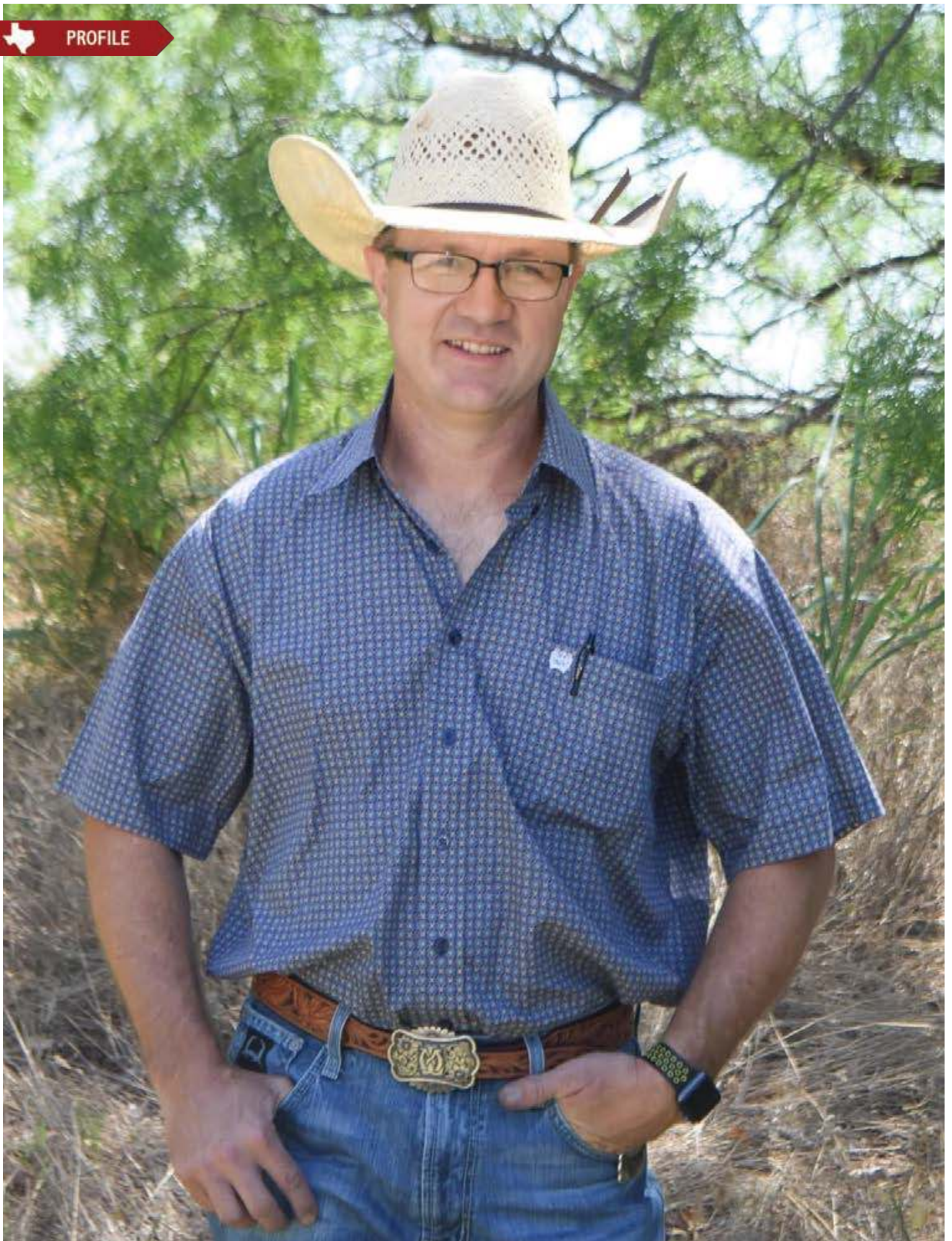
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PROFILE







# MATT LITZ

## Silversmith

A flat sheet of silver does not hold a lot of meaning for those with an untrained eye, but for silversmith Matt Litz, it is an opportunity to create a work of art designed in his mind and coaxed by his hands.

Silversmith is a craft dating back to as early as 4695 BC. Many of the same tools utilized by the very first silversmiths are still in use today including tongs, engraving burins, large scales, hammers, anvils, small mallets, ceramic furnaces, blowpipes with clay nozzles, and weights.

In the beginning, there was no distinction between the goldsmith and silversmith, but during the Middle Ages a separation between the two professions occurred. Goldsmiths prefer only gold, but silversmiths work with silver, copper, bronze, nickel silver, and brass.

Silversmiths begin by cutting a flat sheet of metal into shapes or strips for the item they are creating. Blades for jewelry saws come in a variety of sizes, and wire cutters are used for metal wire.

Once the metal has been cut, a silversmith files down the rough edges using a jeweler's file. The metal is then shaped while it is cold by being hammered, bent and textured into shape with the use of a jeweler's hammer.

The metal can be sculpted around a mandrel for necklaces, rings or bracelets, or hammered on a flat metal block. If two pieces need to be attached together, a solder is used.

The silver must be heated with a torch to just the right temperature and cleaned with an acidic solution before and after. When it is done cooling, the silversmith may continue shaping it, with additional filing and sanding. When the silversmith has it just the way he wants, he polishes the work of art to a shiny, smooth finish.

The techniques are ones that have been used by silversmiths across the ages and a craft that requires a steady hand and an artistic eye. Litz's journey with silversmithing began in college when a buckle caught his eye.

While silversmithing has more history than



A piece created by silversmith Matt Litz. (Photo courtesy Matt Litz)

many current occupations, it was not something that had been a part of Litz's past.

Born in Lubbock, Litz moved to Paris, Texas, in second grade but would return with his dad to Paducah, outside of Lubbock, during the seventh grade.

His grandparents, who still live in the small Texas town, farmed the land, growing cotton and producing cattle, while his dad worked in the oilfield.

"My dad worked on drilling rigs when I was a kid, and I would spend my summers with him. He would take me to the drilling rig, so I lived out there with all of those guys," Litz laughed. "If I wasn't with my dad, I would be

with my grandparents in Paducah, learning how to farm and ranch. I have photos of me when I was little bitty, asleep on the side of the armrest in the tractor. I would take a pillow and ride that tractor all day long. I enjoyed it. I still enjoy it."

After graduating high school, Litz attended Tarleton State with the intention of becoming an Ag teacher, but life had other plans. He met his wife, Janay, and the two married. Janay found a job in the north Texas area and the pair settled in Iowa Park, the town they still call home.

Meanwhile, Litz went to work welding  
**Continued on page 34**





# MATT LITZ

## Silversmith

### Continued from page 33

for Entex, where he still is today. However, the sight of that buckle Litz saw in college stuck with him and inspired him to begin making his own work.

"I have always enjoyed seeing people's work, and I really liked that buckle. I figured I could build one like that, so I found a guy who told me where to buy some equipment and materials. I just piddled around with it for a little bit; I never really got very serious about it," Litz recalled.

Years later, Litz crossed paths with Nick Cunningham, a silversmith who lived close by and was kind enough to help Litz out with his budding craft.

"He gave me some more places to buy materials and nurtured me along for a little while, and I met another guy who helped me engrave," Litz said. "There are engraving schools and stone setting classes. I wish I had time to go take some of those classes. A lot of the time here it is just trial and error. 'Okay, that didn't work, so let's do something different.' I just went from there; hardheaded and determined I was going to get something turned out. It started as a hobby, something fun, and now it is a full-time business."

Litz began by making trophy buckles and soon he was fulfilling orders for organizations. Those customers continued to return each year to make purchases for their events.

"I realized, 'Hey, these people come around every year. I think I can make a swing of it,'" Litz explained.

Litz's work can be found coast to coast in the United States and as far as Germany, Sweden, Australia-

**Continued on page 36**



(Top) After working during the day and family time in the evening, Matt Litz can be found creating unique pieces in his shop. (Photo by Dani Blackburn) (Left) The most recent work of art created by the Iowa Park silversmith. (Photo courtesy Matt Litz)



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One of the pieces created by Matt Litz next to the drawing he made before beginning the project. (Photo courtesy Matt Litz)

#### Continued from page 34

lia, and Brazil. It is a testimony to his work and the love his customers have for his pieces.

"I never imagined that people would want anything that I built from starting out in my garage in our own house to stepping into the shop I have now. It just keeps going," Litz said.

Litz works hard at his craft, going to his normal job during the day, and working as a silversmith from around 9 p.m. to midnight. He also can be found in his shop up to 20 hours on the weekends.

The fall is his busiest time as orders for the Working Ranch Cowboys Association and Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo

*My inspiration has a lot to do with them, the people. That is why I specialize in custom if they are wanting the old school, classic look. It is no frills; it is just good, solid, classic designs.*  
— Matt Litz

roll in. While the trophy buckles are the business side of it for Litz, what he truly loves is the specialty side of silversmithing.

"The one-off stuff is the specialty side that I really like. I can build what I want depending on the customer's parameters and

budget," Litz said. "Cigar tubes, I like building those, just something different. I like the things you don't see all the time. There are a lot of people who can build trophy buckles but there are not many who can take a flat piece of silver and press it into a tube."

There are some pieces in particular that hold special meaning for the silversmith; such as a buckle that emulates one of his heroes, Mark Drain. Litz created the buckle to resemble one of his. He also is fond of items he has made for his loved ones, including a bracelet made for his wife where the negative space makes the picture, pendants for his grandmother and pocketknives





for his grandad.

He likes making things for his friends, such as their wedding rings. Litz also enjoys setting stones and the jewelry side of his work but focuses on a traditional look.

"My inspiration has a lot to do with them, the people, that is why I kind of specialize in custom if they are wanting the old school, classic look. I love doing that kind of stuff. It is no frills; it is just good, solid, classic designs. Old school is the best school," Litz said.

Creating customized pieces for customers does come with its own set of challenges. The cost for materials continues to go up and makes it difficult to produce unique pieces at reasonable prices.

"Everybody has a different eye for things and different expectations. The hardest part for me is to not only meet their expectations but also exceed them and still stay true to what I am doing. I am not copying, not reproducing, but once you have built thousands of buckles it is hard to come up with something new and original, but it is fun and I enjoy that part of it," Litz said.

In addition to the price of materials, Litz must place a price on his time working and hours spent away from his family. There are those projects he spends more time drawing up than he does actually building. Litz keeps files of shapes on his computer, but everything else is hand drawn to fit each individualized order.

"It is hard for people to see that in this day and age, but I want to show my customers it is not just a belt buckle; it is a piece of art. You can't run down to the Walmart and buy one. It has a little bit of me into everything I build. You're not just buying a buckle or pendant, you're buying a piece of my mind," Litz explained. Litz also has combined his love of education with silversmithing by teaching classes through the Texas Engraving School in Brookshire, Texas.

"The school does a lot of engraving classes and things like that, and I go down and do silversmithing classes. It is really fun. It is long hours because you get six people in a class and they are all building something and everybody is just a little bit different. Some have more experience than others, and you just cater to them and try to teach them the best you can. It is a good challenge," Litz said.

Litz's craft has taken him all over the world through the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. The purpose of the TCAA is to carry on the tradition of silversmithing, showcasing the



Matt Litz with his wife, Janay; oldest daughter, Kate, and youngest daughter, Jaydee. (Photo courtesy Matt Litz)

forms of saddle making, bit and spur making, silversmithing and rawhide braiding.

"They do a lot of work that enables people to go and travel the country and take different classes," Litz explained. "I was very fortunate to be able to win one of those scholarships."

Through the TCAA, Litz traveled to Canada, Washington and Arizona, among others.

He enjoyed seeing everything from the logging in Washington to the huge rolling hills that go right into mountains in Canada.

"I never dreamed I would go to the places silversmithing has taken me," Litz said. "I have got to meet tons of great people from doing the cutting horse shows in Fort Worth and getting to know a lot of those people down there, and as far as travel, I never imagined in a hundred years that it would have taken me where it has. I really enjoy the traveling because growing up in Paducah; it never changes from one end of the county to the next. Being able to see different parts of the country is really good."

When Litz is not at his job, silversmithing, teaching, or traveling the country, he can be found with his wife, Janay, and two children,

Kate, 12, and Jaydee, two. He also returns to Paducah to help out his grandparents.

"I still go back and work on my granddad's farm equipment. I went back last weekend and finished working on a plow for him. I plowed around for a little bit and I was like, 'I sure miss it.' I miss it a lot. It was always good times," Litz said. Litz enjoys hunting, particularly varmints, and has recently gotten involved with the Future Farmers of America Alumni Booster Club, and Kate shows rabbits.

"I run the welding shop during the day and do this at night. I teach classes and I am just trying to be an average, everyday guy. I like to hunt and do that three months out of the year, and the rest of the time is in here. I really enjoy it. Silversmithing is just one of those things where I can be creative with my hands. I have always worked with my hands. I think I was little bitty and I would be out in the barn with my grandad welding and cutting. It is just fun," Litz said.

To learn more about Litz and his artwork, make sure to follow him on Facebook and Instagram.





# Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Newlin

## Chicken Primavera Spaghetti Squash Boats

**Yields:** 2 servings | **Prep Time:** 20 minutes | **Total Time:** 1 hour

### Ingredients

For spaghetti squash

- 1 medium spaghetti squash, halved, seeds removed
- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

For primavera filling + topping

- 1 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/2 small red onion, chopped
- 1 orange bell pepper, chopped
- 1 c. grape tomatoes, halved
- 1 medium zucchini, cut into half moons
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 tsp. Italian seasoning
- 2 1/2 c. cooked shredded chicken
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella
- 1/4 c. freshly grated Parmesan
- Freshly chopped parsley (optional)

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°. Drizzle cut sides of spaghetti squash with oil and season with salt and pepper. Place cut side down on a large, rimmed baking sheet. Roast until tender, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool slightly. Using a fork,

break up squash strands.

2. Meanwhile, make primavera filling: In a large skillet over medium heat, heat oil. Add onion and pepper and cook until mostly tender, 3 to 4 minutes, then add tomatoes, zucchini, garlic, and lemon zest. Season with salt, pepper, and Italian seasoning and cook 3 to 4 minutes more. Stir in chicken and remove from heat.

3. Divide mixture between spaghetti squash halves and stir to combine. Top each spaghetti squash with cheese and return to oven to melt, 5 minutes.

4. Top with parmesan and parsley.

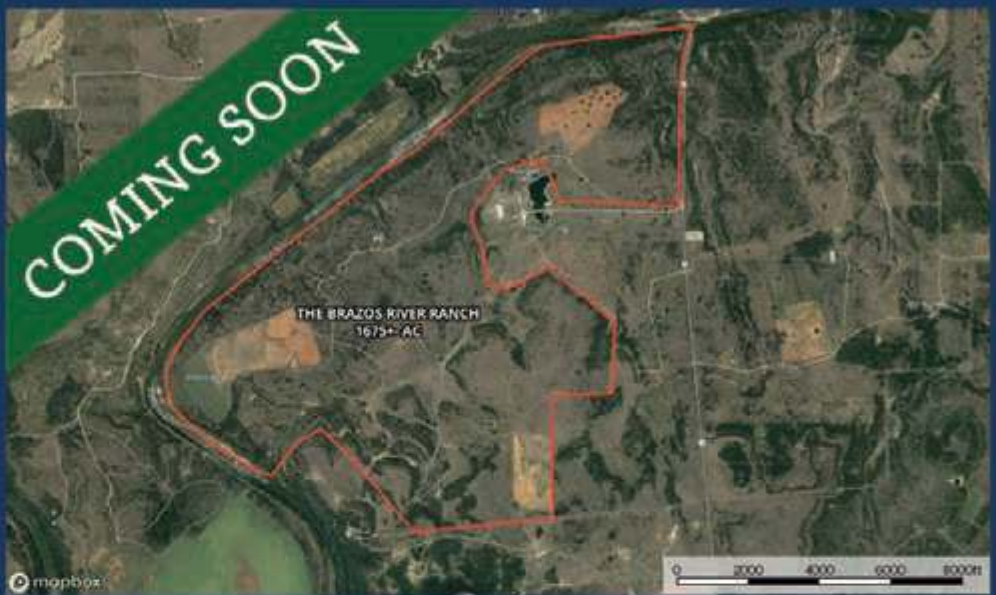


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# Grub Time

by LANG ©



"DANG IF I KNOW SPARKY. THE COUNTY DIDN'T POST A  
'THING CROSSING' SIGN BACK THERE."





# The Buzzard

By Judy Wade

Eight to 10 sleek black birds circling lazily not far above the ground occasionally caught by an updraft and occasionally flapping their gleaming wings almost seem majestic until you remember they are buzzards.

From afar they may look majestic, but up close they are among the ugliest creatures on earth. Tiny bald bright pink or red heads and long beaks contrast sharply with the wingspan of up to six feet.

Sometimes called “turkey buzzards,” if caught in just the right pose, they do resemble a turkey. They are actually a member of the vulture family and are among the most widespread birds in the Americas, ranging throughout North America, Central America and South America. They spread from Canada to Chile. Scientists believe their population is around 4.5 million birds.

The buzzard is one of the most important creatures in the ecosystem. Its job is to rid the world of dead animals. Dead animals are a breeding ground for infectious diseases, including those that can pass to humans. Buzzards have strong acid in their stomachs that destroy these toxins. By eating carrion, these birds prevent the spread of rabies, botulism, anthrax, cholera, and more.

They prefer fresher carcasses to heavily decayed ones. Their low circling allows them to use their strong sense of smell to detect ethyl mercaptan, a gas produced early in the decay process.

Think about driving down the highway. How much road kill do you see every day? What would it be like if it just continued to pile up? Thank the buzzards road kill disappears.

Be careful, however, in approaching buzzards feeding on the side of the road. Occasionally,



Close up of a buzzard. (Courtesy photo)

one of the birds is slow to rise or fails to catch an updraft to avoid crashing through a car windshield. Those who have experienced it say the putrid smell is indescribable.

Buzzards will sometimes kill and eat rabbits, chickens, mice and birds, but carrion is its main diet. The buzzard has some unusual behaviors. Unlike most birds, it does not build a nest in the trees. Instead, the female lays two eggs on the bare ground of a cave, cliff or similar place. Both the male and female incubate the eggs, which hatch in about a month. At about three months of age, the chicks will learn to fly and will begin searching for their own food.


If harassed, buzzards can projectile vomit to deter a potential danger or predator. They can shoot their vomit up to 10 feet away. As night approaches, they seek a roosting place, with sometimes several dozen congregating in the same grove of trees.

Many people believe buzzards



Buzzards roosting in a tower in northeast Henrietta. (Photo courtesy Judy Wade)

will not kill newborn animals. However, ranchers have reported the eyes of newborn calves have been pecked out by buzzards be-

fore they could stand and nurse. Two Clay County ranchers reported that very thing happening not long ago. 



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# JESSE'S JEWELZ

By Jesse Kader

We've made it to September. Fall is right around the corner and I'm ready for it. Fall colors, cooler weather and fun festivities. The colors in the stripe body suit are a perfect transition and go perfectly with the camel color bell bottoms. Throw on a jean jacket on a cool fall evening and you are set. Find all of this and more at [www.jessesjewelz.com](http://www.jessesjewelz.com). ®





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They have recently released their fourth self-titled studio album. With the addition of virtuoso’s Simon Stipp on guitar and Daniel Parr on upright bass, this powerhouse group shows no fear in taking the music of iconic Texas songwriters to a new level. Their rendition of “Summer Of

Roses” by Willie Nelson is simply untouchable by any other group in the country. This also is the first time they are sharing their own songwriting talents while blending in bluegrass, cowboy and even a little Jazz.

This album is yesterday, today and tomorrow all rolled into one. Go to [www.quebesisters.com](http://www.quebesisters.com) and see for yourself. Trust me, you’ll be glad you did.

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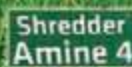


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# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## From Trash to Treasure

Do you have lots of trash piles around your ranch? You know, that stuff you no longer use or it doesn't work anymore, so it gets thrown into a stack to throw away one of these days? Or maybe you're like my husband who believes you might need that something again someday, so you better not get rid of it.

I began this year with the intention of cleaning out our house and around the ranch and quite simply getting rid of everything we no longer used or wanted.

Interestingly, my cleaning out also has resulted in discovering new ways to use old stuff. Some call this repurposing.

We are probably only ankle deep in cleaning out my in-law's house. Although it feels arduous and sad for my husband, there have been some fun surprises uncovered that were long ago buried in closets, cabinets and drawers that haven't seen the light of day in a few decades.

In our own house, after 40 years together living in the same place, came the realization it was time to sell the China that had only been used at most two or three times.

The perfect buyer was found that was excited to obtain more of her discontinued China pattern. I was happy our wedding China gifts went to a good and loving new home.

Recently, I was shocked by a most unexpected discovery in a huge clump of steel rubbish. Part of the surprise for me was how often I had walked by this



(Left) Annette Bridges suddenly saw precisely what she was looking for in a huge clump of steel rubbish. (Right) That rubbish included the perfect pieces for a new T-shirt display. (Photos courtesy Annette Bridges)




ugly mound paying little to no attention to what was in it. Now, I suddenly saw precisely what I was looking for. I'm wondering if my discovery has anything to do with the gratitude and new appreciation I'm feeling these days as we continue to shelter on our ranch?

I have a shop space in a downtown store in Denison, Texas. One of my products is my Ranch House T-shirt line. With the addition of some new shirts, I needed a better way to display them.


For some reason this particular morning as I walked by the heap of discarded steel, I noticed the two old iron front porch posts that were on our farmhouse when we first married. I didn't like them 40 years ago and could not replace them fast enough.

The inspiration came to me how those two iron posts could make the perfect sides to a shirt display stand my husband could build. I was right about that. They were indeed perfect.

My rancher life continues to teach me to never say never, to stay open to new ways of using old things, and that it's okay to let go of stuff – even the beautiful and unbroken – that are no longer serving a purpose.

My mamma always taught us kids how grateful eyes would help us see what we have rather than what we don't. Apparently, grateful eyes can also help us turn what we once viewed as trash into treasure. 






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# The Many Facets of Lavender

By Mandi Dietz

As the lavender fields in Texas, which bloom from about May to late July, fade, the flowering plant lives on in a multitude of uses. Commercially grown lavender, although fairly new to the state in the last couple of decades, can meet many needs. Lavender Ridge Farms' Country Gift Shop and Café in Gainesville offers everything from hand sanitizer; lotions and salves; bath and body products like lip balm, bubble bath and salts, handmade soaps and more, essential oils and aromatherapy, to candles, pet care, insect repellent, photo ops, recipes, culinary, honey, herbs, coffee and teas.

Originally a strawberry and melon farm a century ago, the land of Lavender Ridge, family-owned for more than 150 years, resides eight miles east of Gainesville, off County Road 178 from Farm to Market Road 678 and Highway 82, and an hour north of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. Friday, Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., shop the Country Gift Shop and its wealth of selections in person (or online anytime), and dine at the Lavender Cafe with a seasonal menu and farm-inspired dishes, such as lavender honey chicken salad, greens with lavender vinaigrette, lavender ice tea and lavender lemonade, and sweets such as lavender cheesecake, lavender brownie sundae and lavender lemon gooey butter cake. It's an "herb'n experience you can't get in the city," amid the shade of tall oak trees, fresh air and the presence of resident hummingbirds.

The farm grows a variety of herbs, perennials, annuals, and native plants, adding new items, for example irises and geraniums, often keeping the farm occupied in addition to lavender tending and picking.

According to the Farmer's Almanac, lavender comes in more colors than purple; blue, pink and white, and this "bushy, strong-scented perennial plant from the Mediterranean" attracts butterflies and grows best in arid climates with well-drained soil.

Another lavender farm, Prayer Lavender Garden, in Rockwall got their start in 2016, thanks to a Young Farmers Grant from the Texas Department of Agriculture. TDA's website states the program provides "dollar-for-dollar matching grant funds to young (18 years or older, and younger than 46 years of age) agricultural producers who are engaged




The land of Lavender Ridge Farms, family owned for more than 150 years, resides eight miles east of Gainesville.



Commercially grown lavender in the last two decades is fairly new to Texas. (Photos courtesy [www.lavenderridgefarms.com](http://www.lavenderridgefarms.com))

or will be engaged in creating or expanding an agricultural business in Texas." The next application cycle begins fall 2020.

With the increasing popularity of agritourism, urban farms, and Texas-grown lavender with many uses, there's probably room in the

market for new businesses to bloom. During the peak season, lavender fields create a perfect backdrop for pictures, farming and agricultural experience for kids and fun outings for the whole family. However, the fruits of an annual harvest keep giving all year. 





# Confessions of a HUNTER

## Courage – Confidence – Courage

By Andy Anderson

When I was growing up, we rode bikes down the streets without helmets and elbow pads; heck, sometimes we didn't even have shoes on. We built ramps out of scrap plywood and 2x4s; there were even some old rusty nails to be found. We drank water from a hose and sometimes from a house whose owner we did not know. It was a time when you left the house at daylight and didn't go back until the streetlights turned on. It also was a time when as kids we did things on a dare or just to see if we could do it.

The neighborhood kids would all gather at a nearby creek in a small area on the bank overlooking the creek that fed the Trinity River. We frequented this spot so much that we created a large dirt area free of grass that served as the head of a well-worn trail down to the creek. This trail was steep, sandy and littered with rocks, tall pecan trees hung over like giant watch guards, shading the whole area. At the bottom of the trail was a small narrow strip of beach; it was here we spent the dog days of summer playing, pretending and swimming. The swimming hole was about 10 to 15 feet at its widest point and about 60 yards long. No one knew how deep it was; no one could ever swim down to touch the bottom.

One day we gathered up like we always do, sitting around talking,



Something happens to you when you find courage; you find confidence and with confidence comes a greater sense of courage. (Photo courtesy Andy Anderson)

picking on each other and dreaming of what was to come, when our attention was distracted by a growling noise coming from down the road. Here came Jimmy, on his bike towing a red flyer wagon loaded down with scrap cuts of plywood. As Jimmy rolled to a stop, the dust slowly clearing the air, we all circled around Jimmy with curious minds. Someone blurted out, "Whatcha gonna do with that plywood Jimmy?" Jimmy looked past us, down to the swimming hole, stared for a moment, then said, "I'm going to jump the pond." Of course, we all thought that was a great idea and spent the better part of the day helping Jimmy haul all the plywood down the trail and build his ramp.

Then came the moment Jimmy had to deliver. Back at the top of the bank looking down, you could follow the trail some 40 feet in a line to the ramp. Jimmy, sitting on his bike, the front tire just over the crest of the drop down on the trail, hands gripping the handle bars of the bike, looked like a first-class chicken. At the last second Jimmy chickened out; he couldn't do it. We just spent our whole day working on this to see Jimmy jump the pond and now, we were going to go home tired, dirty and unsatisfied, not to mention Jimmy was a little less cool. After a few minutes of egging him on, providing stern words of encouragement, Jimmy started to back away, shaking his head.

All of a sudden, he went,

screaming all the way down, and loud too. He was going so fast he couldn't keep up with the pedals so he stuck his feet out. He was bouncing off and over the rocks, a few times nearly crashing, but he kept going. Just as he was about to hit the ramp he turned going down the beach.

"Awe, come on Jimmy," some of us screamed. "Do it again, you'll get it this time." Jimmy dragged his bike back up the hill, took a minute to rest and tried it again. This time he stood on the pedals, steering around the rocks and got up a lot of speed; he hit that ramp square. Up and over the pond he went, but he landed just a little short, the back tire of the bike hit the bank causing Jimmy to bounce back up and out of sight



he went. Like the tall grass just swallowed him whole, Jimmy was gone!

As things settled back down and the dust cleared the air we hear from below: "I'm okay!" Jimmy made it and then did it again and again and again, until eventually he cleared the pond and made good landings.

Jimmy was different after that day: he wasn't scared of a thing, would try anything and even if he failed, he would try again. Jimmy and I hunted and fished a lot together until he moved off, and even in his absence, when faced with new, uncertain circumstances, I would think about Jimmy and what he would do.

One day I was forced to find courage in myself, to do something even though I was scared. Something happens to you when you find courage; you find confidence and with confidence comes a greater sense of courage. Cour-

age and confidence become routine; you get used to it to the degree it fades away, and you no longer realize you even acted in a courageous manner.

I was reminded of that just a few days ago in my son and daughter. While on a family trip to the Uvalde area, we floated the Nueces River and found a rope swing. At first both were nervous about doing it, falling short just after swinging off the bank.

It didn't take long before each figured it out and gained the confidence in themselves to swing out as far and high as possible before letting go and plunging into the water below. I watched them all day swinging from the rope, thinking back to my days of youth, being reminded of the courage I found in myself to do things I never thought I could, including asking a pretty girl to be my wife, and well, that made me sick to my stomach, too. <sup>(N)</sup>

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# Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean

## Vine Mesquite

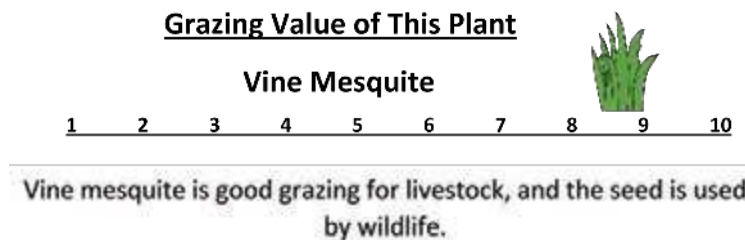


Vine mesquite often grows in dense colonies in areas that receive extra moisture. (Photos courtesy Tony Dean)

Vine mesquite is a special plant at our place. It is my wife, Cindy's, favorite grass. Her reasons why:

- ✓ "I like the bright green color of the leaves."
- ✓ "The leaves and stems are straight and erect, not spindly like other grasses."
- ✓ "I like that it grows mostly in thick colonies."
- ✓ "It looks like something cows want to eat."

This perennial warm season native grass has firm and erect stems reaching heights of 12 to 24 inches. Vine mesquite reproduces from underground rhizomes and above ground stolons, as well as from seed. The stolons reach



lengths of eight feet and often take root at the nodes. It is considered a sod-forming grass.

Seed heads are narrow panicles of one to four inches in length, and the individual spikelets are nearly round and about 1/8" in diameter. Quail and dove eat the seeds in fall and early winter. Vine mesquite

seed is seldom available commercially, but digging dormant plants from the field and transplanting them can start new plants. Vine mesquite is a hermaphrodite, in that it has both male and female organs on the same plant. It is pollinated by the wind.

Although Vine mesquite can




The seeds of Vine mesquite are slick with a hard seed coat and are readily eaten by quail, dove, turkey, and song birds.

grow as individual plants, it is most often found in dense colonies. It grows well in areas where additional moisture gathers and is adapted to a variety of soil types but is often found in clay and clay loam soils.

Vine mesquite provides good grazing for all classes of livestock. As the grass matures, it becomes less palatable and livestock will seek out and eat the seed heads, ignoring the stolons and leaves.

Historically, Vine mesquite seed was cooked as whole grain or ground and used as flour. An infusion of the leaves also is said to be a good wash for making the hair grow more quickly.®






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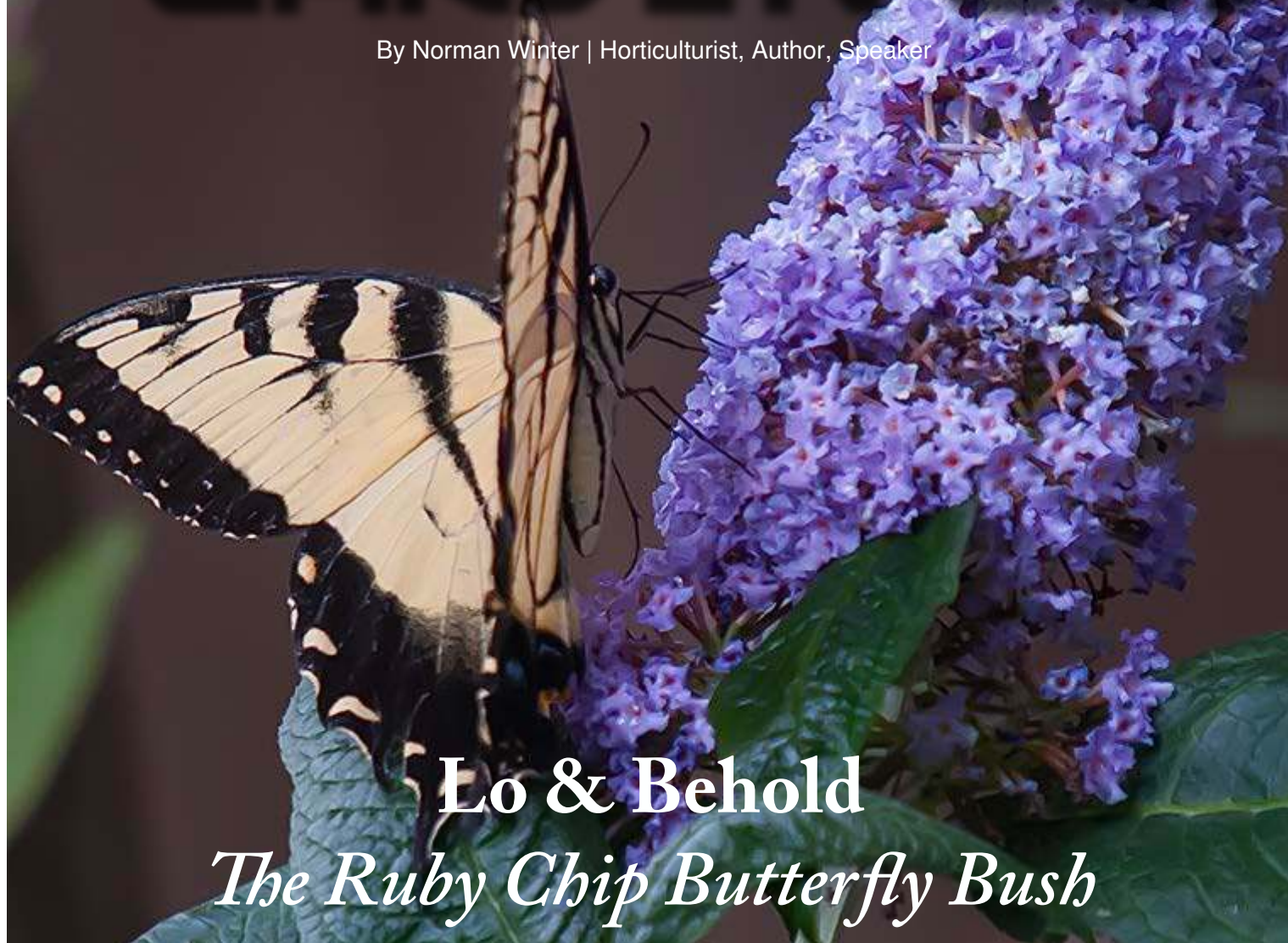






# THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker



## Lo & Behold *The Ruby Chip Butterfly Bush*

Pugster Amethyst, like other Pugster colors, has fat or pudgy blooms providing a lot of nectar for pollinators like this Eastern Tiger Swallowtail. (Photo by Norman Winter)

This year 'The Garden Guy' decided to add some dwarf buddleia into his arsenal of pollinator plants. The idea of three-foot tall or less buddleias or butterfly bushes seemed like just what the doctor ordered to be able to incorporate them with lantanas, rudbeckias, gaillardia, and salvias for a colorful wild Serengeti style backyard habitat. Lo & Behold I have found a Garden Guy favorite.

I hope you are smiling with my

little Lo & Behold segue because there is a brand spanking new selection called Lo & Behold Ruby Chip. You will love it for its habit and its non-stop bloom production.

It will compete with all of your favorite pollinator plants, including salvias. I've felt like nothing could compete with Rockin salvias, and here is this little buddleia always with blooms and getting attention from bees, butterflies and

hummers, too.

I remember the first buddleia I saw as a young ornamental horticulturist. It was well over two stories tall.

These new buddleias I am growing feel like the perfect complement to the perennial garden. Notice I am talking plural here, even though my new love is Lo & Behold Ruby Chip.

I am also growing Pugster Blue and Pugster Amethyst. These are

so different that you will adore them. Imagine fat pudgy flowers coming from a compact bush that is a handsome dark green. There are six colors, and I want them all. I've got the Pugster Blue grown in close proximity to Indian summer rudbeckia.

To be honest, sometimes it seems more like intermingled. In another area, Pugster Blue is partnered with SunPatience Hot  
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Coral impatiens for a gawdy but wonderful marriage.

The Garden Guy partnered the Pugster amethyst with the Color Coded Orange You Awesome echinacea and Luscious Marmalade lantana.

This was the first to bloom in my garden and immediately brought in the Eastern Tiger swallowtails.

The Pugster butterfly bushes come in blue, pink, white, amethyst, and periwinkle and are going to reach two feet tall with a two foot spread, probably slightly more in the south.


The Lo & Behold group comes in six colors and can vary in size. You'll find Blue Chip, which has been recognized in Dallas Arboretum Trials, Pink Micro Chip, Ice Chip (white), and Lilac Chip, all of which get around 30-inches tall with a 24-inch spread.

Ruby Chip gets slightly larger, and Purple Haze is the largest of the group but still a compact 36-inch by 36-inch habit.

These compact buddleias or butterfly bushes are really easy to grow and will have you ready for peak September-October butterfly season in North Texas.

Give them fertile soil; good drainage with full sun, and you will have garnered the 'Green Thumb Award.' No longer will you need an acre to grow the butterfly bush. If your soil drains poorly, plant on raised beds and even plant a little high with the rootball slightly higher than the soil surface.

Both the Lo & Behold and Pugster groups are brought to you by Proven Winners and cold hardy from zones 5-9 meaning just about everyone can enjoy their beauty. Your decision will be how to use them.

Let your creative and artistic abilities loose; you are the Monet of your garden. Follow me on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy. 



This female dark morph Eastern Tiger Swallowtail finds the Lo & Behold Ruby Chip butterfly bush to be just perfect.



(Left) Lo & Behold Ruby Chip butterfly bush is a new compact variety and partnered here with Heat It Up Yellow gaillardia. (Right) This Eastern Tiger Swallowtail appears to be doing acrobatics as he feeds on a Pugster Amethyst butterfly bush. (Photos by Norman Winter)





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By Jelly Cocanougher

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