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Bit and Spur Maker

Troy Flaharty



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ON THE COVER

On the cover is renowned bit and spur maker Troy Flaharty, who creates one of a kind works of art that are both exquisite and functional. (Photo By Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

Hello readers and welcome to the May issue of North Texas Farm and Ranch magazine.

I will share something a b o u t myself with you: I have zero artistic talent. I like to tell others I can't even draw a stick figure, and it's true.

I am in awe of those with talent for creating something beautiful out of something as simple as a pencil and piece of paper, metal, leather, or whatever the material may be.

Imagine my surprise when I interviewed this month's profile, bit and spur maker Troy Flaharty, and he explained he also cannot draw a stick figure. He had to work hard at his craft, perfecting it as the years went on. I already had the highest respect for his artwork, but knowing he was not naturally gifted but instead persevered to gain the skills needed to create these beautiful works of art inspired me. I hope you enjoy learning more about this incredible artist.

As always, our contributors are full of wonderful things. They never cease to amaze me and I know you will enjoy reading all they have brought us this month.

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. 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
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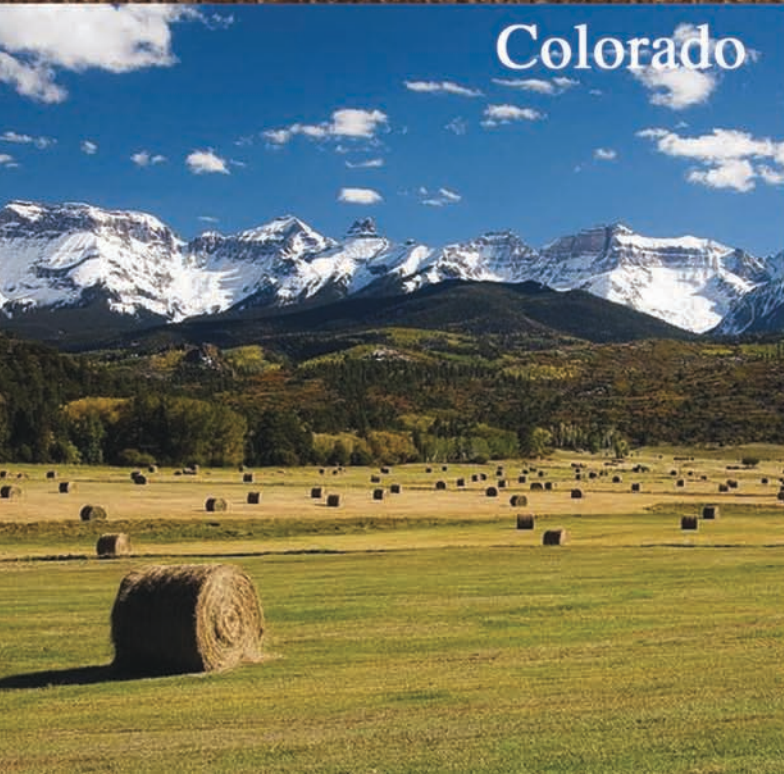
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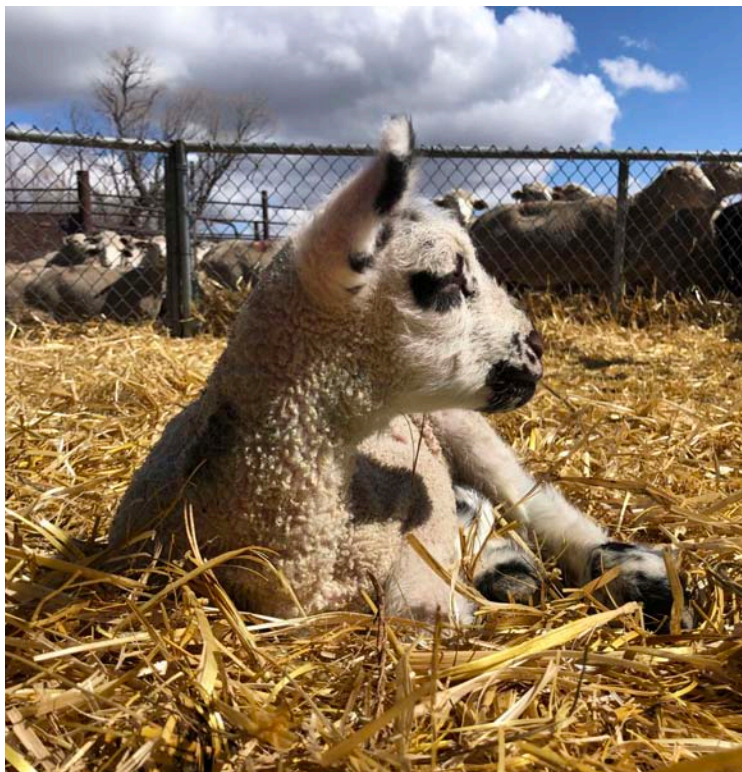
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New Mexico



CONTENTS



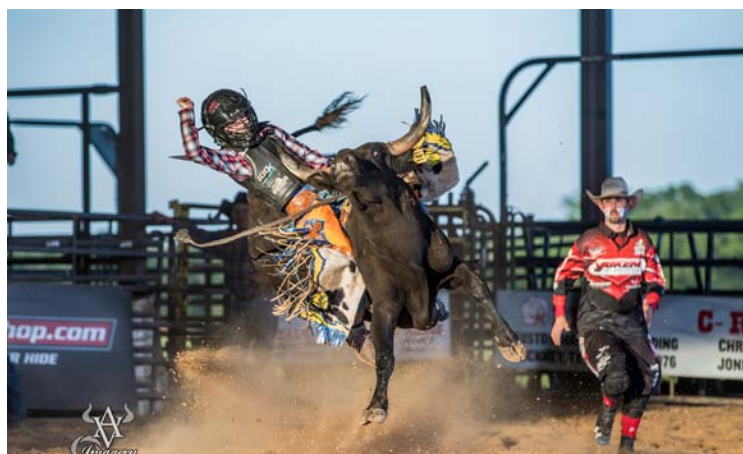
pg. 14 *Ag Elsewhere: Wyoming*



pg. 32 *Troy Flaharty*



pg. 16 *Freedom & Whisky*



pg. 23 *Making a Mark*

10

Back at the Ranch

Most of our spring born calves are at least 60 days old, and now they will get their first round of blackleg vaccine.

28

Equine Skin Tumors

It is rather common for horses to have skin issues but what is causing this issue can sometimes be neoplastic growths.

46

Beef Byproducts

Each beef animal provides us with products beyond the beef we eat that we use in our everyday lives.

49

On the Road

The music industry was hit hard during the pandemic, but the good news is, it looks like the comeback will be even greater.

54

Grazing North Texas

The most common species of grass belonging to the Brome family in North Texas are Cheat and Rescue.

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TOUGH ENOUGH FOR BISON TOUGH ENOUGH FOR CATTLE

We met up with Brock Toler with Back Forty Bison and asked him a few questions about his opinion on the effectiveness of the Lewis Cattle Oilers. Brock is the ranch manager for Back Forty Bison near Dadeville, MO. Brock was skeptical, at first, on the durability of the Oilers. "Bison are notorious for tearing things up....flipping things over....To bison, everything's a toy! To this date, they haven't tipped one over! The durability has really been surprising". The biggest thing that Brock loves about the Oiler is the efficiency.

"In the bison industry, the oiler pays for itself in one year"

-Brock Toler, Back Forty Bison

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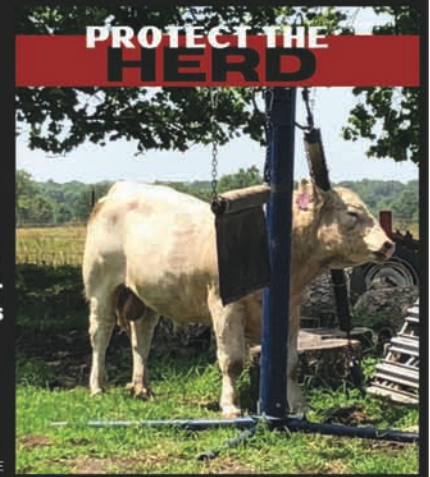
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February's rural land sales were slowed down by the significant winter weather event that we all suffered through. READ MORE: ntfronline.com/2021/04/land-m...



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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

Most of our spring born calves are at least 60 days old, and now they will get their first round of blackleg vaccine and dewormed with safe-guard while the cows will receive a lepto-vibrio vaccine. In my opinion, these are the most important vaccinations for the year. For those reading for the first time, we all need a little reminder from time to time. Just don't wait until you find a nice 400-pound calf dead to jog your memory.

Next up for us is turning out bulls which will be low birth-weight bulls on our heifers and growth bulls on all the others. While we want calves that have good weaning weights for us and our customers, we try to never lose sight of the need to make sure the maternal traits are bred into our cattle since the ones not calving every year are where our losses occur.

After that first calf is born and the cow is now three years old when the next calf comes, she should be able to handle any bull we use regardless of birthweight or calving ease. On our three-year-old and older cows, we almost never have calving issues other than maybe those due to presentation issues such as a leg or head turned back. Our mature cow average birthweight ranges anywhere from 80 to 85 pounds. With selective breeding over the years, and particularly with Angus cattle, huge birth weights are not an issue. Even when we have those 90 to 100-pound calves, the cows are capable of having them without assistance.

May is a great month to control weeds in our neck of the woods as both the early germinating and late germinating weeds have appeared. May 10 is our normal target date, but this changes from year to year



The hotter the weather, the lower the quality of the hay when considering warm season perennial grasses such as coastal bermudagrass.

with the weather fluctuations. If we spray too early, we miss the cocklebur and woolly croton, also known as either goat weed or dove weed depending which side of I35 you reside. If we spray too late, we need to up our herbicide rate and also be concerned about adjoining crops and gardens.

Either way, be sure to use a good surfactant to decrease the surface tension of the water droplets which makes the water spread out more evenly on the leaf surface. It would be similar to sitting a basketball on the floor fully inflated or letting the air out of it and placing it on the floor.

With less air, or surface tension in the case of water, more of the ball will touch the floor resulting, in the case of the water droplet,

more of the herbicide itself in contact with the leaf of the targeted weed.

The great blizzard of 2021 also forced us to feed more hay than normal here. As we look to restock our supply, we will be looking to get hay baled before the dog days of summer arrive. The hotter the weather, the lower the quality of the hay when considering warm season perennial grasses such as coastal bermudagrass. Our first choice would be winter annuals such as ryegrass or wheat, but we are not sure at this time what the availability will be.

If you bale your own hay, the age of the forage at baling is key to making high quality hay. Coastal baled every 28 days is ideal for the best quality, if cut timely, you will

also see a boost in your protein. Hay that was fertilized but not cut when the new growth is young will only result in more hay per acre but not necessarily any higher quality. If you're only looking for mass, no problem, but if you are looking to reduce your winter feed bills, the better the quality, the less store-bought protein will be required.

As we wrap up this coming month, cows and calves worked, bulls turned out and hay needs met, let us take time and smell the roses and enjoy some time spent with those we love. It has been a tough past 12 months in many ways, but it looks as though we can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

It's a great time to be in the cattle business.🐮

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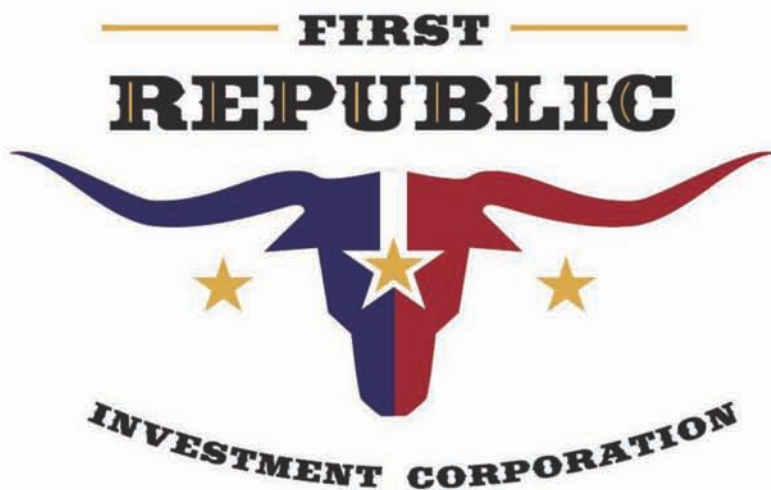
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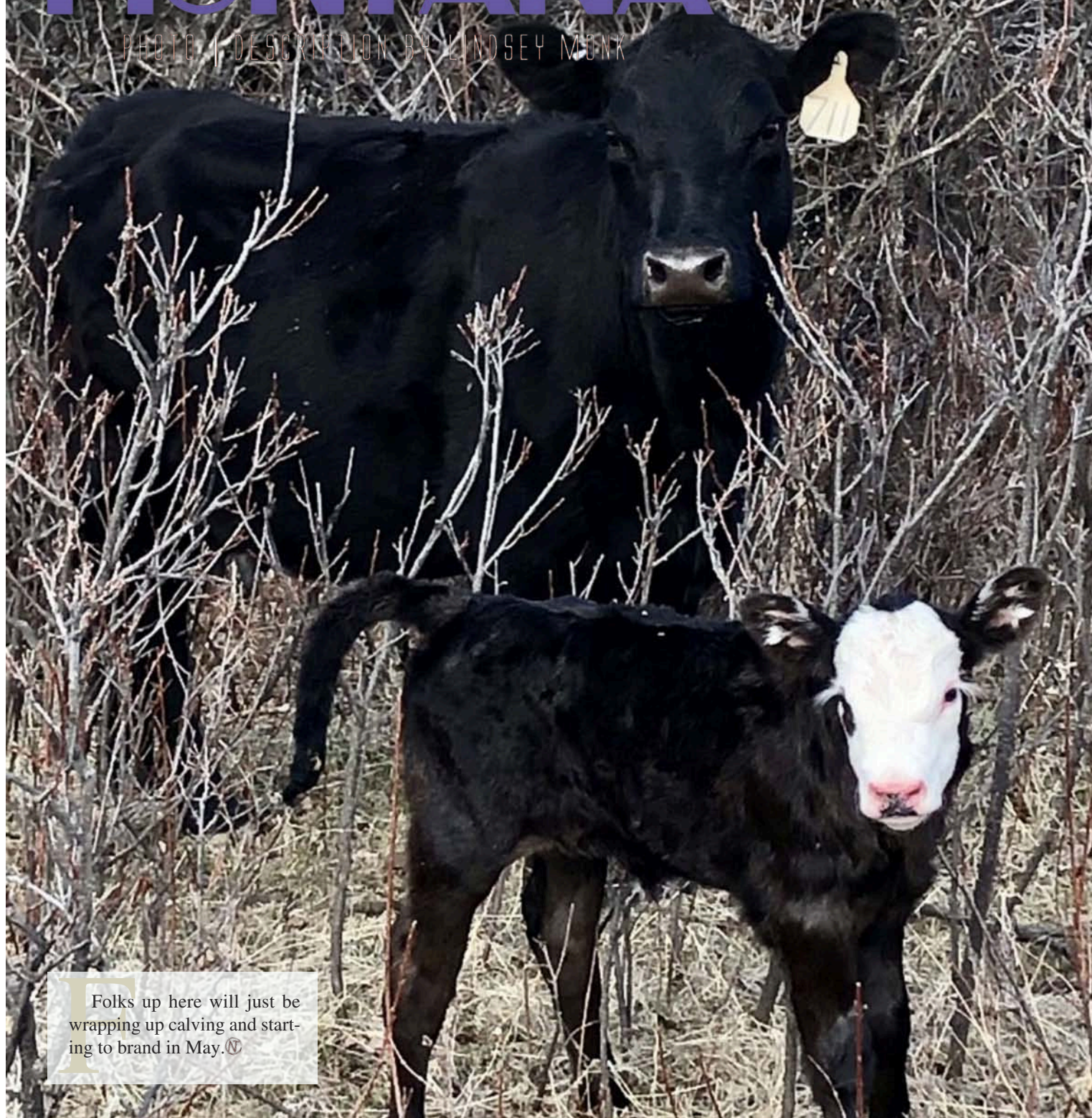
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AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

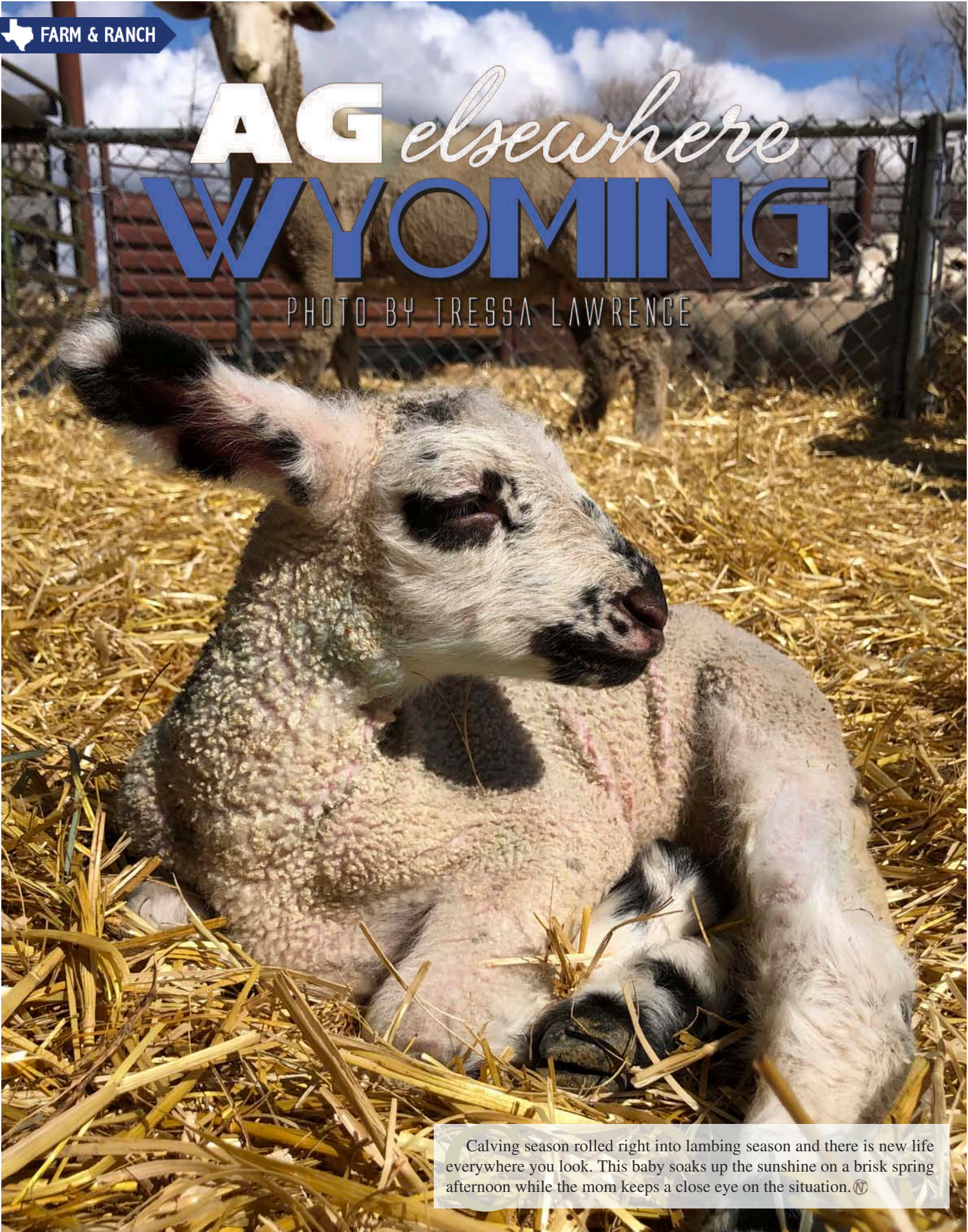
PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK




Folks up here will just be wrapping up calving and starting to brand in May. 🐾

AG *elsewhere* WYOMING

PHOTO BY TRESSA LAWRENCE



Calving season rolled right into lambing season and there is new life everywhere you look. This baby soaks up the sunshine on a brisk spring afternoon while the mom keeps a close eye on the situation. 

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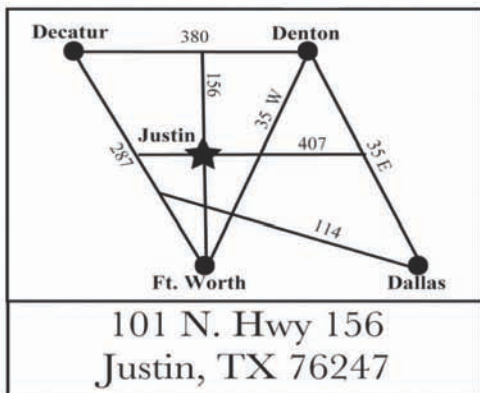
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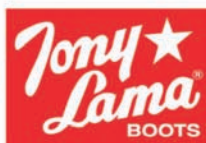
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Freedom and Whisky

By Nikolyn Williams

“When it’s not always raining there will be days like this.” - Van Morrison

Sometimes in agriculture, we become programmed to always portray the beautiful cows on green pastures under blue skies picture. That is not a very realistic portrayal, and sometimes even amongst ourselves we become really good at painting those beautiful pictures.

Last week, a rock from the trailer somehow flew up and hit the back glass of Woodrow’s pick up “Black Betty.” The glass looked like a spider web for a few days, and then must have finally fallen out. Woodrow picked me up in Black Betty at the front door to go put out hay.

As usual, my mind was in a million different canyon paths and creeks.

I quickly came back to the present when he asked, “You know what’s great about having the back glass of your pick up gone?”

I whirled around and saw the gapping hole, threw back my head and died laughing, and replied, “No Woodrow, I don’t but I’m sure I’m about to find out.”

He said, “If your standing in the bed of the pick up and you need something from inside the pick up all you gotta do is reach in there and get it.” Again I was laughing so hard I could hardly breathe.

When I caught my breath, I said, “You know what else is good about it, Woodrow? Black Betty is paid for, and I’m not an indentured servant to an expensive pick up payment.” He looked at me and smiled. The reality of agriculture is a plague of broken windows, blowouts, breakdowns and plan Bs. The process of getting those cows under those blue skies and onto those green pastures can



The process of getting those cows under those blue skies and onto those green pastures can often test the limits of your very being.




“When it’s not always raining there will be days like this.” Van Morrison. (Photos courtesy Nikolyn Williams)

often test you to the limits of your very being. It can rip your guts out, stomp on them and literally test your faith.

The road can and will be rocky

and rough, but when we finally get those cows settled under a blue sky, on a green meadow, we can look out to recall the trials and tribulations, shake our heads and

say, “When all the parts of the puzzle start to look like they fit, my momma said, ‘There will be days like this.’”

Love always, Nikolyn. 

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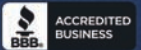
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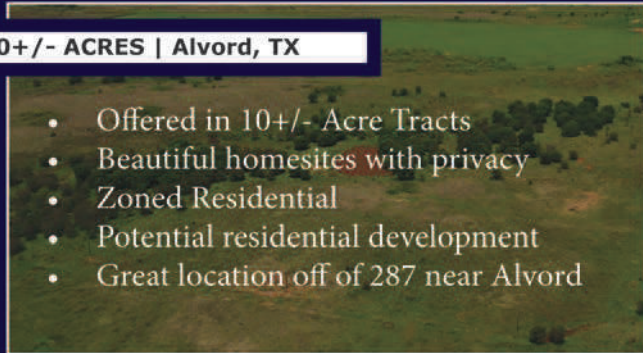
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Bull Fertility Following Cold Weather

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

The arctic blast that blanketed Oklahoma in February affected many livestock producers. With the extreme cold temperatures increasing nutritional requirements of livestock, many ranchers spent long hours ensuring their animals had plenty of hay and feed.

Most water sources froze which resulted in many producers spending long hours chopping ice or hauling water. Even with all of this extra effort, some producers suffered losses such as cattle falling through the ice and newborns succumbing to the extreme cold temperatures.

Unfortunately, not all losses will be this obvious. For those cattle operations that forgo bull breeding soundness exams before bull turnout, open cows may be an issue this fall.

In a study performed in Canada, severe frostbite was associated with reduced satisfactory breeding soundness exams. The authors of the study suggest the frostbite resulted in inflammation to the testes, which increases the temperature of the testes. In order for normal sperm to be produced, the bull must regulate the temperature of the testes.

Testes are kept at two degrees to six degrees Celsius below normal body temperature. This is why the testes are kept close to the body wall in cold weather and farther away in warm weather. Any deviation from this temperature may result in damage to the sperm, which will lead to nonmotile sperm and/or abnormal sperm.

Frostbite is not a common problem with bulls in Oklahoma and Texas; however, Oklahoma and Texas cattle are not accustomed to the extreme temperatures seen this past February. Without proper protection, bulls may have suffered damage to their scro-



A bull's breeding soundness exam performed by a veterinarian should alleviate any fears of infertility. Any abnormalities in any part of the exam are cause for alarm. (Courtesy photo)

tums or testes. Damage to these tissues may result in poor semen quality.

With this information in mind, cattle producers should have their bulls evaluated before turnout. A bull breeding soundness exam performed by a veterinarian should alleviate any fears of infertility. The exam has three parts. Part one is a physical exam to ensure the bull is in good health. Part two is the examination of the internal and external reproductive organs. During this part of the process, the scrotum will be measured and evaluated for any abnormalities such as frostbite. Lastly, the semen will be evaluated for motility and morphology (normal and abnormal sperm). Any abnormalities in any part of the exam are cause for alarm.

Bulls meeting the minimal standards for each part of the


breeding soundness exam will be classified as a "satisfactory potential breeder." Any issues discovered will result in a bull being classified as "deferred" or as an "unsatisfactory potential breeder." Bulls with signs of frostbite damage to their scrotum and with poor semen will most likely be classified as "deferred." The evaluator will probably suggest a recheck in a few weeks. One study indicated that most problems improve after six weeks of rest; however, according to the study in Canada, the fertility of some bulls with frostbite damage never improves.

Even though February's cold weather is long gone, some of the animal losses may still be present. Bull fertility is one issue that may take some time to improve. Producers should ensure their bulls are ready for the upcoming

spring breeding season by having a veterinarian perform a bull breeding soundness exam on all of their bulls. Hopefully, this will prevent any unwanted surprises during pregnancy testing this fall. For more information about bull breeding soundness exams and issues associated with frostbite, producers should contact their local veterinarian.

References

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Kastelic JP, Rizzoto G, Thundathil J. Review: Testicular vascular cone development and its association with scrotal thermoregulation, semen quality and sperm production in bulls. *Animal.* 2018;12(s1):s133-s141. 

LAND MARKET REPORT

By Jared Groce

MARCH 2021 RURAL LAND SALES

Last month's prediction of a heavy month of land closings in March have come true, with a lot of land being closed after the snow storm in February. With the banks and title companies all being closed for a week straight, there was a pretty large backlog of closings to do.

I have added the March averages for the last two years to the report this month, and the story is right there in black and white – prices are going through the roof. The “smart folks” who make predictions on such matters say that this trend will likely continue until new federal income tax regulations are enacted by the current administration. The possibility of removing the 1031 clause, increasing capital gains taxes, and increasing personal and corporate income tax rates will likely stop most people from wanting to sell, and make it more difficult for buyers to make their debt services if their income taxes are significantly higher. Time will tell, but there is no doubt that this is the best time in our history to sell land and cash out.

The high demand for North Texas land has finally caught the attention of the national news, which is reporting that people are trying there best to flee the urban areas in hopes of finding peace and quiet in the country. Let's hope they don't try to over urbanize our quiet country lives.

Happy spring, and get outside!

WISE	ACRES	\$/ACRE	LIST/ SELL	DOM
ALVORD	10.01	\$ 7,478.12	60.13%	86
ALVORD	12.232	\$ 7,357.75	90.00%	63
SUNSET	10.01	\$ 9,390.61	94.85%	587
SUNSET	10.01	\$ 9,490.51	95.86%	670
SUNSET	10.01	\$ 9,990.01	100.00%	176
ALVORD	10.01	\$ 11,632.57	75.37%	86
ALVORD	10.01	\$ 13,294.41	102.76%	86
ALVORD	10.01	\$ 13,297.10	86.15%	105
POOLVILLE	10.877	\$ 13,500.97	100.00%	9
SPRINGTOWN	11.2	\$ 15,178.57	94.87%	118
BRIDGEPORT	22.22	\$ 8,687.22	99.28%	26
SPRINGTOWN	11.39	\$ 18,525.02	105.86%	119
PARADISE	11	\$ 19,409.09	99.53%	20
PARADISE	11	\$ 20,818.18	100.00%	45
PARADISE	17	\$ 15,000.00	98.46%	675
BRIDGEPORT	26.5	\$ 11,320.75	93.75%	780
ALVORD	20	\$ 32,275.00	92.88%	86
DECATUR	49.9	\$ 17,517.03	151.74%	416
DECATUR	52.14	\$ 16,762.56	159.20%	416
BRIDGEPORT	129.08	\$ 7,092.31	98.44%	11
DECATUR	131	\$ 7,633.59	76.98%	1201
DECATUR	144	\$ 7,291.67	81.65%	77
AVERAGE	33.164	\$ 13,315.50	98.08%	266
March 2020 avg	17.909	\$ 11,294.98	95.07%	189
March 2019 avg	31.123	\$ 11,388.77	89.31%	170

COOKE	ACRES	\$/ACRE	LIST/ SELL	DOM
GAINESVILLE	16.5	\$ 6,515.88	81.45%	31
VALLEY VIEW	11.24	\$ 13,790.04	103.33%	2
GAINESVILLE	18.3	\$ 8,500.00	100.00%	13
GAINESVILLE	15	\$ 11,666.67	97.22%	307
GAINESVILLE	23.4	\$ 8,500.00	100.00%	13
GAINESVILLE	20.02	\$ 10,739.26	96.63%	33
GAINESVILLE	18	\$ 12,738.00	99.73%	105
VALLEY VIEW	11	\$ 20,909.09	92.00%	21
VALLEY VIEW	10	\$ 23,000.00	92.00%	15
GAINESVILLE	39.51	\$ 9,364.72	92.52%	373
GAINESVILLE	47.2	\$ 11,122.88	85.56%	141
GAINESVILLE	200	\$ 5,000.00	100.00%	551
AVERAGE	35.848	\$ 11,820.54	95.04%	134
March 2020 avg	109.475	\$ 12,276.07	97.25%	307
March 2019 avg	43.287	\$ 8,944.21	91.24%	262

DENTON	ACRES	\$/ACRE	LIST/ SELL	DOM
SANGER	11.1	\$ 17,567.57	92.46%	87
PONDER	21.81	\$ 17,148.10	99.73%	183
AUBREY	15.529	\$ 31,231.89	97.78%	81
KRUM	85.94	\$ 6,853.62	100.00%	1187
KRUM	120	\$ 6,525.83	87.01%	125
PILOT POINT	22.794	\$ 39,500.00	96.34%	195
PILOT POINT	27.555	\$ 39,012.88	86.71%	69
DENTON	118.852	\$ 9,317.66	71.67%	476
AUBREY	35.214	\$ 42,141.99	100.34%	47
AUBREY	10	\$ 152,460.00	98.36%	1050
PILOT POINT	35	\$ 52,481.09	98.75%	820
AUBREY	42.852	\$ 79,342.85	97.14%	619
AVERAGES	45.554	\$ 41,131.96	93.86%	412
March 2020 avg	47.471	\$ 29,510.68	92.74%	238
March 2019 avg	77.526	\$ 29,944.47	93.52%	122

MONTAGUE	ACRES	\$/ACRE	LIST/ SELL	DOM
RINGOLD	14.7	\$ 3,278.57	72.86%	14
SAINT JO	21.996	\$ 7,200.04	92.90%	45
BOWIE	16	\$ 10,312.50	97.63%	44
SAINT JO	24.608	\$ 7,199.98	96.64%	45
NOCONA	55.132	\$ 4,600.00	95.83%	85
FORESTBURG	50	\$ 6,126.60	88.15%	490
BOWIE	24.68	\$ 13,472.45	95.00%	5
NOCONA	90	\$ 3,800.00	97.44%	24
AVERAGE	37.14	\$ 6,998.77	92.06%	94
March 2020 avg	33.77	\$ 7,910.12	81.86%	440
March 2019 avg	40.233	\$ 4,760.09	89.58%	228

Information from North Texas Real Estate Information Service (NTREIS) for raw land data, 10 or more acres, ag exempt, for the month of March 2021. SP/LP = Sell Price to List Price ratio. DOM= Days on Market. ®



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1,961 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



HAMMON RIVER RANCH \$2,093/Ac

The Hammon River Ranch is prime recreational land located on the Red River in northern Clay County. It consists of 1,961.04 acres, being primarily wooded river bottom, along with several food plots and 170 acre cultivated field. It has nearly 2.5 miles of river frontage and a large oxbow that holds water year around. The property is fenced and cross fenced. There is a water well and electricity is on the ranch. This is a very nice large recreational ranch on the Red River, you won't find another like it.

316 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



BYERS FARM \$2,000/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.

2,092 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



TURKEY CREEK RANCH \$2,375/Ac

This is a pristine cattle ranch located in north Texas in Clay County. Open rolling grass land with hardwood lined creeks, minimal mesquites, good perimeter and cross fencing, nice cattle working pens with scales, adequate surface water throughout, two houses, nice workshop on a slab with electricity, horse barn with tack room, stalls and turn-out pens, equipment/hay barn, great access, 15 minutes east of Wichita Falls. Owner Finance available willing to divide.

1,292 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



PRICE REDUCED

BELL SCOTT RIVER RANCH \$1,868/Ac

The Bell Scott River ranch consist of 1,319.71 Acres with 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, haybarn, 2 sets of corrals, fenced and cross fenced two water wells and electricity. 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.

4,972 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



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.

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- Wellington Ranch - 60 Acres - Wichita Co - \$2,750/Acre
- Jarvis Farm - 180 Acres - Wichita Co - \$2,350/Acre
- Coleman Rd - 35 Acres - Archer Co - \$4,250/Acre
- Quail Run - 31 Acres - Archer Co - \$10,000/Acre
- Farr Ranch - 162 Acres - Baylor Co - \$1,750/Acre

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How Much of a Mark Can One Family Make on the Sport of Bull Riding?

By Phillip Kitts

If you are a serious bull riding fan you have heard of the Miniature Bull Riders. They have seen their young athletes compete on the biggest stages of bull riding at places like Madison Square Garden, the Staples Center in Las Angeles and numerous other big venues around the nation.

What so many may not know is how this great organization got its start or the amazing people behind the MBR.

The Leal family has a passion for bull riding and the youth of the sport. Many years ago, what started out as a herd of miniature cattle sparked an idea that has grown into a phenomenon. When the family came up with the idea of taking the big-time sport of bull riding and shrinking it down to miniature size, they probably never realized the huge impact the idea would have.

To help understand the value of this idea, we have to look deeper into youth bull riding. Most all youngsters start out with mutton busting, and the truth is riding a sheep does not have much of a fundamental connection with bull riding. In a lot of cases, this is the defining point where a young athlete may develop the passion it takes. When a young bull rider makes the next step, for many years it was moving to calves. This practice is still common and some of the fundamentals begin to come into play.

Moving to calves is a safe way to keep your bull riders safe and allow them an opportunity to learn more about the sport. The transition from calves in history has been steers and this where the MBR has made one of the biggest impacts. The fact is the



Recognizing there was a gap when it comes to riding calves and steers, the Leal family had a vision that revolved around providing the youth with a much more realistic match up that they can learn and grow with while being safe. (Photos courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

physical difference between steers and a bull is drastic. Bulls tend to be larger in the front end and of course there is a strength and athleticism difference between the two.

Over many years a lot of super bull riders moved through by riding steers until they were ready to accept the challenge of smaller or junior bulls. This has always been a subject of heated debate since in so many cases young bull riders are introduced to bulls above their ability too soon. In a lot of cases, this has resulted in injuries or just as common the psychological effects of not being able to succeed when challenged at this level.

Recognizing there was a gap when it comes to riding calves and steers, the Leal family had a vision. This vision revolved

around providing the youth with a much more realistic match up that they can learn and grow with while being safe.

As difficult of a challenge as it was, the answer came easy, and with a herd of miniature bulls one of the biggest issues was met. The miniature bull develops and grows much like their full-size counterpart. The key component is they just do not get as big. With the size being comparable now, the bull riders are not trying to compete on bulls that are just too big to match up against. Then there is the benefit of the miniature bulls bucking characteristics. Because these bulls are not as big and as athletic as a full-size bull, the risk is significantly reduced. No, they may not act the same during a ride in that they tend to spin less than

big bulls, but the rest of the basics are still pretty similar.

One of the biggest factors to making these bulls a key asset to young bull riders is they tend to be more docile in nature. The reality is they are still bulls, and just because they are smaller does not mean they are safe, but on average the risk of a bull making a run at a young athlete is reduced.

Put all these pieces together and the Leal family created a platform where young bull riders can learn and develop their skills on animals that are remarkably like what they will compete on as they get older. They can do so in a safer environment where they are challenged but not as overpowered.

Now understanding the immense value of what the Leal
Continued on page 24

**Continued from page 23**

family has assembled, if you look behind the scenes of one of these events you see where the true miracle happens. Anyone in the sport of rodeo knows that money and time are two assets there is just never enough of to go around. On the average weekend of an MBR event, the work starts weeks before one single child climbs into the car.

Most of it gets going with the hours of enrolling kids in each weekend, figuring out entry fees and the plethora of marketing and advertising that it takes to make an event happen.

All this time includes knowing how many athletes will attend an event then matching the correct number of bulls to competitors along with making sure to have re-ride bulls ready if they are needed.

Still an entire week before the



With anywhere from 35 to 50 athletes on a weekend, there is a lot to be done before the first latch is cracked. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

first bull bucks, the Leal family puts in hours upon hours prepping arenas and making sure all the equipment is safe and ready for use.


This daunting task can go from anything like raking back pens to

rewelding things around the arena to greasing bucking chute gates.

Once event weekend comes what has already been hours of work now ramps up to even more time and focus. Numerous hours are put into final touches on the

arena and making sure everything is not only presentable but is safe. When the young athletes arrive, there is the process of drawing match ups, accepting entry fees, and ensuring each athlete and family's needs are met. With anywhere from 35 to 50 athletes on a weekend, there is a lot to be done before the first latch is cracked.

Weekend after weekend the Leal family manages all of this and not once will you see a member of the family asset. In the modern world you hear a lot of unsung heroes and there is little doubt the Leal family is one of them.

They even have proof that it works, with the all too familiar name of Keyshawn Whitehorse and a couple of other Professional Bull Riders Tour athletes have grown up in the MBR system, and they will be the first to tell you how special the Leal family really is. 

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A Barrel Racer's Benefit

By Krista Lucas Wynn

The rodeo family is always one to step up when someone is in need, especially one of their own. This includes barrel racers, and recently one of North Texas' own experienced the outpouring of support from fellow barrel racers after a freak accident.

Janee Ornelas is a successful barrel racer, trainer and horse seller. She was the 2018 Patriot champion on her great horse, Jessadasher, and has seen one of her horses run down the alleyway of the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo with Stevi Hillman. She is more than just a barrel racer though. She is a wife, mom and dear friend to many. She also helps produce races at Parker County Arena, which has been previously featured.

Ornelas' reach in the industry expands further than just North Texas, and in the middle of March, people from near and far reached out to return the favor for someone who is always willing to help others.

While at the Elite Extravaganza in Waco, Texas, Ornelas was leading a horse back to the trailer early in the morning and was later found unconscious on the ground. She woke up in the hospital with hardly any recollection of what had happened. She woke up with two brain bleeds and a fractured skull. Her body was also scraped and bruised in many places. Although she did not need any surgery, doctors told her she was lucky to be alive.

When everyone was informed via social media thanks to her close friend and colleague, Courtney Smith whose family owns PCA, Ornelas was instantly met with support. Smith began putting together a benefit, and barrel racers pitched in to help in any way possible.



Pictured is Janee Ornelas, from the flier for the benefit. (Photo courtesy of the official Benefit for Janee Ornelas Facebook page)

May 2 will be a full day of barrel racing and fellowship. A barrel race will be held at PCA with added money to the Open, Futurity, Derby, Youth and Women's Professional Rodeo Association side pot. So far, there is more than \$5,000 in added money, buckles and other awards. There will be a silent auction that is still taking donations and a 2021 stallion auction with breedings donated from some of the top barrel sires in the industry today.

"I was a little taken back when I was told they were going to do this

for me," Ornelas said. "I am thankful and appreciative, and pretty overwhelmed with the outreach to be honest." There also has been a GoFundMe page set up to help with medical expenses as Ornelas has a long road of recovery ahead of her.

"So many times I should have died, and God has kept me alive. I guess it is to tell my story," Ornelas said. "So I'm starting a ministry. I've been called to do this for a long time. Now I have the time to do it. So it's time, and that's what I am working on. While I heal I

will focus on sharing my story and trying to reach other people and give them hope."

With her strong faith, sense of humor and even stronger support system, Ornelas will continue to recover and one day be on the back of a horse again for North Texas barrel racers to see her smiling face. To make a donation, contact Courtney Smith of PCA or contribute on the GoFundMe page. Visit the official Benefit for Janee Ornelas Facebook page to stay up to date on the latest details for May 2.



Common Equine Skin Tumors

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM

It is rather common for horses to have skin issues but what is causing this issue can sometimes be neoplastic growths or tumors that can be rather serious. Skin is the most common region of a horse to experience neoplasia. There are many types of equine skin neoplastic diseases or tumors that occur with some being more concerning than others, and they behave differently similar to neoplasia in other animals.

Sarcoids

Sarcoid growths are the most common skin tumor that occurs in horses. Sarcoids are limited only to the skin and do not spread to other tissues in the body like other cancers do.

These masses are classified into different categories based on the behavior and appearance.

Occult sarcoids – Flat, hairless, mostly circular areas of dark patches that are often subtle.

Verrucose sarcoids – Raised, wart like, dark areas that often spread into poorly defined margins. They can also be ulcerated on occasions.

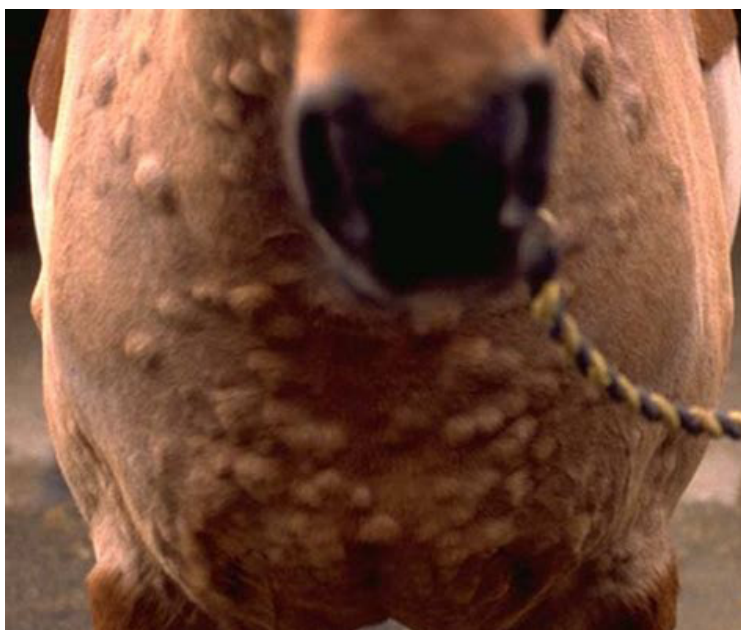
Nodular sarcoids – Firm and nodular skin lumps, which may have normal skin over them but can be ulcerative.

Fibroblastic sarcoids – Often ulcerated, weeping, raised sore lesions that may become cauliflower-like.

Mixed sarcoids – Commonly a mixture of two or more of the forms described above.

Malevolent sarcoids – Rare, invasive sarcoids that spread over large areas of the body and grow rapidly.

There are many treatment options for sarcoids such as surgical excision, laser excision, injection of chemotherapeutic and immunostimulating drugs, electro chemotherapy, radiation, and topical



There are many types of equine skin neoplastic diseases or tumors that occur with some being more concerning than others, and they behave differently similar to neoplasia in other animals. (Courtesy photos)

therapies.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma

Squamous Cell Carcinoma, or SCC, is the second most common skin tumor of horses. These tumors tend to be most commonly located around mucocutaneous junctions such as around the eyes,

mouth, vulva, anus and, penis/sheath of horses.

Other less common locations include the stomach, esophagus, sinuses, guttural pouch, foot, ear canal, and throat region. The lesions are more common in light skin colored horses such as appaloosa, paints, pinto and draft

breeds, but any breed or color can be affected.

SCC is mostly caused by ultraviolet light from prolonged sun light exposure that leads to mutation of skin cells. Other causes have been attributed to smegma around the penis/sheath, non-healing wounds and burn scars.

SCC has a classic appearance of being raised, cobblestone like and red to pink colored. Large tumors tend to become ulcerative, bleed when traumatized and become necrotic with drainage from the tumor bed.

These masses can grow slow to rapid, and approximately 18 percent metastasize to the local lymph nodes or other organs. These masses are locally destructive and like to invade surrounding tissues.

Small-localized lesions can be excised with a good chance that the mass will not return. It is commonly needed to do a combination of treatments to achieve successful resolution of the SCC.

These combinations typical involve debulking or removing as much of the mass as possible by sharp excision or laser resection combined with local chemotherapy or radiation.

Masses that are located near the eye or orbit with limited amount of tissue that can be removed require a combination of treatment to reduce the tumor size with chemotherapy and excision of the mass when it is reduced in size if possible.

Cryotherapy, using liquid nitrogen to freeze the mass, is also a successful means of destroying cancerous tissue.

Also, treatment with an oral non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug called Piroxicam can successfully treat and resolve SCC

Continued on page 31

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Continued from page 28

masses of the face and muzzle of horses.

The reason this drug is successful is because SCC express Cox-2 receptors that are targeted by this anti-inflammatory drug.

Melanoma

Melanoma is a dark pigmented mass that arises from melanocytes, dendritic cells or melanoblasts. These masses are the third common skin mass that is seen in horses.

Dark pigmented grey horses are the most predisposed to Melanoma with Arabians, Thoroughbreds, Percherons, and dappled breeds mostly affected. Melanoma commonly occurs around the anus, vulva, base of the tail, sheath, and in the throatlatch region.

These masses can also be seen in the guttural pouches. Melanoma is typically locally benign tumors that form in chains or clusters and can become locally expansive. When large amounts are present around the anus they can become restrictive and cause problems with passage of manure.

Melanoma does not respond well to chemotherapies and are most commonly removed with surgical excision if needed and when amendable.

An antihistamine drug called Cimetidine can help reduce the size of the masses or slow the rate of growth, but is not a cure.

A vaccine developed for the treatment of canine melanoma has been used in horses with some success but is a rather expensive treatment with stringent protocols that must be followed.

Lymphosarcoma/Lymphoma

Lymphosarcoma is a lymphoid neoplasm that may involve the skin.

This cutaneous form commonly occurs between the ages of four and nine years of age with no sex or breed predilections.

These lesions will be well-



Similar to what our doctor tells us, when a mass is noted on your horse that has abnormal shape, color or appearance have it inspected by your veterinarian. If there are concerns about the mass it is recommended getting a biopsy of the mass to get a definitive diagnosis and whether further treatment is needed. (Courtesy photos)

circumscribed lesions with cobblestone appearance underneath intact skin. Horses with these masses can present signs of systemic illness such as depression, weight loss, anemia, leukemia, and enlarged lymph nodes.


Treatment is not successful in

these cases unless the lesions are localized and can be fully surgically excised.

Most of these skin tumors can be treated successfully when addressed as early as possible.

Similar to what our doctor tells us, when a mass is noted

on your horse that has abnormal shape, color or appearance have it inspected by your veterinarian.

If there are concerns about the mass it is recommended getting a biopsy of the mass to get a definitive diagnosis and whether further treatment is needed. 



PROFILE

Bit and Spur M

Troy Flaharty ←





Maker



Bits and spurs are a functional part of a horseman's everyday gear, but they start out as just a simple piece of metal. However, when that steel gets into the hands of bit and spur maker Troy Flaharty, it becomes a work of art.

Flaharty was born into a family of horse trainers in Pennsylvania, giving him firsthand knowledge of the value of a good bit and pair of spurs. At 18, he moved to Kansas to attend college on a rodeo scholarship in timed events as a team roper, calf roper and steer wrestler. His horsemanship plays an important part in the quality of work he produces.

"The elementary horsemanship is the fundamentals of a bit. If you don't have elementary horsemanship, I don't know how you can make them. You have to know what will work and won't work," Flaharty explained.

It was in college where he was first introduced to bit and spur making. He learned the fundamentals and continued the craft as a part-time gig, until he decided to go all in.

Continued on page 34

**Continued from page 33**

"I got pretty serious about it and I have been full time five or six years now," Flaharty said. "My family all trained horses and I always thought I would be a horse trainer. But it seemed like I could make more money with less debt in bit and spur making. It is something I really enjoy doing and I can do for the rest of my life."

He eventually grew tired of the cold Kansas weather and made the move to North Texas, where he runs his business. Flaharty can be found in his shop, molding and designing steel into unique, one-of-a-kind pieces of art.

Flaharty begins with clean metal. He has several patterns and designs on hand, or for custom pieces, draws a new design before transferring the chosen art to the metal. He shapes each piece with files, sanders, grinders, and with higher end pieces uses stones. Barrel racing bits are a bit simpler, with a piece of rod cut and bent to the desired shape.

"It's a lot faster of a process, but the higher end bits take a lot of time," Flaharty explained. "It's not a big deal to put 60 to 100 hours in one piece."

The craftsman is constantly working to improve his skill, one he says he was not born with naturally. Instead, bit and spur making is a medium he had to work hard to perfect.

"I'm not artistic. I had to really work at it. People say, 'Well, you're so talented.' I tell them I'm really not. I have had to work really hard. I can't hardly draw a stick figure, but I have practiced on the scrollwork and flowers. I have gotten so much better at it, but it has taken a lot of work for me personally," Flaharty said.

Even though the artwork is beautiful, unlike other mediums, a bit and pair of spurs must be able to serve their purpose. The functionality is a vital part of each piece.

Continued on page 36

Troy Flaharty's favorite piece of work is a pair of spurs he gifted his daughter, a barrel racer, on her 18th birthday.



Troy Flaharty's horsemanship plays an important part in the quality of work he produces. (Photos courtesy Troy Flaharty)

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MAY 2021 | 35

**Continued from page 34**

"It has to work fundamentally. There are certain rules, especially in bit making, you can't stray from or they don't function," Flaharty stated. "Functionality is the main thing with a bit. It doesn't matter how good the silverwork is, if you don't understand the mechanics or fundamentals of a bit, it is worthless. If it doesn't function in a horse's mouth, it doesn't matter how pretty you make it. That is one thing bit and spur maker Wilson Capron always said, 'You've got to make something worthy of decorating first.' If you skip the steel work or skip the quality steel work, there's a difference."

The craftsman explained if he could go back and do it over again, he would find very elite bit and spur makers and would stay with them for however long they could stand him.

"I would go and learn from them. It really speeds up the learning curve. I was just doing it on my own and trying to learn on my own. Not until five or six years ago, did I look at bit and spur making as an art. It was all utilitarian for me, but to make it an art just opened a whole different world for me," Flaharty said.

Many have helped him through the Traditional Cowboy Arts Association. He was awarded their fellowship, which provided him with funds to study with members of the association.

"I have had a lot of help along the way just in the last 10 years. In the first 20, I was too hard-headed and wanted to do it on my own. I wish I had been smarter when I was younger," Flaharty said. "Wilson Capron, Ernie Marsh, those both have influenced me a lot. I was friends with many of them already so that made it easier when I would stay for a week at a time for the fellowship. It is pretty intense, they try and teach you as much as possible. The skills they do are really high level, and to try to learn all that in one week is a



Troy Flaharty has many plans for the future, but at the top of the list is a bid to become a member of the TCAA. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

lot but it was great to get to hang with my peers. It inspires you to go with those guys, see what they are doing and help each other. It is very inspirational to go stay with them."

His own personal favorite piece remains a bit he made for his daughter, who barrel races, which he gifted her on her 18th birthday. While he is proud of all his work, he hopes to always be working to improve.

"Every professional gets to a certain level and they are comfortable there. They don't want to get out of their comfort zone. That's where they stay. It is true not just with bit and spur makers, saddle

makers or silversmiths, but even other professions," Flaharty said.

"My work will be getting good, and then I will hit a plateau and it seems like everything I make is the same. Then I'll step out there and try something new and different, fail and just keep trying. You'll get better, but you hit a plateau because you get comfortable. There are certain things I do like scrollwork that is elementary. It is simple for me, so I get stuck doing that a lot because it is easy, but I have to keep getting better, try something new, and elevate my level of craftsmanship."

In recent years, Flaharty has begun to enjoy the engraving.

"I enjoy doing silverwork, but in the last few years I really started enjoying finishing the steel, making the steel perfect, the polishing and all that. Even before I put the silver on or do the engraving, I like it to look pretty with just plain steel," Flaharty said.

Flaharty has many plans for the future, but at the top of the list is a bid to become a member of the TCAA. As a bit and spur maker, he will be required to turn in three pieces of artwork during their annual show in Oklahoma City. The TCAA as a group looks at them, critiques them, then votes whether or not to accept the artist as one of the newest members.

"I believe you have to have 70 percent of the members agree to let you in and they have criteria. There are very, very few people who get in their first year," Flaharty explained.

He has not applied but has gone through the first step of the process which required him to send in a portfolio including pictures of his work.

If they like what they see, they allow an artist to apply. Flaharty has made it past that first step and is looking forward to creating his work.

"I haven't made them just yet; it is very time consuming. It is nothing to put 100 hours into a bit, so times three, and you have to do the very best thing you have ever done three times. There are only 13 guys in it and a lot of different disciplines. There are only two bit and spur makers in it, so that is a huge goal. It is a big deal and there are not many people who get in. I think it is obtainable, but it is a difficult goal," Flaharty said.

In addition to his hope of becoming a member of the TCAA, he also would like to do more California style collector type bits.

"That's really where I would like to go," Flaharty said.

To see more of Flaharty's beautiful work, follow him on Facebook and Instagram.



Exquisite examples of pieces produced by bit and spur maker Troy Flaharty. (Photos courtesy Troy Flaharty)





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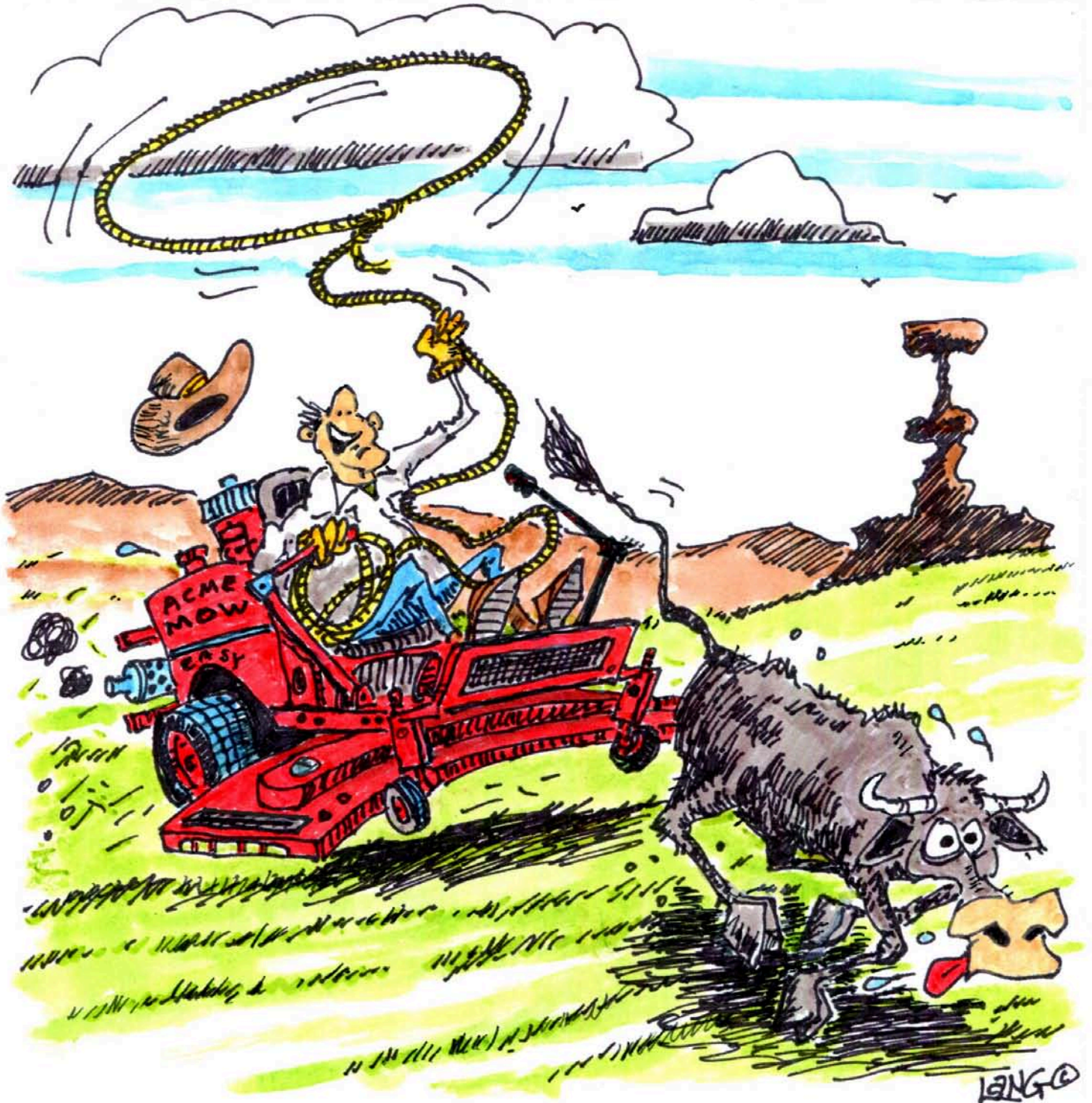
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By Jesse Kader

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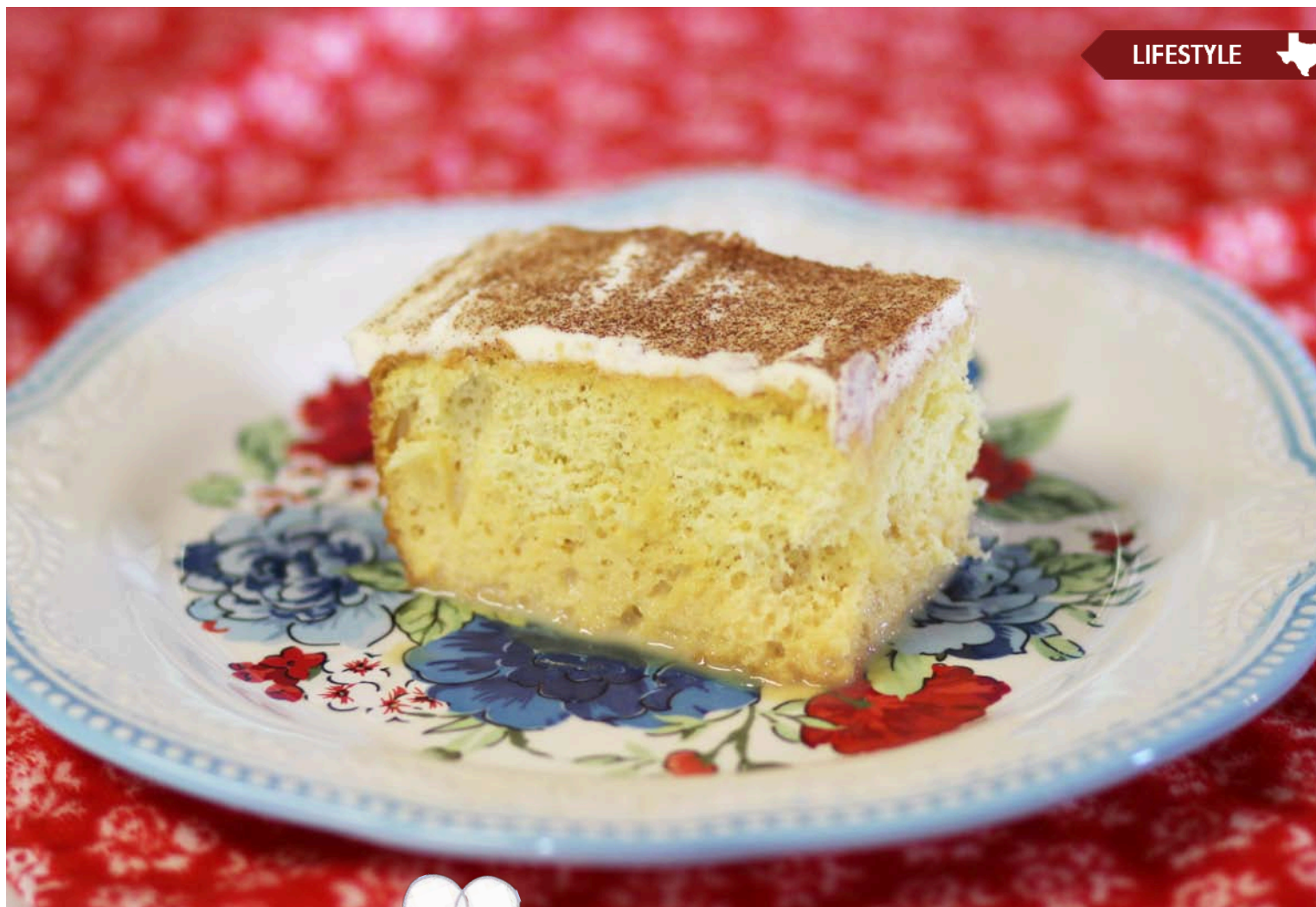
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Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Newlin

Tres Leches Cake

Servings: 15 servings | **Total Time:** 3 hours

Ingredients

For the cake

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup granulated sugar, divided
- 5 large eggs, separated
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup whole milk

For the tres leches mixture

- 1 (14-ounce) can sweetened condensed milk

- 1 (12-ounce) can evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup whole milk

To finish

- 2 cups heavy whipping cream
- 1/4 cup powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Ground cinnamon, for topping
- Strawberries or maraschino cherries, for garnish

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prep a 9x13-inch baking dish with baking spray. Separate the egg yolks from the egg whites and set aside.

2. In a large bowl or a stand mixer, beat 3/4 cup of the sugar with the egg yolks on medium-high until creamy and light. Add the milk and vanilla and beat again, scraping down the sides

of the bowl as needed.


3. Add the flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt, mixing just until combined.

4. Whisk the egg whites, gradually adding the remaining 1/4 cup of sugar until stiff peaks form. Fold into the cake batter.

5. Pour into the prepared pan.

6. Bake for 25 to 35 minutes. Cool completely, then poke all over with a fork.

7. In a separate bowl, whisk together the sweetened condensed milk, evaporated milk, and milk. Pour over the cooled cake. Let soak for two hours in the fridge.

8. Whip the cream, sugar, and vanilla, then spread over the cake. Sprinkle with cinnamon and top with strawberries. 

WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Are there things you never thought you could do? Things you never even dreamed you would do?

I can honestly say when I was a kid I never dreamed of being a cattle rancher. I grew up mostly in two big cities: Atlanta and Dallas. Living in the country was not a concept I comprehended.

We officially announced to our families the Christmas of 1980 we were going to get married. At the same time we said we would be living on my husband's family cattle ranch. Of course, I thought the little farmhouse we were busy cleaning up and repairing was only going to be our "starter home." I never imagined we would be living in it for 40 plus years. I will never forget my mamma's first words to our happy news.

"I didn't send you to college to get your hands dirty," she said.

"What's makes you think I'm going to get my hands dirty?" I responded with a giggle. My mamma simply looked into my eyes with a twinkle in hers. I think about that twinkle now that she's passed. What did she know that I didn't?

That twinkle wasn't about dirty hands, my friends. My mamma knew that in life all of us would have many opportunities to do and experience things we never thought possible. Indeed, I've had many.

Besides becoming a cattle rancher, living in the country and getting my hands dirty from time to time, I also never imagined myself running in a half marathon.

The year this feat was indeed achieved would be the year I lost my sweet Mamma and my beloved 17-year-old dachshund in the same month. I needed to prove to myself I was stronger than I thought I was to be prepared to face what would be the most difficult moments of my life.

My goal when the half marathon began was simply to complete it even if I was the last to cross the finish line. I had not lost the weight I wanted to shed. I had not been consistent with my training. It would have been tempting to drop out before I began and to believe I wasn't



Annette Bridges truly was stronger than she thought she was after an already rough year. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

prepared or capable.


That year had already been a rough one preceded by a couple of very challenging years. I had lost two brothers and had two surgeries myself. There had been many hospital stays for my mom and vet visits for my aging dog.

The half marathon was taking place at the happiest place on earth – Disney World. I needed some happy and the thought of doing something I had never imagined myself doing was exhilarating.

Plus, I would be doing it with my daughter and only child that gave me incentive. She reached the finish line before me, and I will

never forget the delight in her eyes as she cheered her mamma on.

So I began and indeed crossed the finish line. Laughing and crying as I mustered the strength to run across, I couldn't help but assume the Rocky Balboa stance and yell, "I did it," again and again.

I truly was stronger than I thought I was. I have no doubt that you are, too. If you ever question your abilities, consider putting yourself to the test by doing something you never thought you were capable of doing. I'm pretty sure you will be surprised and proud to discover that you are. 

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Reference 1



Brian Pickard from Rhodes, Iowa
- Case IH Steiger 385

„After having AgroEcoPower tune our Case IH tractor, we are using 2 gallons per hour less fuel and can go even in those spots where water stood without slowing down. I am impressed.“



Reference 2



Alex Recker from Arlington, Iowa
- John Deere S680

„This last evening we did some figuring in fuel savings alone, it will pay for the tune in about 250 hours. That does not include less man-hours per acre and more acres covered per hour. Nice product, very well done.“



Reference 3



Paul Enhle from Kewanee, Illinois
- Case IH Magnum 340

„Once we got the combine done and visited with you guys, we realized it was not only turning it up, but it was the increased torque too. And a lot of it! And all our tuned tractors act clearly different than they did before. We have had 12 units tuned by AEP and are not disappointed with one of them.“



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Beyond the Beef: Cattle By-products, Part 3

By Dani Blackburn | editor@ntfronline.com

When many think of the word beef, they conjure up images of the meat a beef animal produces. While each animal does provide enough steak and hamburger meat to feed roughly 860 people half pound servings, it also gives us many other products we use in our everyday lives, referred to as beef byproducts.

From the hair to blood to the hooves, a beef animal provides what we need to make soap, medicine, photo film, cake mixes and more.

Even a beef animal's manure is not wasted. Farmers, gardeners, landscapers, and others commonly use livestock manure as a fertilizer to provide nutrients needed for crop production.

The manure becomes a fertiliz-

er due to its high content of water and organic materials, especially if it contains straw and bedding.

Efficient and responsible use of the animal's manure gives us a valuable source of nutrients, organic matter and carbon to pour into our pastures.

The manure of a beef animal is inherently high in phosphorus, giving it tremendous fertilizer value. In fact, in beef animals, phosphorus is the second highest mineral in the body and is needed for almost all of its metabolic reactions.

The crops found on our farms need phosphorus more than any other nutrient. Other key nutrients found in cattle manure include nitrogen, potassium, sulphur, magnesium and calcium. A beef

animal's manure is a long-term source of nutrients that can impact soil properties. All plants from legumes to grasses benefit from optimal levels of these key nutrients.

Manure nutrients have real value as fertilizer. However, like commercial fertilizer, manure must be managed properly to avoid negative environmental impacts.

Overuse of manure beyond what the land requires is just a waste of time and money. If beef cattle manure is applied to the land based on nitrogen requirements of the crops, phosphorus is nearly always applied in excess. There are a few issues with over-applying phosphorus to land. Fortunately, conducting soil tests on your

pasture will give you insight to optimal nutrient levels. When you use commercial fertilizer blends, it is possible to customize each one but manure fertilizer cannot be customized. Knowing the nutrient levels within the manure sample and understanding how the key nutrients impact pasture and crop growth will help with manure management, allowing you to make the most of the nutrients provided by your crops and cattle.

Resources

<http://www.beefresearch.ca/research-topic.cfm/manure-and-nutrient-management-7>

"The Truth About Beef Byproducts." *The Truth About Agriculture*, 17 June 2015, thetruthaboutag.com/2015/06/17/the-truth-about-beef-byproducts/.¹

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On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



Let The Come Back Begin



Probably one of the hardest hit industries during the pandemic of 2020 here in North Texas has been our live-music venues. There isn't much one can do if your livelihood consists primarily upon the gathering of others. With the closing of almost every entertainment venue in the entire state of Texas, many musicians were forced to simply wait it out. The good news is, it looks like the comeback will be much greater than the setback.

My friend and fellow musician Dusty Moats, pictured on the left, is doing his part in getting North Texas on the road back to normal. Moats has been playing guitar with great Texas musicians throughout his entire career.

His love for Texas songwriters has led him to promoting the newest craze in live entertainment. His company, Power House Promotions, produces Texas Songwriter events throughout North Texas.

As our live venues begin to open back up, Moats is booking Texas Songwriter engagements faster than you can say, "What coronavirus?"

Check him out on Facebook at [powerhousepromotions11](https://www.facebook.com/powerhousepromotions11), or on Instagram at [power_housepromotions](https://www.instagram.com/power_housepromotions). You will be glad you did. Live music is back in North Texas. Now that is something to celebrate.

Happy Trails.🇺🇸

Listen to Dave Alexander's Radio Show Big Texas Country and Western Swing Show.
davealexander.com.

Beef vs. Alternative-Source Proteins

By Martha Crump | marthacrump@comcell.net

Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and a billionaire philanthropist is making news again involving the agricultural community. In a recent interview with MIT Technology Review, he stated, "...all rich countries should move to 100 percent synthetic beef." Gates does not claim publicly to be a vegetarian, but he does staunchly support both publicly and financially the technology of plant and cellular based alternatives to meat. In other words, he is promoting synthetic protein.

In his new book 'How to Avoid a Climate Disaster,' Gates suggests using regulation to force a shift to synthetic meat is one of many governmental policies that will ultimately be needed to avoid said climate disaster. His book also covered steel and cement production in regards to climate change, but the response to his push for the developed world to replace beef with synthetic meat has generated largely supportive media coverage around the world, while the remainder of topics were largely ignored and glaringly omitted.

Here are some facts Gates has not touted in quite such a public manner. First and foremost, he has a considerable financial interest in the synthetic food companies he is promoting. This includes Beyond Meats, Impossible Foods, Memphis Meats, and Hampton Creek Foods. His initial interview did include a disclaimer to that end, but not one of the following news stories chose to mention it. Eric Schmidt, co-founder of Google, Peter Thiel and Max Levchin, co-founders of PayPal, Marc Andreessen, founder of Netscape, Vinod Kholsa, (Sun Microsystems), Jerry Yang, (Yahoo), and Bryan Johnson, (Venmo) are just a few other high-profile investors in the synthetic biology market.

In 2000, there were less than 100 companies in this arena. Just over two decades later there are now more than 600 companies, with reports the industry has raised more than \$12 billion in the past decade, with \$3.8 billion in 2019 alone. A recent article written for Forbes Magazine is encouraging investors because synthetic biology has the most potential to radically reshape our world with endless possibilities. As the writer proclaims, after all, if the world's brightest tech founders are seeing the potential, then it obviously is worth your money. Should we spend a moment consider-



How do we as individuals begin to promote the benefits of our products? (Courtesy photos)

ing their expertise in the world of agriculture? Or should we simply be in awe of the fact that because they deem it worthy it is valid?

Also of interest is the fact that Gates owns 242,000 acres of farmland in the United States, stretching over 18 states. The biggest of these holdings are in Louisiana, with a reported 69,071 acres; Arkansas, with 47,927 acres; Nebraska at 20,588 acres and Washington State at 14,500 acres. According to The Land Report, the Gates' farmland is held both directly and also through Cascade Investment LLC, which is controlled by Gates himself. If these numbers are close to accurate, then this would make him the largest private-farmland owner in the United States.

If we in agriculture think we can continue going about our days, caring for our livestock responsibly, marketing our animals like we

have always done, then it's time for a wake-up call. How do we, as individuals begin to promote the benefits of "our" products versus "their" products? The normal independent producer does not have billions to invest. As a general rule we do not have friends with billions to invest. Possibly one of the biggest factors is we certainly do not have invested friends in control of many of the more popular media outlets. Additionally, we are experiencing a time when many would rather be told what to think and how to live, than take the time to do their own research. It is so easy for the morally engaged to be outraged about greenhouse emissions and animal cruelty, rather than do their own research to find the truth of the matter.

Here are some truths in counterpoint to what would seem to be overwhelming odds against agriculture and the cattle producer specifically.



First, while Covid-19 restrictions put us at home and had us avoiding crowds in public places, it also resulted in more people cooking at home. According to the 2020 Program Evaluations from the Texas Beef Council, there were 1.6 million website visitors and twice as many beef recipe shares reported on the website BeefLovingTexas.com. There were 1.3 million views of the “BBQquest” video series featuring renowned Texas Chefs and pit masters. Other milestones for 2020 include reaching out to 5,000 registered dietitians and MDs about including beef in a healthy diet; 7,000 Beef Teams appearances to raise awareness of how beef can fuel athletic performance; and of note, 2,000 culinary professionals subscribed to the Beef Loving Chefs monthly newsletter. None of those interactions involved recipes for synthetic or plant based beef alternatives.

Theresa Davis recently compared animal-source proteins and plant-based proteins in an article for the February 2021 issue of The Cattleman magazine. Davis is a nutrition scientist and professor of pediatrics with United States Department of Agriculture’s Agricultural Research Service Nutrition Research Center at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. Additionally, she is a former president of the American Society for Nutrition and a member of the USDA’s Health and Human Services 2020 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee. In her article, she shared one of the key differences between animal-source protein and plant-based proteins are the number and types of amino acids each offers. Of the two groups of amino acids, the body can produce one type, while food isn’t a necessary part of that production. The second type; however, consists of 20 amino acids, nine of which cannot be produced by the body. They are critical and must be obtained from the foods you eat. The good news is animal



proteins contain all of those types of amino acids required by the human body and are referred to complete proteins.

Basically, the makeup of animal-based proteins and human proteins are very much alike. The problem with depending on plant-based proteins is they are deficient in one or more essential amino acids. They are referred to as incomplete proteins, and here’s a key component to the nutritional science of it all. If you are deficient in just one amino acid, then you cannot utilize all those other amino acids to make the proteins. According to Davis, another advantage to animal-source proteins is that they are digested and absorbed better than the amino acids in plant-based proteins.

While vegetarianism and plant-based diets are often talked about, the reality is that approximately 97 percent of the world population eats animal-based foods. That is a definite plus for those of us in the animal-sourced protein business, so let’s look at what we do we have that the tech billionaires of the world don’t. We have the capacity to relate to the consumer.

We have the capacity to engage with our consumers in every aspect of what we do, and best of all, we are all knowledgeable about our industry. Cattle production has evolved no doubt, and to survive, we as producers have had to evolve as well. We recently attended an “Eat & Learn” dinner sponsored by Steve and Lydia Tucker, with Tucker Ag Products and listened to Mike Nichols, DVM, with Boehringer Ingelheim. Nichols addressed issues related to managing a profitable cow/calf operation. As I looked around the table, I saw many familiar as well as some new faces, with ages ranging from late 20s to late 60s and beyond. We were all there for the same reason: How can we learn to do this job better? What would get us further down the road in a successful way?

We have financial incentives just like any other business owner out there. We have worked, learned, failed, and learned more. In ranching, we have become experts in our field, in our own respective ways, just like Gates and his tech savvy cohorts have done in their respective fields.

Unlike Gates; however, I would never presume to give computer related advice. The beauty of being a member of the Wichita Falls Area Cattlewomen is we get to share that knowledge every time we are a part of a community event. From mid-February of this year through March alone, the WFACW had face-to-face interactions with close to 1,000 people through three different community events, and we are only now getting geared up. We have the opportunity to appeal to an amazing cross-section of the population to promote, educate, encourage awareness of beef advocacy programs, and best of all, let people know just how dedicated we are to the beef cattle industry.

Nichols ended his presentation the other night by reminding us the most important thing to be cultivated in our industry is our reputation. No matter how big or how small our ranching enterprises are, we are only as good as our reputation. Most of the people I know in this business take this to heart. I for one am certainly glad to know those kinds of folks.

I would encourage any of you ladies that want to be a “voice” for all that our industry is doing, to think about attending a meeting. Come see what we are all about. Help us in our effort to reach people with our positive messages about ranching at a grassroots level. It is a very proactive message forum that is needed more than in our society.

Speaking of meeting up, the next meeting of the WFACW will be on May 17, 2021, at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, Texas, at 11:30 a.m. and again at 5:30 p.m. Prepackaged meals will be available for ordering prior to each meeting or you may bring your own. The speaker is yet to be determined. All social distancing rules are followed and masks and hand sanitizer are available prior to entry to the meeting area for your continued safety. 🐾

Noble Learning:

The Difference Between Organic and Regenerative Ag.

By Courtney Leeper, Noble Research Institute

We all want clean air and water, food, and an overall healthy environment. More and more farmers and ranchers are joining the conversation around regenerative agriculture as the best way to manage the land for environmental, animal and human health. Regenerative agriculture — and more specifically, regenerative ranching — is now the focus of Noble Research Institute's education, consultation and research efforts. Regenerative ranching is a solution to broad societal challenges, but it is also a solution to the challenges that farmers and ranchers face. It helps them improve the quality of the land — for us all — and be profitable, which is important for keeping good stewards on the land.

What Is Reg. Agriculture?

Noble defines regenerative agriculture as, “the process of restoring degraded soils using practices based on ecological principles.” It requires managing a farm or a ranch by considering the interactions among the soil, water, plants, animals and humans — interconnected pieces of one whole system. The benefits of regenerative ranching include:

- Increased soil organic matter and biodiversity.
- Healthier and more productive soil that is drought- and flood-resilient.
- Decreased use of chemical inputs and subsequent pollution.
- Cleaner air and water.
- Enhanced wildlife habitat.
- Carbon captured in the soil to combat climate variability.

With regenerative agriculture, producers are not just sustaining the current land resource so that it can continue to be used in the future. They are actually improving what is there, leaving it better for the next generation.

Organic vs. Regenerative

The question that commonly comes up is, “How is regenerative agriculture different from organic agriculture?” “Organic” is a labeling term that denotes products produced under



Regenerative agriculture — and more specifically, regenerative ranching — is now the focus of Noble Research Institute's education, consultation and research efforts. (Courtesy photo)

the authority of the Organic Foods Production Act. When an individual goes into the grocery store and sees the green and white seal that says “USDA Organic,” they are seeing a product that has been produced and handled under a strict set of standards overseen by the federal government.


This national label began in 1990 with the passage of the Organic Food Protection Act, which aimed to create national standards for the production and processing of food that could be marketed to consumers as “organic.” By 2002, the year the standards were implemented, the U.S. Department of Agriculture had defined “organic” as “a production system ... that respond(s) to site-specific conditions by integrating cultural, biological, and mechanical processes that foster cycling of resources, promote ecological balance, and conserve biological diversity.”

In order for a farmer, rancher or food processor to market their product as “organic,” they must prove to a certifier that they followed all organic regulations. These rules dictate what practices and substances can and can't be used. For example, organic farmers cannot use seeds that have been genetically engineered. They also cannot use most synthetic fertilizers

or pesticides. Any such item they do use must be on the approved national list. While buying organic food can assure you that the land on which it was grown was managed without the use of most synthetic fertilizers and pesticides, the label itself cannot tell you whether the health of the land is improving. Organic alone is a prescriptive standard for the production of food. While stating the intention to promote ecological balance and conserve biological diversity, the system does not endeavor to rebuild or regenerate the soil.

Focusing on Outcomes

Regenerative agriculture is about principles, not practices. It focuses on outcomes — actual improvements to soil health and the overall quality and health of the land (the soil, water, plants, animals and humans). There is no recipe or prescription because each farm or ranch differs based on unique natural resources, climate variability, and animal and ecological dynamics. Producers apply principles for their particular region, operation and personal situation. This freedom for producers to make decisions on their land is important. The reality is that working with nature is complex. There are good practices that if applied at the wrong time or under the wrong conditions can hurt, not help the land. Noble recognizes that prescribed practices are no substitute for producer-led problem-solving and critical thinking to manage a complex environment. Instead, Noble seeks to empower all producers to understand how their land functions and give them tools to make the best management decisions that improve land health. These decisions may differ from producer to producer, depending on their unique set of natural resources, their climate, and their skills and goals.

Marketing programs like organic may work for some producers, but there is no one-size-fits-all solution. It's important to preserve choices for both producers and consumers. At the same time, it is important to consider the future health of the land. 

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean | tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Meet the Brome Brothers

There are several species of grasses belonging to the Brome family growing in North Texas, but the two most common are Cheat and Rescue. Rescue grass can behave as an annual or biennial, while Cheat grass is an annual. They are both introduced cool-season grasses.

Along with having the same family name, Cheat and Rescue also are both aggressive invaders into our range and pasture lands. Texasinvasives.org lists them both as Texas invasive plants in the database maintained.

Cheat and Rescue grow slowly during the winter months, then as temperatures begins to warm, they rapidly become a significant part of the green blanket that covers much of our grazing lands in early spring. They soon shoot up a seed head and are maturing about the time that our summer perennials are just beginning to grow. This gives the Bromes the distinct advantage in using the available sunlight and moisture.

Cheat grass was introduced accidentally in 1861 in New York and Pennsylvania through contaminated shipments. By 1928, it was found throughout the United States. The common name for Cheat grass, also known as Japanese brome, came from farmers, who, after seeing it growing in their wheat fields, felt they were possibly cheated due to impure seed. Cheat grass is poor quality grazing for cattle and deer.

As Cheat grass matures during the early summer months,



Cheat grass rapidly dries out as it matures in early spring. (Photos by Tony Dean)

Grazing Value of This Plant

The Bromes

Cheat grass and Rescue grass



Cheat grass is of little value but Rescue grass is good grazing for a short time.

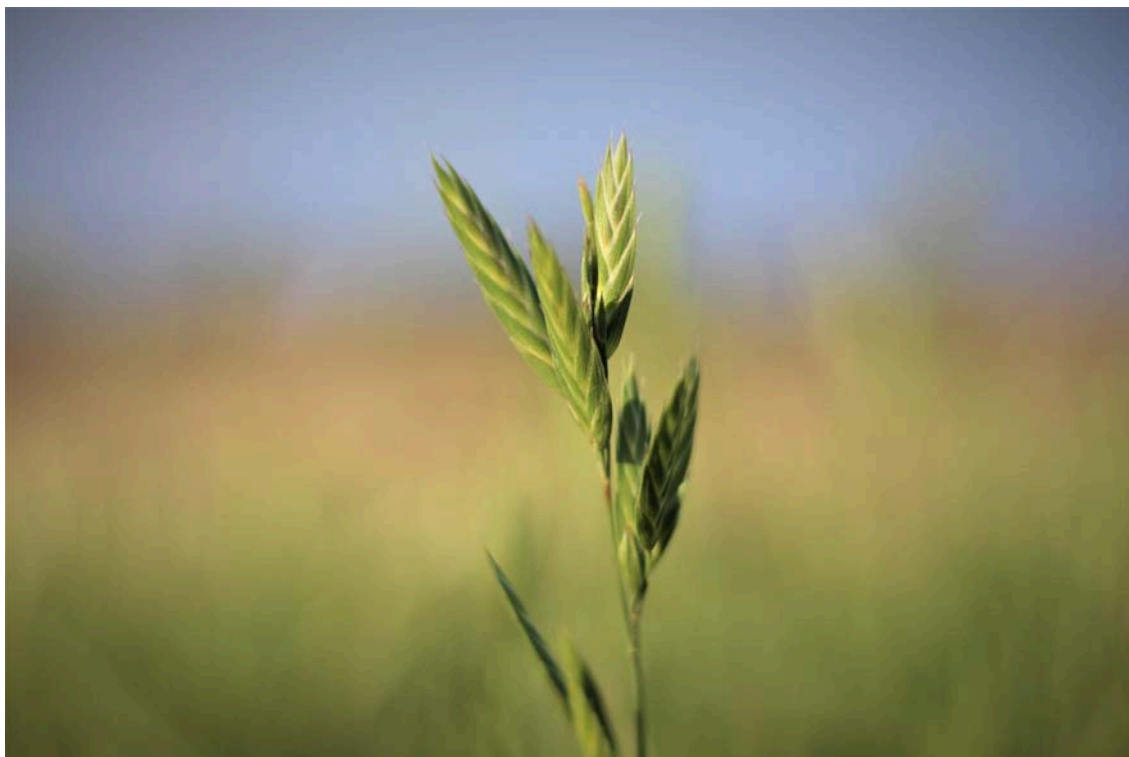
it becomes extremely dry. If a significant amount is present in a pasture, Cheat can increase danger from wildfire. In some instances, it can cause damage to livestock's mouth, intestines, nostrils, and eyes.

Rescue grass is a native of South America, but can now be found in almost all states across the United States. Rescue provides good quality grazing for livestock and deer for a brief period during late winter and early spring. Turkey not only graze on Rescue plants but also eat the seed heads.



Rescue got its name from its ability to rescue ranchers who were looking forward to something to graze after a long winter. When moisture is adequate; however, it can grow so thick that it can reduce or weaken stands of native perennial plants.

These cool season grasses are most effective at invading into stands of native warm-season perennials weakened by heavy summer grazing. If these pastures are grazed heavily during the summer, then vacated during winter months, Cheat and Rescue have little competition as they become more dominant each year. They are adapted to a wide variety of soil types. As with many invasive plants, Cheat grass and Rescue grass can be reduced by a well-planned grazing management program that encourages summer perennials to flourish. ^(N)



Rescue grass can provide good grazing for a short period of time in early spring.

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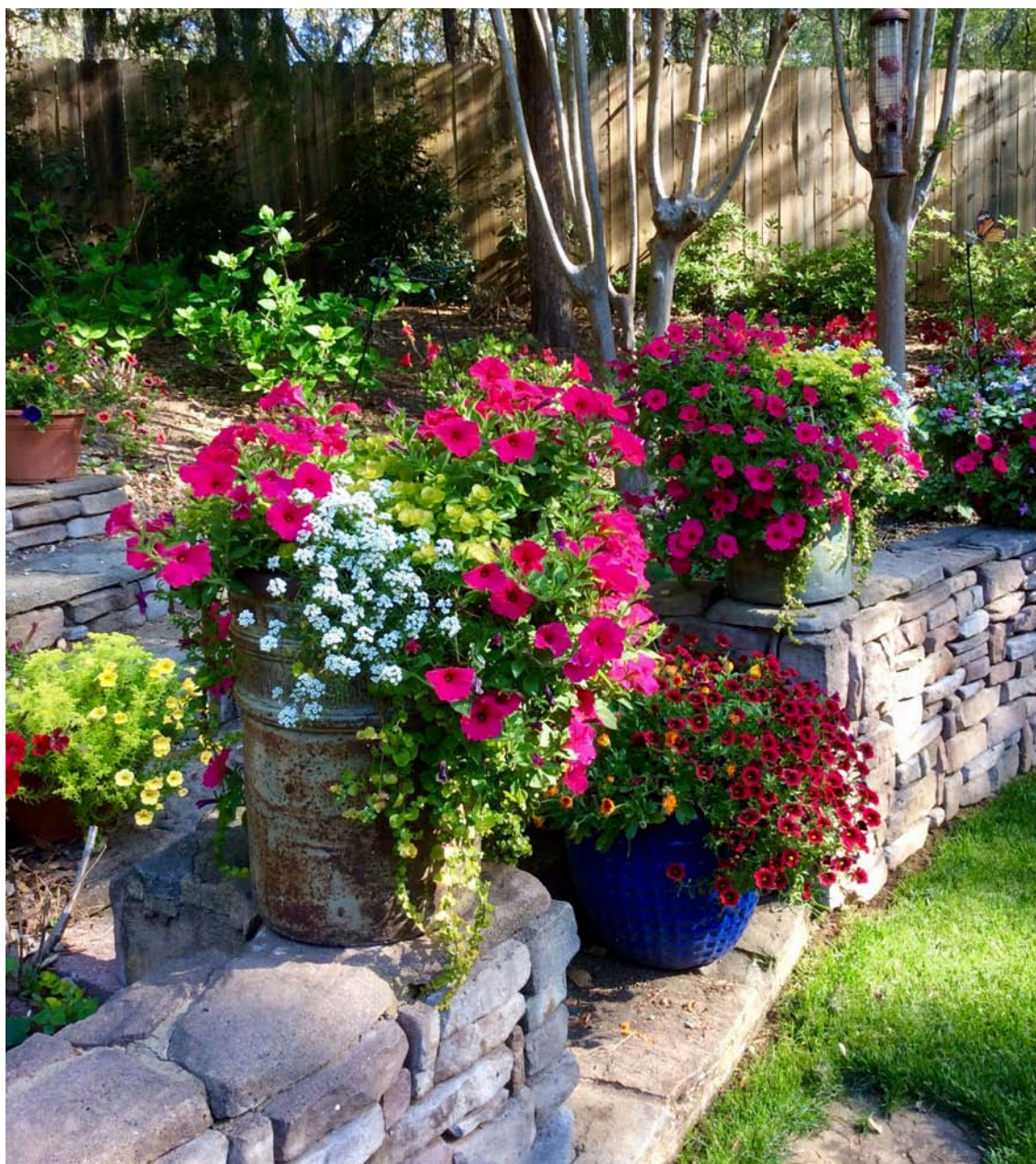
Petunias for Pollinators It could be Paradise

Petunias for pollinators, could be paradise, at least it seems this way at The Garden Guy's house. First off, my wife Jan and I are having the most beautiful spring ever. Not too long ago, I wrote a column that planting a fall crop of Supertunias was a great idea. That is proving to be a huge understatement as that October planting survived the winter and is making an incredible display in both the landscape and containers.

Did I do it for pollinators? That would be a big no. We have all seen an occasional hit from a butterfly or hummingbird over the years, but this spring as we are waiting on lantanas, verbenas and salvias to bring them in it is Supertunia Vista Paradise that has taken the crown as pollinator champ.

I'll admit, until I started growing it, I had never heard of Supertunia Vista Paradise. This is a little embarrassing considering it won Top Performer Award with University of Georgia, nearby Florida, Cornell, Penn State, Ohio State, University of Wisconsin, and Perfect Score All Season at Michigan State, where I will end, even though there are more.

No doubt these weren't being judged on pollinators since we don't think of petunias doing much for the insect world, although I would remind everyone to notice the tag which says butterflies and hummingbirds. I am growing half
Continued on page 58



This Cloudless Sulphur stands out against the watermelon pink blooms of the Supertunia Vista Paradise petunia. (Photos courtesy Norman Winter)



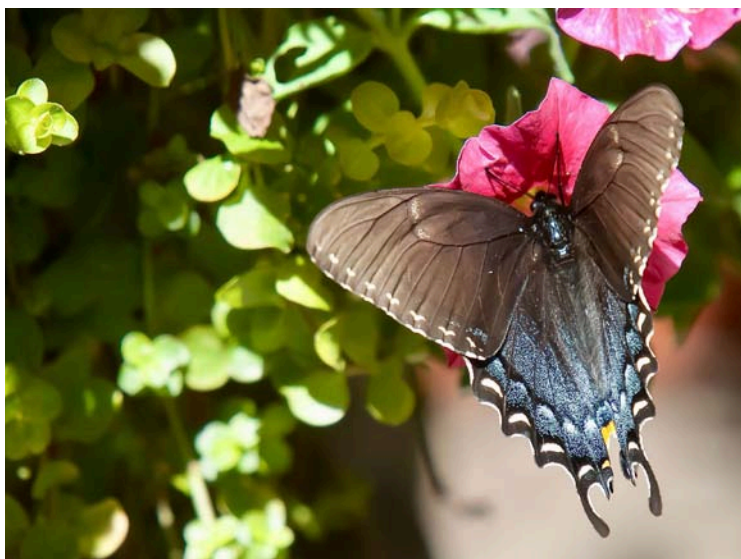
Continued from page 57

a dozen petunia varieties now and Supertunia Vista Paradise is the one they have been going to since the 2021 butterfly population started showing its face.

There are a total of five colors in the Supertunia Vista group, Bubblegum, Fuchsia, Snowdrift, Silverberry, and Paradise. This is the segment of the Supertunia entourage that was created for show and go. These petunias get 24-inches tall and 36-inches wide creating an almost shrub-like appearance. These are the racehorses of the petunia world.

The Supertunia Vista Paradise color is hard to describe. Proven Winners calls it Watermelon Pink and that does a pretty good job, but there is a little more, an almost iridescence to the petals. This kind of makes you think it could glow at sunset or under a black light.

In the landscape I have mine



This dark morph female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail shows off her blue as she feeds on the Supertunia Vista Paradise petunia blossoms. (Photos by Norman Winter)

with other Supertunias, Rockin Fuchsia salvia, Pugster buddleia and with the new Limelight Prime Hydrangea paniculata. In containers they are partnered with White

Knight alyssum and Goldilocks lysimachia.

This crop of Supertunias planted in October gave me 60 days of blooms before freezing tem-

peratures in December and now 30 days so far in the spring. That is 90 days spread over fall 2020 and early spring 2021, and they are full speed ahead for the long growing season. What if they make it until November? I won't count my chickens yet.

Though I am touting the award-winning Supertunia Vista Paradise, the real story is you as gardeners can count on 150 plus days of beauty with Supertunias no matter the variety.

Great organic potting soil, regular water and feeding, good sunlight, and then a little trim around the First of August and you too can keep them in a state of riveting splendor the rest of the season. Watch for the butterflies and hummingbirds too.

Follow me on Facebook @ NormanWinterTheGardenGuy for more photos and garden inspiration.

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2016 CHEVY 2500-6.0 gas, 4x4, Auto, pwr windows, locks & mirrors, a/c, new bed liner, backup camera, #262071 \$29,995. Call Mangum Auto Sales, **580-252-0441**.

2019 FORD F-250 SD 4X4-6.2 gas, auto, A/C, power windows & locks, posi trac. #C29725. \$41,995. Call Mangum Auto Sales, **580-252-0441**.

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POST OAK MEDIA is seeking driven ad sales professionals who possess a passion for the market to sell advertising solutions in the Wichita Falls/Lawton area. The duties include: Develop and cultivate leads in multiple categories, persuasively articulate Post Oak Media's offerings, to clients and prospects via in-person sales meetings, telephone sales and email, and meet monthly revenue goals as outlined in weekly sales meetings. Skills you need include: Motivation, passion and a proactive approach, tenacity and drive to generate record-breaking revenue, proven ability to effectively multitask, and the ability to thrive in a dynamic deadline driven, rapidly changing environment. What you'll get: Post Oak Media offers an attractive compensation package including a competitive base salary and commission plan. Insurance light package included. Holiday pay and mileage reimbursement. If you meet the qualifications, submit your resume to kayla@postoakmedia.net.

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REAL ESTATE

WEATHERFORD/SPRINGTOWN AREA - Need lease pasture for established cow herd. Gentle animals. **817-498-6464**. 07p

WE NEED LISTINGS - We have well-qualified cash buyers looking for properties in the North Texas area. Call Today Williams & Williams, Realtors, LLC. Eddie, **940-368-2043**, Virginia, **940-391-2379**, Office, **940-383-2712**.

TEXAS LAND FOR SALE - 127.4 +/- acres, Jacksboro, TX. \$700,700. \$5,500/acre. 31.92 +/- acres, Nocona, TX. \$175,500. 919 +/- acres, Estelline, TX. \$1,171,725. \$1,275/ac. 30 +/- acres, Alvord, TX. Call Van Baize, real estate associate, ag appraiser, for more information at **940-366-3407** or visit BufordResources.com.

JUST LISTED - Mission Ranch is a Top-Notch Equestrian facility with great visibility on Hwy 377 between Tioga & Collinsville. Includes a nice 4BR home, 42 total stalls, and a fabulous 120'x250' covered arena with good dirt, LED lighting, Big Ass Fans, center alley, roping boxes, return alley, holding pens, & covered extensions providing ample space for tying horses, viewing, and equipment storage. Attached to and overlooking the arena is a 1st-class 1500sf lounge with bar, kitchenette, and bathrooms. 7639 Hwy 377, Collinsville TX. \$1,900,000. Dutch & Cheryl Realtors, Keller Williams Realty. Direct and Text **940-391-9092**. Email: info@texasliving.com.

ESTATE BUY OUT - Quick cash for real estate, antiques, equipment and livestock. We pay closing cost. Call Josh Swint at **940-841-0180** or Sue Swint at **940-841-2328**. 07-12c

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NOCONA - Good highway frontage on HWY 82W. Some live oak mixed mesquite through the middle of the property with good pasture on both sides. Older, but good fences on 3 sides. Good soil for horse or cow place. \$337,500 Call Bobby Bowden **817-626-2000** at Bobby Norris Preferred Properties. www.bobbynorris.com.

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By Jelly Cocanougher

A watchful eye glares past the standing bugs that fly through the stagnant spring air. To the low hills that move beyond the cattle grazing a few feet away, he watches his human dance against the weeds that brush against the jeans that clothe her. Undocumented, it is the bond between human and canine and the naturalistic need to protect those in his pack. Instinct and curiosity, not that of a nosey cat, but out of synchronization of being with each other day and night. 

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POOLVILLE

Great view and location to build your home on. Total 17 acres, 7 acre tract and 10 acre tract. both tracts have well. The 10 acre also has septic. 3 space carport, 40 x 60 shed for horse trailer or Motorhome, would make a great shop. very clean 2016 38 foot travel trailer with 2 slides. Good fence for cattle or horses. Need to look at this property. Hard to find this size property with no known restrictions. NEW 2016 38 foot travel trailer with slide out.
Pete Rehm- \$277,000



LIPAN

Very Secluded and peaceful 321+- Acres with 5 ponds. Rolling terrain, and plenty of wildlife, Turkey, Deer & Hogs. 2014 3 brm 2 bth manufactured home used only as weekend retreat. 25 x 13 pavilion. Small storage with concrete floor. Late model Kubota M5700 4wd tractor conveyed in sale. JasonJarvis-\$2,407,500



LIPAN

This amazing 130-acre property is a horse trainer's dream. A 3 bedroom two and half bath home with vaulted tongue-and-groove ceilings, a floor-to-ceiling stone fire place and 60 ft. sunroom. Excellent fencing and plenty of water with 7 tanks on the property. Full training facility with plenty of room for cattle. Siding and columns. Barn has a two-story apartment, 11 stalls and 2 stud stalls, ample hay storage, tack room and wash rack. Additional 20 acres with road frontage and creek available.
Bobby Bowden \$1,325,000



WEATHERFORD

Fantastic 3 BR 2 Bath open concept Southwestern Style home on 11.5 acres, less than 4 miles from town on dead end road. Well constructed built with 6 inch walls, vaulted ceilings, floor to ceiling stone fireplace. Is ready to move into. now. Coastal plus native grass, enough trees for plenty of shade. Cattle pens and shed, green house. To be sold with MLS 14345277 shows very nice 2 Br. 2 Bath in laws house, which will equal 15.9 acres.
Pete Rehm- \$460,300



NOCONA

Good highway frontage on HWY 82W. Some live oak mixed mesquite through the middle of the property with good pasture on both sides. Older, but good fences on 3 sides. Good soil for horse or cow place.
Bobby Bowden \$337,500



KEMP

36 Peaceful acres in up and coming area. Heavily Wooded, with clearing in front near road entrance. Deer, hogs, and other wildlife. Located on paved road. Perfect weekend retreat , or homesite. About an hour commute from Dallas. Property has a small spring fed pond and creek. Lots of potential.
Jason Jarvis \$270,000



John Montgomery
817-475-8535



Gabe Webster
817-204-3452



Tri Goldthwaite
817-266-5501



Colton Childs
817-913-1806



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