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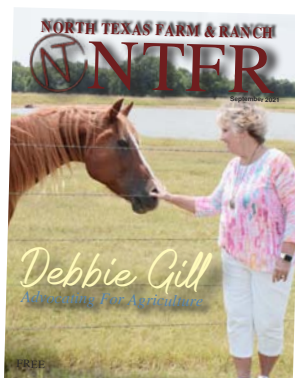
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## **ON THE COVER**

Debbie Gill, who has served as the Texas CattleWomen president, Region IV Director for the American CattleWomen, elected to the Cattlemen Beef Board and created Women in Ranching while operating Gill Cattle Company with her husband, Ron. (Photo By Dani Blackburn)



# *letter from the editor*

*“I don’t think quantity time is as special as quality time with your family.” - Reba McEntire*

Time. It is something that has been on my mind quite a bit lately. I think because there just never seems to be enough of it in each day. I found the guilt becoming enormous. I had guilt that I was grabbing dinner on the go instead of cooking a meal, that I didn’t get to that workout I needed to squeeze in, or finish up that task at work. The list went on and on.

But the problem wasn’t time, it was prioritizing my time, and my loved ones, because at the end of the day, isn’t that what makes our world go around? Time is fleeting, but if we focus on the quality of time we are spending with our loved ones, we will all be better for it at the end of the day.

This month, learn more about Debbie Gill, who is making her time in the agriculture industry count by advocating for beef at the local, state and national levels. She is an inspiration to the changes that can happen when we get involved.

Turn the pages for plenty of wonderful things from our contributors, from forage education to delicious recipes for the home to preparing our cattle for the upcoming winter season. Hopefully it is much less brutal for us than the previous winter.

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

*Dani Blackburn*

**Dani Blackburn, Editor**  
[editor@ntfronline.com](mailto:editor@ntfronline.com)





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- 25- Super baldy A Bar Ranch bred heifers safe to 4-star calving ease Express Ranch Angus bulls. To calve 2-10-22 for 30 days.
- 75- Angus A Bar Ranch bred heifers safe to 4-star calving ease Express Ranch Angus bulls. To calve 3-11-22 for 45 days.
- 80- Ultrablack A Bar Ranch bred heifers safe to 4-star calving ease Express Ranch Angus bulls. To calve 3-11-22 for 45 days.
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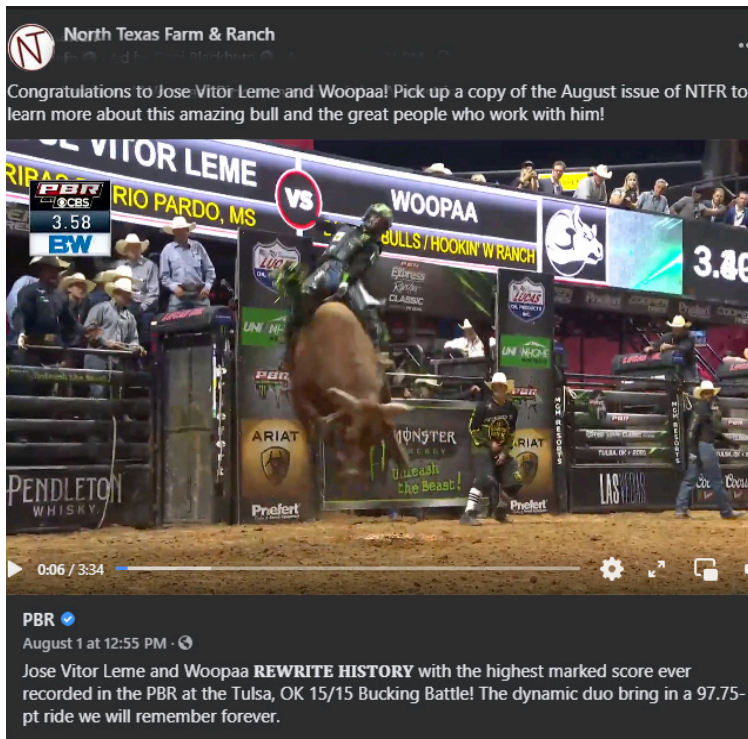
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In this month's parting shot, adventures await. READ MONTH: [ntfronline.com/2021/07/partin...](http://ntfronline.com/2021/07/partin...)



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**TOUGH ENOUGH FOR BISON  
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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.

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**-Brock Toler, Back Forty Bison**

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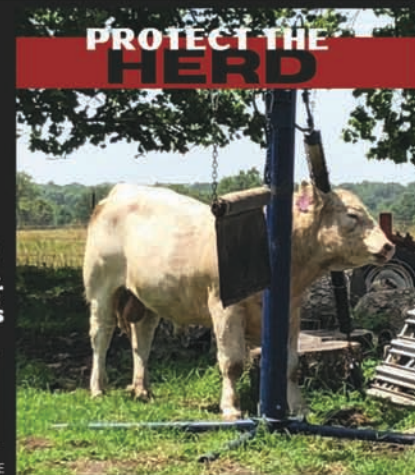
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# MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

There are 75 days until our first average freeze date here in North Texas, which normally occurs around November 15. Although grass growth is little or nothing after nighttime temperatures begin hovering around the 45-degree mark, our forage quality is still good for a few weeks after the first freeze of the year.

Around our place, we plan on supplementing protein around December 15 and continue until mid-March, or approximately 100 days. We are still looking at our options for this winter regarding feed source; i.e., cubes, liquid, etc. We know anything we can do to lower our overhead is vitality important to our bottom line.

Forage growth has been phenomenal across most of Texas this year so our stockpiled native grasses will be our main hay source this year, which also helps with the bottom line. The winter pasture we will be planting, Nelson ryegrass, will be stockpiled until mid-January and February for our first calf heifers and developing virgin heifers.

While it will be ready to graze by November 15 or so if the weather cooperates, we will just let it accumulate for our worst winter days.

Our developing bulls will receive a commodity ration formulated to yield daily gains of three pounds so the bulls will still grow but not get fat, which reduces their worth as breeding stock in our opinion.

Our spring crop of calves will be weaned later this month and will receive their second round of vaccinations for blackleg and the IBR virus complex. While we deworm in the spring with Safeguard, our fall or early winter deworming will be with one of the

products that also kills external parasites such as lice and the internal kind. If you remember earlier this year, cattle were gadding more than usual to avoid adult heel flies, and along with the abundant moisture, parasite loads are probably higher than normal.

If you are planning on selling your calves after weaning, I would highly recommend finding a preconditioned sale. In most cases, calves are required to be weaned a minimum of 45 days and receive vaccinations for blackleg and most importantly in newly weaned calves, the viruses that lead to respiratory problems. We saw discounts up to 25 cents per pound last year for just weaned bawling calves with no vaccination history. That is more than 100 dollars per head that none of us can afford to lose.

Fall also is the time to identify free loaders, or cows that did not breed back this year after hopefully weaning a calf. If it costs \$500 annually to run a cow, and if four of your cows are not bred, it may take the profits from eight or nine cows to cover their expense to the herd.

Eliminating cows that will not calve next year will have a huge impact on our actual profit. This can be done either by hand palpating or by blood test. Either way, it is one of the most important jobs we need to do.

Other than that, do your part to be a good steward of the land and livestock. As I heard once, it is okay to be in a rut as long as you are headed in the right direction. As Will Rogers once proclaimed, "Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there."

It's a wonderful time to be in the cattle business. 🐾



There are 75 days until our first average freeze date here in North Texas. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)

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# AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK




This has been a tough summer for Montana with severe drought and fires. Can you tell which side of the fence line was grazed? 



# AG *elsewhere* WYOMING

PHOTO BY TRESSA LAWRENCE



Heavy smoke has filled the skies most of the summer in northern Wyoming. Here, cattle graze on irrigated meadows as the sun drops behind the Big Horn Mountains. 





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# Freedom an' Whisky

By Nikolyn Williams

I am pretty sure if the non-agriculture community ever came to a Merrell branding, we would have no confusion left about the importance of agriculture, misconceptions about carbon emission, animal welfare, or whatever issue those not involved seem to have with the rest of us. In fact, if we were to send Warren Lee Merrell and his family to Washington, I am fairly sure we would not have to worry about any of that nonsense anymore.

It has become crystal clear throughout the springs works, what I have known all along is absolutely true. Yes, owning cattle is about making a living, and yes it is a business; however, I cannot think of one single line of work that is so driven by the love of the land, love of the cattle, and most importantly, love of family.

"I want them to know they can work together," Warren Lee said.

I do not think I have ever seen a family of this size, their spouses and children come together and get the job done so well. When I asked Warren Lee's granddaughter, EJ, how he gets them to come home, she replied that he calls to say we are working cattle and hangs up the phone.

They all show up and have been for a while.

Warren Lee leaves no stone unturned, and he makes sure everyone has a job to do the entire time, no matter how big or small the job or the person, even down to nine-year-old "Super P," or Preston.

Warren Lee cemented a post in the ground so Super P could get a wrap and hold a back leg. Ryder, Maria and Warren Lee's other grandson were oiling brands with a bucket and paintbrush.

According to Warren Lee,



Warren Lee and Maria Merrell are a shining example of how to hold an agricultural family together.



The calf decided it had other ideas than waiting patiently. Fortunately, no one was hurt and everyone got a good chuckle when it was over. (Photos courtesy Nikolyn Williams)

everyone has a nickname. Even me. I am Nicky. Clay Merrell is "Clay Boy" or "Lupe Lopez." I like Clay, he reminds me of Warren Lee. Brandi, Clay's wife, is Brandi Ann, although her middle name is not Ann. Brandi Ann is Clay's number one assistant and is part of the glue that holds it all together. Clay depends on her like Warren Lee depends on Mo Mo,

or Maria.

EJ is Warren Lee and Maria's feisty little granddaughter. EJ should consider nursing school; she runs a tight ship with a syringe gun.

Baby Jake, Warren Lee and Maria's grandson, is about to marry Baby Jayne. Warren Wayne is the eldest, but his family could not be with us this time. I look

forward to when he is there, and all missed him.

I did notice when Warren Lee needed something he called on two people, Mo Mo, or Baby Jake. P-Jay or Fuzz, and Clay Boy, are left to sort of run the whole branding thing. However, from time to time, he would issue a small warning or instruction. At 75-years-old, his watchful eye never missed a thing. By the way, I think someone forgot to tell Warren Lee he is 75-years-old. He pushes every one of those calves up the alley in full baseball catcher's gear. Yes, he can still take a swift kick to the shin, or other places with the best of them. I saw it happen.

He pushed a rather large 600-pound or better calf up that alley, one was already in the calf cradle, and you would of thought that 600-pound calf would have politely waited its turn. The calf had other ideas and went right over the top of "Clay Boy" who tried to wrestle it to the ground but was out matched by 500 pounds or more. No one was hurt, and we all got a good chuckle when it was over.

The Merrell family is one of the oldest families in the area. Warren Lee told me a few stories about his granddad, Warren Wade. The baby of nine kids, he was born on the Merrell home place at Grey Mule. His great granddad settled the home place more than 120 years ago and fought in the Civil War. Warren Wade passed a few sayings down; he never said a woman was pregnant, he always said, "In the family way." A cow never had a calf, "she found a calf." Warren Lee says the same things, and I like that about him.

I know this took an enormous amount of planning on the part of Warren Lee. When I cannot find Woodrow, he is usually over at Warren Lee's barn, where they



talk to some guy named "Evan" over there a lot. Anyway, I have been hearing about all of the planning Warren Lee has been doing for days, and I suppose Evan has as well.

Woodrow has talked about the Merrell cattle work for quite some time. Finally getting to witness the way they all carry out their specific roles is really something to see. I think Warren Lee shows exceptional leadership; it is no small endeavor to hold a family of this size together and to complete a task in somewhat harmony.


There is no doubt in my mind it all works as well as it does because of the time and attention to detail Warren Lee and Maria put into it all before hand. I have to hand it to them; they are a shining example of how to hold these agriculture families together. As I watched them, I could not help but be grateful Woodrow spends a lot of time around Warren Lee because he is

a good man.

Woodrow has always told me what is important to Warren Lee, his legacy and life's work, is centered on one day leaving a family that can work together. I think his kids realize this, and it is important to them as well.

When we moved here, I was very guarded. I still am, however, somehow the Merrell family found Woodrow and me. You can forget being guarded around this bunch. They are going to love each other and love you as well.

If you are in the area stop by the grocery store some early morning, and go back to the meat counter to visit with Warren Lee Merrell. I guarantee you will never forget that conversation.

Woodrow always teases me that everyone gets their weather off an app or the news, but Nikolyn gets hers at Venture Foods from Albert, the manager. He is never wrong. 

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# LAND MARKET REPORT

By Jared Groce

## JULY 2021 RURAL LAND SALES

The North Texas land market is continuing on its crazy, skyward pace, despite slightly more inventory being available to buyers. Land tracts of every size are still in high demand, with an increasing demand for good cattle ground. I'm pretty sure I could never make a cattle program pay for land at these prices, but I am not a good cattleman anyway.

The prediction is for this market to continue on its current path at least through the end of the year. The fear of major changes to the capital gains taxes has many landowners cashing out while the capital gains rates are half of what they are saying they will be next year.

Today's producers in this market are a rare breed for sure, it takes a sincere love of the land and a love of the life to continue with agriculture today when the temptation of such a large amount of income from the sale of the land is looming overhead. My hat is off to all of you who stick with it because it is your life, your love, and your destiny.

COOKE COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
GAINESVILLE	14.207	\$11,000.00	91.67	37
ERA	17.138	\$12,545.22	95.56	197
ERA	15	\$15,000.00	100.00	167
GAINESVILLE	15.823	\$14,504.20	100.00	57
ERA	20	\$17,975.00	100.00	12
ERA	37.84	\$10,570.82	100.00	0
GAINESVILLE	76.16	\$6,039.92	92.18	153
VALLEY VIEW	18.059	\$31,242.98	100.00	40
FORESTBURG	110.93	\$6,274.38	94.70	34
MUENSTER	156.89	\$4,939.77	96.88	58
ERA	83.7	\$11,500.00	100.00	163
GAINESVILLE	297.29	\$5,058.83	85.94	957
<b>AVG</b>	<b>71.92</b>	<b>\$12,220.93</b>	<b>96.41</b>	<b>156</b>

DENTON COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
SANGER	16.064	\$25,896.41	92.86	51
PILOT POINT	10.000	\$49,990	100.18	450
SANGER	55.506	\$23,420.89	108.33	3
FLOWER MOUND	10.300	\$204,368.93	107.95	38
PILOT POINT	53.600	\$41,045	106.02	6
<b>AVG</b>	<b>29.094</b>	<b>\$68,944</b>	<b>103.07</b>	<b>110</b>

MONTAGUE COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
SUNSET	16.000	\$10,937.50	97.22	224
NOCONA	52.500	\$5,000.00	95.24	250
SUNSET	22.190	\$12,500.00	96.15	7
FORESTBURG	53.890	\$9,000.00	100	68
BOWIE	124.600	\$7,130	83.21	14
<b>AVG</b>	<b>53.836</b>	<b>\$8,914</b>	<b>94.37</b>	<b>113</b>

WISE COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
DECATUR	10.380	\$14,450.87	96.34	176
SPRINGTOWN	10.039	\$18,129.30	91.46	139
SPRINGTOWN	10.000	\$21,500.00	100.00	41
BRIDGEPORT	20.000	\$21,500.00	100.04	19
DECATUR	28.788	\$13,000.00	83.07	146
PARADISE	15.000	\$9,205.22	107.65	0
DECATUR	47.030	\$21,870.27	96.58	1,278
SUNSET	40.000	\$7,335.74	101.37	91
ALVORD	31.700	\$11,987.38	95	10
DECATUR	26.690	\$15,839.98	101.87	143
DECATUR	20.000	\$21,500.00	97.73	74
DECATUR	31.560	\$19,000.00	100	432
BOYD	58.320	\$13,021.18	86.79	34
BOYD	68.000	\$14,705.88	83.33	13
DECATUR	140.500	\$13,879.00	97.5	9
JACKSBORO	1,453.00	\$5,809.46	100.16	8
<b>AVG</b>	<b>125.688</b>	<b>\$14,397.35</b>	<b>94.18</b>	<b>163</b>

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





# Comeback Queen

By Krista Lucas Wynn

Texas represents one of the largest groups of young rodeo athletes in the National High School Rodeo Association. Every year, the Texas High School Rodeo Association crowns a state rodeo queen and this year the title was won by none other than Vie Vie Blanchard of Celina, Texas.

To anyone who has met Blanchard, she is a breath of fresh air and extremely passionate about the way of life that is so important to her. She enjoys competing alongside the best up and coming rodeo athletes, whether that is in the arena barrel racing or on the rodeo queen stage.

"I am actually a first generation cowgirl. I received my first horse when I was eight years old. We started out competing at the Blue Ridge Rodeo Riding Club Playdays and won saddles for my age group two years in a row. I then branched out and started competing at local barrel racing jackpots," Blanchard said. "In sixth grade, I joined the Texas Junior High Rodeo Association, which is a member of the NHSRA and have been a member ever since."

It was that sixth grade year where she was introduced to rodeo queening. However, she would also soon learn that the power of persistence would pay off, after being thrown a learning curve.

"There was a flyer in my welcome packet, and I entered during my sixth grade year for the TJHRA Princess Pageant," Blanchard said. "I lost that year and the following year. I went back to the drawing board and studied harder and won the title on my third attempt, holding the title in 2019-2020."

Now, the junior at Celina High School is a well-rounded, seasoned rodeo queen, who also is involved in many different aspects



The Texas High School Rodeo Association named Vie Vie Blanchard of Celina, Texas, as its new state rodeo queen. (Photo courtesy Charmaine and Vie Vie Blanchard)

of student life, all while being an ambassador for agriculture.

"I am the President of the Celina FFA chapter, as well as the President and founder of the Celina chapter of HOSA – Future Health Professionals Club," Blanchard said. "I am a member of the National Honor Society and Mu Alpha Theta, math honor society. In addition, this will be my third year serving as a 4-H Texas Water Ambassador where I educate and promote the importance of water conservation, irrigation and water laws."

The THSRA is divided into 10 different regions, and Blanchard claims Region III, out of Graham, Texas, as her home base. She is self-described as one to never have met a stranger, which bodes well for becoming a rodeo queen.

"My favorite part of the process is practicing for each part of the competition. I have a beautiful palomino mare that was trained in reining, and I use her for all my pageant horsemanship patterns. I have to say that she is amazing and is so honest and easy to ride

and the reason that I do so well in the horsemanship portion of all the pageants I've competed in," Blanchard said. "I also enjoy honing in on all the necessary skills, like interviewing, public speaking and answering impromptu questions. All of these skills will certainly serve me well, not just in the pageant world, but also as I go through life. I have confidence when I speak to sponsors, the media and people in the rodeo audiences."

To become a THSRA queen, there are eight competition categories including horsemanship, panel interview, two-minute speech, modeling, personality, appearance, impromptu, and rule-book test.

"You want to be ready for holding this title because the winner hits the ground running," Blanchard said. "She represents at the week-long THSRA state finals, and then in a few weeks travels to Nationals to compete for the NHSRA queen title with around 45 other accomplished young ladies from the 44 states

and five countries including five Canadian Provinces that make up the NHSRA."

As Miss Texas High School Rodeo, Blanchard has many duties to promote the THSRA, but one of the most exciting experiences of all may have been getting to travel to Lincoln, Neb., for the national competition.

"The Nationals experience was incredible, and I feel so blessed to have been able to represent my state and the THSRA on a national platform. I am so proud to say that I won the Interview category and was top three or better in all the other pageant categories," Blanchard said. "I won Second Attendant overall competing with 43 other young ladies. The best part was meeting and making new sash sisters from all over the United States and other countries."

Outside of the rodeo queen world, Blanchard also has a passion for fashion. She created her very own western boutique called V V Rodeo Bling. Between the rodeo arena and picking out new items for the online store, she still manages to find time to prepare for a future degree in medicine in hopes of becoming a trauma surgeon or emergency room doctor one day.

"I would also love to be Miss Rodeo Texas and Miss Rodeo America one day and plan on competing for Miss Rodeo Texas Teen next summer."

Blanchard has her eyes set on some lofty goals, and there is nothing stopping her from achieving them. This beautiful cowgirl will continue to represent her state and rodeo throughout the next year and will be making an appearance at the upcoming Wrangler National Finals Rodeo. She would love to say hello to any of her fellow North Texans.



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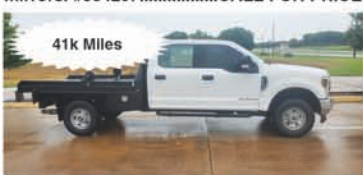
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# Equine Cellulitis and Lymphangitis

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM

If you are a horse owner and have never experienced a horse with cellulitis or lymphangitis you need to consider yourself lucky. This common condition that affects the lower limbs of horses is a frustrating and rarely a life threatening condition for horses. Cellulitis is a term used to describe when a bacterial infection is migrating and spreading under the skin throughout tissue planes. Lymphangitis is when the bacterial infection spreads deeper into the lymphatic vessels. There are technical differences between these two diagnoses but for the sake of this article they will be considered synonymous because the treatment is essentially the same.

One part of the frustration about these conditions is that we really do not know why or exactly how it starts. The best-educated guess of how this occurs is by some small injury or injuries to the lower limb that allow bacteria into and under the skin.

These injuries can be small puncture wounds that are hardly noticeable, nicks in the skin or lacerations. I personally witnessed a horse that had hundreds of seed ticks on its lower limbs develop very significant cellulitis. Once the bacterium that is commonly on the skin of a horse is introduced into the tissue planes below the skin it begins to quickly spread causing lots of pain, swelling and lameness.

Horses that develop cellulitis or lymphangitis often will only have one limb affected at a time compared to just generalized “stocking up” of the legs which will involve the hind limbs or all four at a time. The way to differentiate between stocking up and cellulitis is lameness, heat and pain occurs with cellulitis vs stocked up limbs will be cool to the touch and non-painful when squeezed. Other symptoms of cellulitis are elevated body temperature, breathing more rapidly, lameness, sweating, extreme swelling of the lower limb that develops quickly, swelling continues to spread up the leg and palpation of the limb is rather painful. Horses with swollen limbs from a serious case of cellulitis will have legs referred to as tree trunks or stovepipe limbs because they are so significantly swollen from the ground up to the stifle or shoulder.

Horses that develop recurring cellulitis often have experienced some form of injury to the limb that may have damaged venous blood



Horses that develop cellulitis or lymphangitis often will only have one limb affected at a time compared to just generalized “stocking up” of the legs which will involve the hind limbs or all four at a time. The way to differentiate between stocking up and cellulitis is lameness, heat and pain occurs with cellulitis vs stocked up limbs will be cool to the touch and non-painful when squeezed. (Courtesy photo)

flow or lymphatic drainage in that particular limb. Horses do not have the best mechanism of removing venous blood from their lower extremities already and when injury has occurred leading to further stagnation of lymphatic and venous blood further perpetuating the risk of cellulitis.

Recommendations to lower the risk of recurring cellulitis in horses more prone to this condition is to maintain good limb hygiene in these horses by washing and grooming their limbs routinely to reduce dirt and bacteria on the skin. Allowing free exercise by regular turn out or routine forced work also is beneficial for horses with recurring issues of cellulitis.

Treatment of the cellulitis entails pain management, anti-inflammatory drugs, antibiotics, and management of the swelling. The typical cause of cellulitis is from staphylococcus or streptococcus bacteria on the skin.

When choosing an antibiotic to treat cellulitis typically a veterinarian will choose injectable antibiotics for faster results that have good antimicrobial coverage against these common bacterial culprits.

An effective way to administer higher concentrations of the antibiotics into the affected limb is to use intravenous regional limb perfusion, or IVRLP. This is a technique that has been utilized in horses for many years to deliver much higher concentrations of antimicrobial drugs into horses' limbs where it is often needed the most. This is commonly used to treat serious wound, joint, bone or tendon sheath infections in the lower limb of the horse and is rather great at treating difficult cellulitis cases.

Pain management and anti-inflammatory drugs also are very important in order to manage these cases and resolve the massive





swelling that develops. Phenylbutazone (Bute) and flunixin meglumine (Banamine) are the most commonly used non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs to control inflammation and pain at the same time. In more extreme cases opioids and anticonvulsant drugs are used to help control pain as well. Many times steroids like dexamethasone are needed to help further reduce swelling and inflammation but can be contraindicated in cases that may be more prone to laminitis or other complications from cellulitis.


Hydrotherapy or icing of the affected limb can be rather helpful in controlling the swelling and pain but can be rather challenging in a hind limb of a horse. There are specially made ice boots, ice gel packs or machines that will circulate ice water to sleeves that can be attached for the horse's limbs to accomplish this task. Limb compression with stack bandaging and sweat wrapping the limb is critical in helping reduce the swelling as well. My experience is if you do not apply good compression wrapping on the limb it takes a much longer period of time, if at all, to get the swelling out of a horse's leg with cellulitis.



Another important component of getting the swelling and cellulitis resolved is getting horses back to moving again. Many times, horses with cellulitis initially are very reluctant to move and can convince owners that there

may be a fracture in the limb because they are so painful, but it is just due to extreme swelling and inflammation that keeps them from ambulating. Often when a horse with cellulitis does begin to walk more, they become more comfortable quicker, restoring motion and pumping action of the frog in their foot. Each step helps improve blood and lymphatic drainage from the limb.

In some extreme cases of cellulitis horses can develop abscesses under the skin and loss of skin tissue. These causes will often have such massive swelling in the limb that the skin will begin to leak yellow serum through stretched and damaged skin tissue. Also, a possible outcome of a very serious case of cellulitis is a chronically enlarged limb that will never return to normal size. Lastly, laminitis can be a very serious and life threatening sequel to extreme cellulitis.

When a diagnosis of cellulitis is made, it is rather important to treat it swiftly and aggressively to prevent further spread or complications. Talk to your veterinarian to get treatment started quickly if you suspect your horse has developed signs of cellulitis. 

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# A True American Cowboy

By Phillip Kitts

Rodeo cowboys are sometimes accused of not being “real cowboys,” but if one is to dig just a little they would find this is far from the truth.

The average rodeo athlete not only runs the highways of America in the effort to make a living but most of them work for or operate a multitude of ranches, farms, or other businesses that have connections to the agricultural world.

Then there are the extreme truths of true cowboys. In this case, we will provide additional entertainment by not putting a name to the athlete, but we will provide you with enough detail, it should be pretty easy.

Sometimes when the rodeo arena fills with contestants and livestock the parking area looks like a lot of high-dollar equipment. Trucks and trailers worth as much as many houses will line the area and if you dig a little deeper, the monetary investment just gets bigger.

Then there is a cowboy who shows that living and being simple can define a champion just as much as a million dollars worth of equipment. There have been stories of this athlete showing up to a rodeo hauling his horse in a pickup with racks. We have never been able to confirm this tale but getting to know a roper of this caliber would not be surprising.

If you sit down for a slack session of a rodeo you will watch him ride in, no patches of sponsors on his shirt, no glamour or pizzazz. His horse is not one that would grab your attention and his tack usually carries a small layer of dust. Even his beloved black felt hat may not be brushed and super shaped. When this same man backs into the box, everyone in the arena can feel the tempo in the arena change. Even before his



Have you crossed paths with this true American cowboy and witnessed his terrific ability and nature? (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)


name is announced there seems to be a palpable change to the environment. This changes, even more, every time he nods his head. A person just realizes you never know what you will see. He is known for throwing one swing loop with 30 feet of rope. The most amazing thing is his average with this may be one of the best in pro rodeo. With this consistent ability to perform, what could his resume be?

With multiple qualifications to the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo, you would expect this athlete spends the majority of his time on the rodeo road. While there are years that has been true, you might be surprised to know in some seasons he has only hit the major rodeos and still earned his

spot at the Superbowl of rodeo. With the long list of credentials that make this athlete amazing, his actions and conduct around the arena make him even more notable. Youngsters seem to gravitate to his presence and you will never see him fail to acknowledge them. Young and old love to get his autograph and one would be hard-pressed to find a time he did not oblige.

Now, none of this proves how cowboy this athlete is, but tells the story of what an impact he can make on the rodeo road. Where his cowboy story really becomes paramount is when he is at home. Chasing strays and wild cattle is all part of cowboy life. This rodeo superstar runs around the southwest of America, which

is as inhospitable of a climate as any, and spends most of this free time gathering up unaccounted for wild cattle. If his ability to survive and work in one of the toughest environments on earth does not validate his cowboy status, the fact that he is often sought after to utilize his roping skills in a multitude of venues does.

Is roping cattle in the deserts of America what gives this cowboy his edge? Is it his native roots and deep-seated beliefs on success? Or is it just pure God-given talent that makes him something so special? Can you name this rodeo superstar? Have you crossed paths with this true American cowboy and witnessed his terrific ability and nature? We want to hear your guesses! 



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By Jesse Kader

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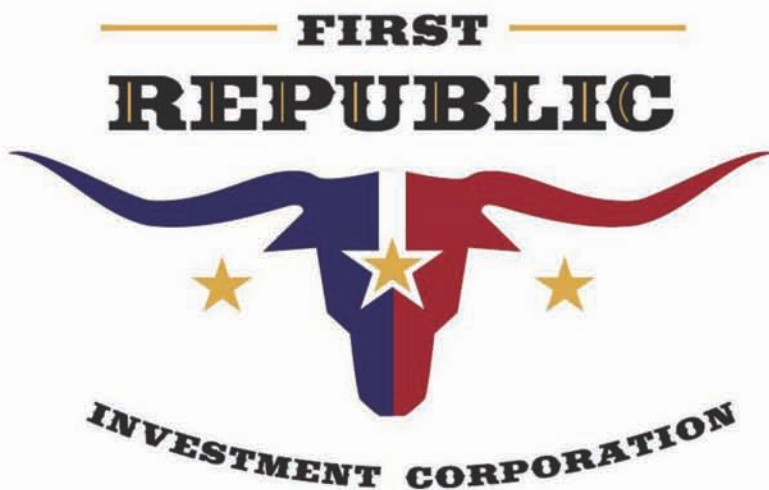


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# Saint Jo Riding Club Names Scholarship Recipients

The Saint Jo Riding Club has completed the selection of the scholarship recipients for this year, and the following students were chosen:

\$750 - Tyler Cook of Saint Jo ISD

\$750 - Brayden Cade Dennis of Saint Jo ISD

\$500 - Wyatt Andrew Geurin of Saint Jo ISD

\$500 - Jessica Dangelmayr of Muenster ISD

\$500 - Rafael Francisco Rondon Jr. of Sacred Heart

The Saint Jo Riding Club Agricultural Scholarship exists to provide support to high school graduating seniors who are interested in or intending to pursue a course of study in a college or university related to agriculture. Recipients were recognized on Friday night during the rodeo - Aug. 6, 2021.

Tyler Cook is the son of Ms. M.c. Fuhrmann and Jacob Cook. He graduated from Saint Jo High School, where he was active in football, basketball, baseball, and FFA. In addition to his busy school life, Tyler has also worked for the City of Saint Jo and for Hess Meat Market, as well as volunteering around his school. Tyler plans to attend Tarleton State University this fall to pursue an ag science degree.

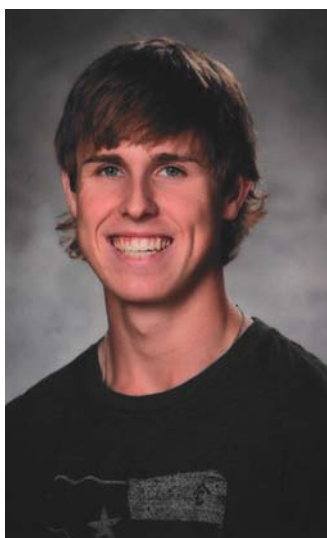
Braden Cade Dennis is the son of Eric and Angie Dennis. He graduated from Saint Jo High School where he was active in UIL Science, football, baseball, FFA, and bass fishing. As a member of the Texas High School Bass Association, Braden was their Angler of The Year (Red River-West Division). Braden is a member of five cattle associations. He plans to attend Tarleton State University and major in agriculture.

Wyatt Andrew Geurin is the son of Kelly and Tina Geurin. He graduated third in his class from Saint Jo High School where he was active in football, baseball, and FFA. Wyatt holds a Farm and Ranch Certificate from North Central Texas College, works on his family's cattle ranch, and has his own fence-building company. Wyatt is a Saint Jo Volunteer Fire Fighter and an EMT, having completed his training this past June.

Jessica Dangelmayr is the daughter of Jack and Denise Dangelmayr. She graduated first in




The Saint Jo Riding Club named its scholarship recipients for the year. They include (clockwise): Tyler Cook, Saint Jo ISD; Brayden Cade Dennis, Saint Jo ISD; Wyatt Andrew Geurin, Saint Jo ISD; Jessica Dangelmayr, Muenster ISD and Rafael Francisco Rondon, Jr., of Sacred Heart.



her class from Muenster High School where she was active in both 4-H and FFA. Jessica works on her family's ranch, feeding/caring for livestock, helping vaccinate/treat cattle, plowing and harrowing fields, hauling hay and helping repair machinery. She also helps with the bookkeeping. Jessica plans to attend Tarleton State University this fall, majoring in agribusiness.

Rafael Francisco Rondon, Jr. is the son of

Mary Rondon and the late Rafael Rondon, Sr. He graduated from Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Muenster, where he participated in football, basketball, baseball, and track. He also was involved in robotics, music, student council and Boy Scouts, attaining the rank of Eagle Scout. Rafael also plays the piano. Rafael plans to attend Tarleton State University to major in general business with a focus on agricultural management. 



# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

There are many ways my husband and I partner on our cattle ranch, one of them being marking the rows as he puts out fertilizer in our hay fields. He used to position white jugs to mark rows, but these days he prefers my body as his marker to drive toward.

I wonder if I should be worried that he likes to drive straight toward me? Actually, I really think he enjoys working together in all the ways we can, and I love to feel needed and useful. Plus, I think I am easier to spot in the distance. He laughs when I say this, assuring me his eyesight is not that bad yet.

Before we begin, he decides how many paces are needed in between each row and has me pace off to see how my steps match up to his. Usually, this means my pacing requires a couple of additional big lunges. I have some suggestions for new rancher wives learning to help their husbands with marking pasture rows.

Dressing in light and bright clothing makes it easier for your partner to see you amongst the green grass. As he turns down a new row to head toward you, he needs to get the tractor straightened up to assure he is getting fertilizer spread out as evenly as possible. Stand in your position until you have just enough time to pace off the next row before the tractor drives where you were standing. Wait too long to move and you will feel fertilizer pellets hitting the backs of your legs.

Since having a melanoma excised off my arm earlier this year, I now only wear clothing that is UPF 50+ when I am marking hay fields, including my hat.

Fortunately, you can find some beautiful colors in this type of clothing and some sassy hats too. There is no reason for you to not look and feel gorgeous and safe while you work in the sunshine.

One of my best suggestions for a field marker is to wear your boots. As hard as we try it seems impossible to kill all of the fire ant beds. I prefer to wear my tall rubber boots. Of course, you still must watch where you step and where you are standing as you await the approach of the tractor.




"This is what marking rows looks like as my hubby puts out fertilizer! Yes...I'm the marker! As in my body," Annette Bridges shared with her social media followers.

My absolute must-not-do tip is do not take anything to drink with you. Any hay pasture is probably a wide-open space. If drinking water goes through you as fast as it does me, I think you understand the problem with this picture. Plus, I am pretty sure you, like me, would be a really long way from a bathroom.

The perk that comes to mind when I think about marking rows is it provides a new track for getting some exercise in. I have my usual walking path that is basically me bopping

around and around our rather big circle driveway. It gets old, but I know how many loops equal one mile. It is always nice to take in some new views while exercising. I do knee lifts and stretches while standing in position. I think this is called multi-tasking.

So, there you have it, another day in the life of this city girl gone country. Our first day of fertilizing this season is a wrap, and it is time to cross our fingers that the meteorologist forecast for rain this week actually happens. 



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# Debbie Gill

## Advocating For Agriculture

Debbie Gill was not born into a life of agriculture. However, that did not stop her from quickly developing not only a passion for it, but a deep understanding of the role advocacy plays for the industry.

Gill and her husband, Ron, own and operate Gill Cattle Company, a cow-calf operation in North Texas. She has served in numerous advocacy roles as she works tirelessly to promote the importance of beef as she shares that love with others.

Gill has served as the Texas CattleWomen president, Region IV Director for the American CattleWomen and she was elected to the Cattlemen Beef Board where she has sat both on the safety committee and stakeholder engagement committee. Her love of ranching also led to the creation of Women in Ranching, which focuses on education for females in agriculture.

**Continued on page 34**





ure





**Continued from page 33****Background**

Gill grew up in a beauty shop her mother owned, attached to their garage so she could be home when the children arrived after school, and graduated from Cedar Hill High School.

“At that time in 1971, girls were not allowed in FFA, so I did not come from an ag background. Cows, horses, all that was foreign to me,” Gill recalled.

After high school, her career led her into the banking industry, where she gained experience with loan documentation, preparation and securing of loans. She stayed in banking throughout her career, wrapping it up as administrative assistant to the bank president.

“I worked in an office with hose and heels. I’m not a cowgirl,” Gill laughed.

That all changed when she met her husband, Ron Gill, who has a PhD in animal nutrition and serves as a professor and extension livestock specialist as well as associate department head for the animal science department for Texas A&M.

“He loves cows, but he knew not coming from a family that owned land, that he would probably never be able to afford enough land to ranch. He got his education so he could support himself and have cows on the side, and it worked out very well for him,” Gill said.

Gill was up for the challenge of learning the ins and outs of running the couple’s cow-calf operation, and soon came to enjoy her new life as a cattle operator.

“It’s just interesting to watch animals and their behavior. I have learned a lot. I’ve had to even call the vet in the middle of the night,” Gill said.

Their herd consists primarily of red Angus with some Beef Master influence. The cattle, because they are handled so much by Gill in his demonstrations for work, are gentle. Their operation is split between Wise and Parker Counties, on lease properties that are both historical in nature.

In Wise County, their place was leased from a descendant of the original settlers of the county. The Old Woody Cabin, currently located on the grounds of the Wise County Heritage Museum, originally sat on the property. The cabin belonged to Tennessee pioneer Sam Woody who migrated to Texas in the 1840s.

Meanwhile, in Parker County, the original spring fed creek that Springtown was named after runs through the property.

**Continued on page 36**



Gill was up for the challenge of learning the ins and outs of running a cow-calf operation, and soon came to enjoy her new life as a cattle operator. Here she is pictured with a Brahman during a Women in Ranching tour. (Courtesy photo)






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Debbie Gill's passion for agriculture led to the creation of Women in Ranching, where women receive hands-on training in multiple aspects of agriculture. (Courtesy photo)

#### Continued from page 34

While Gill enjoys the history of North Texas now, and has come to love the quieter lifestyle, she chuckled as she remembered her first thoughts when arriving in the area.

"When I first came down, there was nothing. When I exited the highway, I thought, 'What have I gotten myself into?' It looked spooky," Gill laughed.

But soon Gill fell in love with not only the land, but the cattle, despite the learning curve that came with her new adventure.

"I had to learn a lot about cattle. Ron, thank goodness, is very patient and he's a good teacher. It's what he does for a living. So, I have learned things that I never thought I would. I also have gone to places with him because of his job and what he does that I never dreamed I would get to see," Gill said.

Together, they have traveled to Hawaii, Puerto Rico, Australia, St. Kitts, Virginia, Utah, California and numerous others as Ron demonstrates to those around the world the best cattle handling

practices.

#### Texas CattleWomen

Gill's first venture into advocacy roles came when she attended a Texas CattleWomen's event in College Station at the former Hall of Fame. Nolan Ryan Beef donated 200 servings of beef tenderloins and a crew from Eglin, Texas, prepared the meal.

There was music and dancing, and it was a fundraiser benefitting the CattleWomen and historically kicked off the Beef Cattle Short Course at Texas A&M University.

"It wasn't very well attended, so I asked around as to why, and they asked if I wanted to help. Which was a valid question, and I said yes," Gill recalled.

With Gill's help, the fundraiser grew to 350 attendees at its last event at the Hall of Fame.

"That's how I became involved with Texas CattleWomen. There wasn't a local chapter in that area, so I was an at-large member up until about three years ago, when we finally got a chapter started in Brazos County. I joined it and worked closely with the Texas

Aggie collegiate chapter that was on campus. Then in February 2020, right before Covid-19 hit, we bought our place in Chico and moved up here, and I moved my membership to the Wichita Falls Area CattleWomen," Gill said.

Joining the CattleWomen was just the start to what would be an outstanding advocacy journey she would take.

"I like beef and that's why I wanted to get involved in the industry, to promote beef and through CattleWomen that's what we do. We try to increase the consumption of beef through promotion and education," Gill said.

Gill knows the value of presenting the information, facts and data when educating the consumers and public about the beef industry.

"I preach all the time about beef and advocacy and trying to correct people when you hear somebody say something that you know is incorrect. Don't be afraid to tell them, 'I'm sorry, but what you just said isn't right,'" Gill said. "The general public doesn't understand that there's not enough

viable farmland to produce enough plants to have plant-based protein. There's just not. There's land out there, grasslands, and the cows are much more efficient at turning those plants into protein than what you can do in a factory. You have the original plant-based protein roaming around out there."

#### American National CattleWomen

Gill's first assignment in leadership roles came as legislative chair for the Texas CattleWomen. In that role, Eze worked to stay current on state legislative issues and sent the information out to the membership.

She next joined the American National CattleWomen, the parent chapter of the Texas CattleWomen, and attended annual meetings. The organization is divided into regions, with Texas in Region IV with Oklahoma and Arkansas. At one of those regional meetings, the previous director had resigned, leaving the region without representation.

"We're at the meeting and I said, 'We need a director for the region.' Nobody would say





anything. I hate being in those situations, I have volunteered for more stuff just because I hate the fact nobody will say, 'I'll do it.' So, I said, 'I would be glad to serve as regional director. I would like to get more involved anyway,'" Gill said.

However, she was met with some resistance as the organization wanted to move in a younger direction, but that didn't stop her.

"In the next meeting we had the same problem. I reminded them I had volunteered, and I was right there and happy to serve as director. It has become a passion of mine, so to speak. All of these organizations want younger members, which they need to carry on, but they need to value and respect their older, more mature members as well. That's where their history is. There is a lot of travel and a lot of time involved, and your younger members normally have a young family at home. They don't have the time to devote or have the financial means to travel. Your more mature members are settled, their kids are established, and they have time," Gill said.

Gill was named Region IV Director, a role in which she served for four years up until 2021.

"That was such a good experience," Gill said. "I have made so many great friendships with women across the country because of my membership through the American National CattleWomen, which came from joining the Texas CattleWomen. The best benefit of the CattleWomen either local, state or national are the friends I have made. It all just comes from a love of what I have learned from my husband. And I love beef. It came to me last night, if you have eaten a hamburger, or if you have ever eaten a steak, you are a part of the beef industry. You are a consumer, and without consumers, there's no need for us to be on the production side."

#### Beef Council



At the Women in Ranching events, attendees break into small groups for demonstrations and hands-on experience for various aspects of agriculture, including working the cattle chute. (Courtesy photo)

The Texas Beef Council is connected to the Texas CattleWomen, funded in part by the council's Checkoff funds.

"That's something that needs to be told often and loudly because the younger producers weren't around when the Checkoff program was established, and they don't understand what it is and what the money goes for. The Beef Councils and the Checkoff dollars have done so much for our industry as a whole," Gill said.

Gill began attending Beef Council meetings, open to the public, due to the council's ties with the Texas CattleWomen.

"I started going to the board

meetings when I could, just to see what was going on. I wanted to know. That sparked an interest, and when an opening came up, my name was submitted for the Cattlemen Beef Board, which is the national organization that controls the Checkoff dollars on the national level," Gill said.

In 2020, Eze was appointed to the Cattlemen's Beef Board. The first year she served on the safety committee, and this year, she has been appointed to the stakeholder engagement committee.

"Years ago, the Beef Board was criticized they were spending too much money preaching to the choir, so to speak. They backed

away from that. And that's where the gap in engagement came from. Your average producer doesn't have a clue what the Checkoff is, they don't understand it, and look at it as a tax. They don't know that if you have kids in 4-H and they have an animal, and they sell that animal, you're supposed to send in \$1. In Texas, you send in \$2. They don't know that if you sell cattle private treaty, you're supposed to send in and it's on the honor system. Both the state Beef Council and the Cattlemen's Beef Board have done return on investment studies and for every \$1 spent, the return on that is a little over \$11. To me, that's a no brainer. I just got so interested in the Beef Council and that's where I knew I could be of more service," Gill explained.

#### Women in Ranching

Today, around 40 percent of agricultural endeavors are run by women, but Gill realized when attending meetings with her husband where he was teaching that the females in the audience were hesitant to ask questions.

"You can just see that they have thoughts and questions, but they won't ask because it is a male dominated environment. Nobody wants to appear stupid, but women think differently than men. We don't always understand what they're talking about when it comes to acronyms and abbreviations and things like that. There was nothing out there for women, so I asked my husband what he thought about putting together an event addressing women. He thought it was a great idea," Gill said.

With the help of fellow advocate Casey Matzke, Gill organized Women in Ranching. The event was created separate from the Texas CattleWomen. The program covers women in ranching, training, tours, education and more.

So far two events have been conducted, with a third canceled

**Continued on page 38**





Continued from page 37

due to Covid-19. Attendees gathered at NRS, where they received training from numerous presenters. The women learned marketing practices, how to castrate cattle, ear notching, managing forage during droughts, cattle handling, how to vaccinate and handle the syringes, and more.

Cattle were brought in, as well as equipment, to ensure the women received the hands-on training they needed. Money from the spring educational event was then put into a tour, with sponsorship money covering the bus. A busload of women visited numerous agriculture locations, improving their knowledge over the course of a weekend. Past trips have visited cattle ranches, processing plants, feed yards, and numerous other agriculture businesses. Gill was awarded the American National CattleWomen of the Year for the creation of the program.

"We try to include as many



Debbie Gill's creation of Women in Ranching includes tours to multiple agriculture businesses where women can further their education and knowledge of agriculture. (Courtesy photo)

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women influenced businesses as possible because women and ranching is what we do. Our program has been so successful that the American National Cattle-Women have copied it. They have WIRED, Women in Ranching Education and Development," Gill said. "They facilitate different regions holding the same type of meetings, which is good, because I don't want to do it on that large of scale. You can't have too much education or opportunities for people to see and learn what we do."

#### Future Plans

As far as the future, Gill said age and physical condition will dictate their plans.

When Ron retires, the couple will continue running 250 head of cattle, and eventually their 48 acres by their home will be just right for scaling down when the time comes.


Gill also has plans to continue

serving on the Cattlemen Beef Board, which allows three-year appointments and permits two terms to be served back-to-back.

"I hope to serve all of those and see where that takes me," Gill said. "It's been a fun life. I love cows because of the life it's afforded us."

For now, she balances her role as cattle operator, beef industry advocate and wife, with that of mother and grandmother to her two children and four grandchildren.

Meanwhile, she encourages others to get involved.

"There are a million different ways and whether the general public wants to admit it or not, we're all involved in agriculture," Gill said. "It doesn't matter if you've never seen a tractor. If you eat, even if you're a vegan, you are part of agriculture. But please consider a healthy lifestyle that includes beef." 

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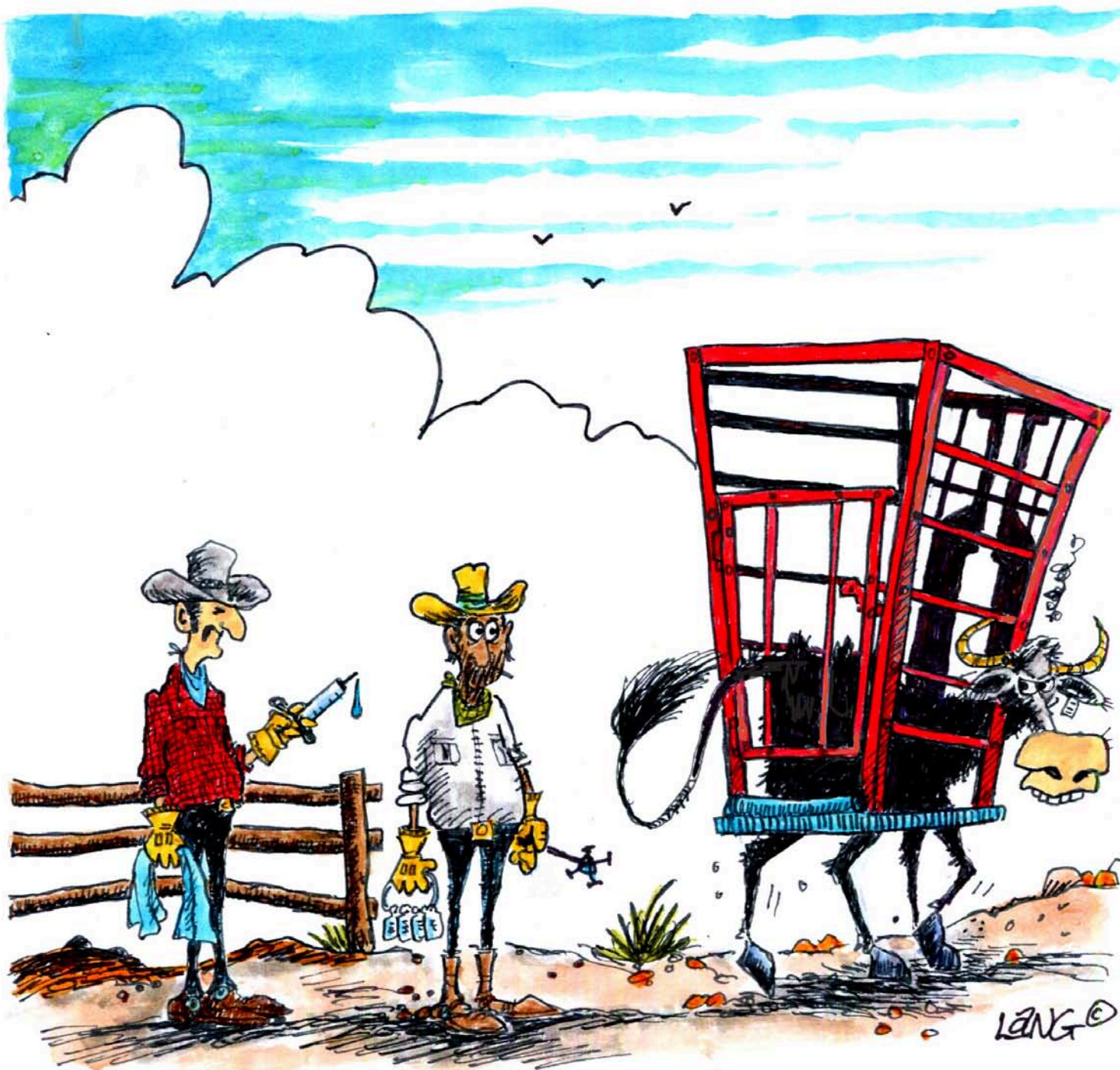






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# Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Newlin

## Portobello Mushroom Pizzas

**Servings:** 2-4 | **Time:** 20 minutes

### Ingredients

- 4 large portobello mushroom caps
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1/2 cup jarred pizza sauce
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- Toppings: Dried Italian herbs, sliced pepperoni, sliced kalamata olives, jarred roasted red peppers, canned artichoke hearts, chopped fresh basil

### Directions

Preheat broiler.

Using a spoon, remove the stems and scrape out the brown gills of mushrooms. Brush the tops of the mushrooms with olive oil.

Broil mushrooms, top side up, for three to four minutes, or until mushrooms begin to shrink slightly. Remove pan from oven and carefully flip mushrooms. Do your best to drain mushrooms of extra moisture or they will be soggy.

Top each mushroom with one to two tablespoons pizza sauce, two tablespoons shredded cheese and desired toppings.

Return mushrooms to broiler for three to four more minutes, or until cheese melts.





# Beef By-products, Part 7

By Dani Blackburn

Cow milk has been used since the beginning of time as nourishment for the human body. Not much has changed as milk is consumed as low-fat, skim and fresh pasteurized whole milk. Plenty of other edible products are created from the milk including cheese, dried milks, condensed milk, butter, and a sweet favorite, ice cream.

The good news is ice cream has more nutritional value than some other sweets we enjoy, like candy or cake. It contains vitamin B2, calcium and protein. A cow's milk can create sherbet, reduced fat ice cream, low fat ice cream, French custard ice cream, French ice cream, and frozen custard.

Meanwhile, the butter, made from milk or cream, contains protein, calcium and vitamins A, D and E. Butter comes in traditional form, light butter, butter oil, butter powder, cultured butter,

whipped, salted or unsalted, and as anhydrous.

Another not so well-known product from milk is the whey, which is the liquid part of milk left behind after cheese is made. It is typically made into a dry product.

The whey is the perfect emulsifier, whipping agent and water-binder. It is used as an aid in gelatin, thickening and browning and can be found in dairy foods, nutritional supplements and processed meats.

Cheese, a favorite of many, is made from milk and is a product produced by draining the whey after the coagulation of the milk protein casein.

There are more than 200 varieties of cheese in the United States and 1,400 in the world, and it can be used in almost every food product. It comes as soft, hard, natural, processed, unripened,

and ripened.

However, milk goes far beyond filling us with the vitamins and calcium we need. A cow provides what is necessary to make more than 100 drugs that help humans with blood clots, upset stomachs and more.

Caseins and whey proteins from milk also are natural polymers, which means they can be modified by physical, chemical and enzymatic means. Casein itself is used for adhesives, while milk also can be used to create glass.

Of course, the cosmetic industry also is on top of using milk as a beauty product.

Recently, milk baths have become popular, as dermatologists believe the calcium in it has a soothing effect on the skin, and it can be found in creams and treatments.


So next time you are cooling

off with your favorite ice cream treat, adding a dollop of sour cream to your favorite tacos or even considering a milk bath for dry skin, thank a cow and remember the value they add to our everyday lives.

## Resources:

"Cattle By-products." Iowa State University. [www.extension.iastate.edu/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/allamakee/Lesson1Activity4Dairy\\_By\\_Products.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/allamakee/Lesson1Activity4Dairy_By_Products.pdf)

Farr, Sara. "10 Common Products that Contain Hidden Cow Parts." <https://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/common-products-that-contain-hidden-cow-parts/>. 2021, July 19.

"The Truth About Beef By-products." *The Truth About Agriculture*, 17 June 2015, [thetruthaboutag.com/2015/06/17/the-truth-about-beef-byproducts/](http://thetruthaboutag.com/2015/06/17/the-truth-about-beef-byproducts/).



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My friend, Tim House, joined forces with master chef, Michael Scott, to create a Texas hot spot unlike any other. House handles the bar and entertainment while Scott grills up some of the finest steaks on Earth featuring Wagyu beef.

Wagyu cattle are known for their unique flavor, tenderness and health benefits. You can enjoy an evening of great steaks and live music or order up fresh cut Wagyu to take home.

Make plans to visit the Bartonville Store and Jeter's Meat Market in the near future. You will find everything you need for an enjoyable evening Texas style.

For concert dates check them out on the web at [www.thebartonvillestore.com](http://www.thebartonvillestore.com).

I will see you there.

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# Land Rich and Cash Poor

By Martha Crump | marthacrump@comcell.net

*“A person doesn’t know how much he has to be thankful for, until he has to pay taxes on it.” - Anonymous*

Venture into any small town coffee shop or Dairy Queen in the early morning, and I will wager you will see a familiar sight; a table or two occupied by locals in the agricultural industry. They are the farmers, ranchers and members of the “sweat equity” demographic that gather to sort out their day, the current state of the county, and world affairs at large. Much can be learned from these “tables of knowledge,” and occasionally my husband will stop in, pull up a chair to gain some insight. The conversations may involve something as wonderful as hearing the oldest man at the table recollect that he has never seen such rain this far along into the summer, or it might be the shared misery of drought, no grass and dry tanks. It also is a sure bet that it will almost always touch on the rising/falling cattle market, fuel costs, feed cost, and crop and land prices. Whatever the topic, there is much to be gleaned from stopping by these tables. We have been blessed with the ability to travel quite a bit, and one of our greatest joys is to wander in someplace for breakfast and find those tables of men and women. My husband just cannot resist eventually getting into the conversation. It is a delicate dance, that outsider insertion into a community conversation, but it will inevitably happen. I will spend a good bit listening, as he gets fully into the rhythm of what is being discussed. We unfailingly hear people from other states share the same exact worries, joys and insights that are often discussed at our local tables. It is something I find extremely comforting and reassuring about this business we are in. We are all rowing the same boat. Different concerns at different times definitely, but shared nonetheless.

There is always plenty of stuff that requires our short and long-term attention as agri-business producers. I dare say, however, one of the long-term issues not given nearly enough attention is planning what happens to the family farm or ranch when grandparents and parents pass and the successive generations take up the proverbial reins. Passing down our farms and ranches is a sacred tradition for many, the end goal of lifetime accomplishments. It is our history, our roots and our shared love of the land

and animals that live upon it. Personally, I do not care who you voted for, or your thoughts on the most recent election. I wish politics did not infiltrate so much of our everyday existence. With that being said, it is important for all of us to be aware of the proposed changes that we may be facing, and make no mistake, there are changes that have the potential to negatively impact the future of all in the farming and ranching business. Currently, the law says when the owner of a farm or ranch dies, the estate is subjected to federal estate taxes. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 was passed by President Trump and was the biggest reform of the United States tax code since 1986. As of 2021, the amount exempted from the estate tax was elevated to \$11.7 million per individual and \$23.4 million per couple but is set to expire in 2025. Have you checked your land prices these days? Do you really understand what dollar amounts you are sitting on? To fully appreciate the current administration’s proposed changes and just what has the entire ag sector on pins and needles, a short background course might be helpful.

## Capital Gains Tax Provisions and Stepped-up Basis in Current Law

When an asset appreciates in value, capital gain is the difference between the current fair market value and the amount that was originally paid for the asset, less accumulated depreciation. In place since the Revenue Act of 1921, and a longstanding provision of United States tax law; the capital gains tax is not imposed when assets are transferred to an heir at death, only upon selling. Under the existing law, the heir is allowed to “step-up” their bequeathed assets to the current fair market value, without paying the capital gains tax on the difference. Most of us think primarily about income tax, not estate tax. With the allowance currently in place, many of us would not have to worry. The current administration has promised not to raise taxes on anyone earning less than \$400,000, but there are plans that address ending an inheritance “loophole” that would do just the opposite. Folded quietly into the American Families Plan, which the President proposed as changes to help pay for infrastructure and job packages, there is a revision to the way capital gains taxes are paid on estates when people die. Hank Adler, associate

professor at Chapman University, said that as this plan is developed, it would impose a new “death tax” that would directly impact and punish middle class individuals who choose to invest in America and leave assets to their children. According to his study the plan does not move the goal posts, it totally changes the rules of the game. Ironically, the dialogue surrounding this measure is it will stop the multimillionaires and billionaires from getting away with not paying taxes on appreciated assets. Now, rising land prices are beginning to impact us directly. President Biden aimed the tax increases directly at the investor class, having said on record to members of Congress, “We’re going to reward work, not just wealth.” The White House is on record as saying it would end the stepped-up basis on gains that exceed \$1 million but did offer some dialogue about protections for family-owned businesses. We are still not in the clear because there are two items in the proposed tax code changes that could have significant impact; the STEP Act, and the 99.5% Act. Simply explained, the STEP Act would end the “stepped-up basis” at the time of death of an owner. The 99.5% Act would, among other things, decrease the estate tax exemption from the current \$11.7 million per individual to \$3.5 million and from \$23.4 million per couple to \$7 million. A recent study conducted by the Texas A&M Agricultural and Food Policy Center in April of this year, released this June, found the number of farms and ranches paying more in taxes would drastically increase if these tax code changes are enacted. Representative Glenn Thompson, R-PA, Ranking Member on the House Committee on Agriculture has indicated that these proposed changes as identified at this point in time would decrease the possibility of future generations to farm and ranch.

“For farmers and ranchers these new tax levies are not just an annoyance. They don’t mean that a farmer will have to forego a new truck for a year. They mean an heir might have to sell off a significant chunk of the family farm, or quite frankly, lose it all together.” Senior Executive Director of Government Affairs Danielle Beck was supportive of the study requested by Senator Boozman and Representative Thompson indicating that she

**Continued on page 50**



Continued from page 49

felt it could have potentially devastating effects on family-owned businesses.

"Farmers and ranchers conserve nearly 900 million acres of crop and rangeland in the United States. The vital work done by cattle and beef producers to deliver an array of environmental benefits such as restoring wildlife habitat, sequestering carbon, and protecting and improving water quality, depends on their ability to stay in business. Federal tax policy that facilitates generational transfer and allows the next generation of producers to build upon the environmental and economic benefits of today's farmers and ranchers is just as important for fifth-generation producers as it is for first-generation, veteran and minority community producers who are breaking into and establishing a foothold in the industry."


Also addressing the proposed changes was the National Cattlemen's Beef Association President Jerry Bohn saying that the estate tax disproportionately harms cattle producers because with few options to pay off tax liabilities, many farm and ranch families are forced to make tough choices at the time of death – and in worst case scenarios, must sell off land to meet their federal tax burden. According to statistics released by the NCBA, an estimated 2,000 acres of agricultural land is either paved over, broken up or converted into uses that compromise agriculture in the United States on a daily basis. Current estimates forecast more than 40 percent of agri-use lands will transition in the next two decades. Therefore, it continues to be of paramount importance that Congress prioritize policies that support land transfer to the next generations.

"As small business owners, environmental stewards, and the economic backbone of rural communities across the country, U.S. cattle producers understand and appreciate the role of taxes in maintaining and improving our nation. However, they also believe that the most effective tax code is an equitable one. For this reason, NCBA ardently supports the Death Tax Repeal Act of 2021," Bohn added.

In addition to the NCBA, other organizations in support of the Repeal Act include: American Farm Bureau Federation, National Federation of Independent Business, Associated General Contractors of America, National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Your voice matters as well, so get involved, and find a good estate attorney just in case.

*"Death and taxes may be*

*inevitable, but they shouldn't be related."* - J.C. Watts

July saw the Wichita Falls Area CattleWomen using our voices to spread the good news about beef at the North Texas Rehab Center's Ranch Round-Up. The CattleWomen were honored to be able to take part in support of community, of beef education, and to sponsor cowkid fun in the arena for visiting children. The next meeting of the WFACW will be on Sept. 21, 2021, at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, TX, at 11:30 a.m., with the evening meeting at 5:30 p.m. The evening location is yet to be determined. Prepackaged meals will be available for the lunch meeting or you may bring your own. The speaker is yet to be determined. All social distancing rules are followed. Masks and hand sanitizer are available prior to entry to the meeting area should you need them. 



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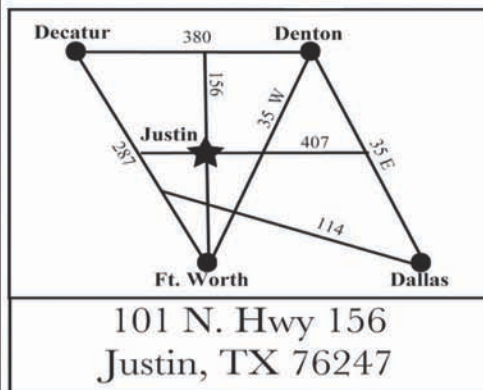




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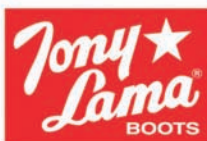


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# Confessions of a HUNTER

By Andy Anderson

## Maintenance Pays Off

I grew up hunting and fishing in a time when we had no box blinds, fancy tripods, electronic feeders and definitely no trail cameras. There actually wasn't much advanced technology to exploit to a degree of benefit for myself in the woods. I relied on my intuition and skills learned from my dad and others who were kind enough to share the knowledge.

I can remember vividly the first "box" blind I ever got to hunt out of. This was a time when the big residential refrigerators first came on the market and they were shipped in boxes. Those refrigerator boxes made great blinds. Just a little handy work with a pocket knife to cut out a door and some windows, a little spray paint and done; the first ever box blind.

I remember sitting in that thing for the first time, and how nice it was to break the wind off and help keep you warmer. I also remember how limited the field of view was. I was used to sitting up in a tree, out on a limb with my back to the main trunk of the tree. Sitting in the blind, convinced I was missing deer because I couldn't see them from the ground, I hatched a scheme to get this box blind into a tree.

We have all built a tree house or two as kids and by this time in my life I had pretty much become an expert on the matter. I requisitioned some scrap plywood, 2x4s



There was a time long ago when there wasn't much advanced technology to exploit to a degree of benefit in the woods.

and a box of nails. I packed up a hand saw and off I went into the woods, carrying each piece of plywood by hand to the tree of choice. This was a perfect tree, an older oak with large branches and spaced just right for the main support. I began hoisting the plywood up the tree, resting on branches as I got up and the floor laid out and secure.

Now it was time to hoist the new box blind up the tree to its new home. I secured it to the decking with chunks of 2x4 and made sure I had good clear lines of sight to the food plot and corn pile. I hunted the next few days seeing

nothing. One evening a doe was working her way in to the food plot, she stayed within the brush, circling around then stopped suddenly. She blew and ran off. What the heck I thought; what could be scaring her off for no reason? The next few weeks were the same. I hunted every day, morning and evening, and every time the deer would either not show or run away scared.

Well, my time to harvest a deer had come and gone, the season was over and chores consumed the time I had after school. I never had the chance to go back to the new stand I had constructed to maintain it or just to see how it

was holding up. Winter faded away to summer and still, I never went back to check on it. Deer season was approaching and so was returning to school. It was the first part of August and August in Texas is usually pretty hot and nasty out. I knew I needed to get to work on blinds and such because once school started there would be limited time to put towards preparation.

I arrived to the blind to see the box was wrinkled up and half collapsed, it was a mess and I needed to get it down to replace it. I started my way up the tree, balancing on each branch to sit on the floor next to the box. My first



task was to remove the metal chain that was in there, it was the only thing holding the box up at the time. Not thinking, I just ripped the door back with such force, the old weather box just disintegrated before me.

Just then I heard the biggest commotion, banging, screaming and thrashing about. Hearing this, I was shaken, a little on edge as I tried to back away; after all I clearly upset something in that box. As the box continued to fall to the outside direction, I ripped the door open. A scared and slightly agitated owl appeared inches before my face. I saw it, it saw me and we both jumped back. As I fell back, I grabbed the underside of the deck to hold myself just as the owl decided to come right at me. The wings flapped over my head, smacking me. I leaned back even more to avoid decapitation only to lose my balance and grip completely; down I went. I

crashed helplessly down through two of the bigger branches before I was able to grab a branch and stop myself. Problem is, this branch was home to some hornets, and they were not happy having their home shook like a major earthquake. They boiled out and on me faster than the gasp of air, to which I needed as I took a leap of faith to the ground below.

I only got stung a few times before things calmed down and I could stop running. I stood there, about a hundred yards away looking back at the blind. Standing there, clothes ripped, hair a wreck, ball cap missing, bleeding and in fully body pain, I concluded the wasp and owl could keep the blind since they liked it so much. But, believe me, I made sure from that day forward to keep up with things and make adequate maintenance runs on all my gear. I also never put another refrigerator box in a tree again. 🐸



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# Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean | [tonydean.tx1@gmail.com](mailto:tonydean.tx1@gmail.com)

## Three Questions

When considering planting perennial grasses or other perennial forage for grazing or haying, we should look at all of the options and make an informed decision. This practice not only requires a significant financial outlay, but if done correctly, can last a lifetime.

Three questions will help make this decision:

1. What will you expect out of the forage established, and what plants can meet your criteria?

2. What level of management are you willing to provide in the long term?

3. What will your soil support?

The first two questions reflect the level of forage management you plan for your ranch. For instance, if you are considering Bermuda grass to achieve a higher level of warm season production, you should be committed to applying fertilizer and weed control in order to maintain and utilize this species.

The third question, your soil type (or types), is just as important as the other two factors but is often left out of the decision process. If soils are not considered, sometimes the planting is successful, and sometimes it is not.

If you think about it, we talk about soil types all the time. We might refer to those “rocky hills” or that “mesquite flat.” Those rocky hills are just that, rocky and shallow areas we should probably leave alone. The mesquite flat is probably a deep clay site because that is usually where mesquite grows the best.

Knowledge of the soil on your ranch can be a powerful tool to help you understand and manage your forage resources. There are usually several different soil types on any ranch or often in any one pasture. Some soils are deep, some shallow. Deep-rooted grasses like Indiangrass need five to seven feet of soil for their massive root system. Shallow soils limit your choice of adapted plants.

Soils have different water holding capacities. Sands do not retain much water because



Soil maps and written soil data are available from NRCS and from the Web Soil Survey to help determine if soils are adapted to various perennial grasses or other forages.

the large sand particles allow moisture to go right through the soil profile. Clay soils hold more water, but some clay hold water so tightly that it is not available to plants.

Some soils have more organic matter, which is the primary building block for soil health. Forage management can improve organic matter.

One of the more important differences in soils is their relative makeup of sand, silt and clay particles. This determines the soil texture and influences all of the above factors.

Information is available to help select grasses that should be adapted to your planting site. However, this adaptation is not an exact science. A grass adapted to a sandy site may germinate and grow on a loamy or clay loam soil, but it will be more subject to damage by drought, high temperatures or other factors that could cause it to fail. Our goal is to take as

many unknowns out of the process as possible to improve our chances of having a long term and productive stand of grass.

How do you find out if you have a clay, loam or sandy soil? The Natural Resources Conservation Service, with offices in most Texas counties, has soils maps available and can furnish copies of maps along with interpretive data. Also, the Web Soil Survey can provide similar information over the Internet. Then, there is always the option of sampling your soil types personally. If you are not familiar with determining soil texture, find someone who can help you.

Another way to get an idea of soil type is to observe plants currently growing at the site. Oak trees, sand plum and green briar are all indicators of at least some sand in the soil. A heavy presence of mesquite usually indicates a soil with more clay.




Once you have an idea about your type of soil, NRCS also can provide guidelines on grasses adapted to different soils. Here are some examples:

**Sideoats grama (Texas State Grass)** - Adapted to a wide range of soils, but it is most adapted to loam or sandy loam sites.

**Little bluestem** - Adapted to a wide range of soils. However, I know from personal experience in North Texas, Little blue is normally more productive on loamy to sandy sites.

**Dahl bluestem** - Best adapted to well-drained sandy loam to clay loam. Not recommended for deep sand.

**Kleingrass** - Best adapted to loam to clay loam soils.

Just because your neighbor was successful with a grass planting, do not assume you will get the same results. No two ranches are the same, and your goals are not exactly like his. Do your own homework; learn more about your ranch, your soils and your grasses. You will not only feel more confident about your planting project, but you will enjoy learning more about your land and what it can do for your family. 



The soils map for this field showed the soil to be a silty loam, and Kleingrass proved to be very well adapted. However, the field contains a few acres of a heavy clay. These small areas are very common and are called soil inclusions. Kleingrass probably germinated on the heavy clay, but couldn't survive long term. The clay soil, as shown in the foreground of this picture, is now covered by Buffalograss, Broomweed, Lotebush, Mesquite, and Prickly Pear.



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# THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## Trough Gardening Rocketing Across Country

Everyone has heard the old saying you can lead a horse to the trough, and if he does not drink make it a planter. Just kidding, but if you choose to jump on one of the hottest trends in the country, you can make your own jokes about some old caballo.

These containers while at the store go by names like stock tank, feed trough, water trough and my choice, the horse trough. They might not grace the landscapes of Highland Park in Dallas or River Oaks in Houston, but they are popping up at high-end shopping centers like The Landings in Columbus, Ga., and specially designed communities like Old Town in North Columbus.

If you do an online search of trough gardening, you will find this trend blazing across the country. When I was younger, I had a fine Grumman canoe. I know they were heavy in the aviation and ship building industry, and if they are still operating I would tell them to crank out some dazzling troughs for all of us gardeners, word on the street is these are getting hard to find.

First, know there is a trough that will allow you to grow just about anything you want to grow. You could have an exotic water feature, flower garden or several for a deluxe raised bed vegetable garden. The 36-inch-tall containers are ideal for those that use wheelchairs and motorized assistance or have trouble bending over. In other words, these can become the vegetable or flower gardens for all abilities.

You will find a lot of instructions on how to set one up. The oldest troughs in Columbus are about 10 years old, and keeping their integrity beautifully after all these years, is galvanized steel.

These were originally attached to wooden piano type dollies with wheels or casters. These deteriorated over time and the containers are now moved by muscle if needed. Some of the



The Lime Green picket fence attracts children to the playground at The Landings Shopping Center in Columbus, Ga. As they play, the parents and children alike see beautiful flowers like Truffula Pink gomphrena, Supertunias and Rockin salvia that are bringing in hummingbirds and butterflies. In addition to pollinators, they just may see the small Green Anole lizards.

new containers in other locations have wheels, others do not.

The containers are filled to one third the depth with aged or even composted pine bark with potting soil comprising the remainder. The containers have drainage plug holes resembling those you might see on an ice chest.

These containers have a dual purpose serving as a barrier to prevent encroachment of a vehicle. You will see on the Internet, however, these have become works of art by many gardeners in the home situation.

In Columbus they are scheduled for a cool  
**Continued on page 58**





**Continued from page 57**

season planting from fall through April and a warm season redesign from late April through early October. In a commercial setting like these, they are first planted with a controlled release fertilizer and then watered as needed from a 250-gallon tank with dilute water-soluble fertilizer as the seasons progress.

Today at The Landings, situated in between a favorite diner and a frozen yogurt business is a playground for the client's children. It is decorated with an iconic lime green picket fence. Here are the oldest troughs with plants like Truffula Pink Gomphrena, Rockin Blue Suede Shoes, salvia, Luscious Royale Cosmo lantana and Supertunia Vista Fuchsia and Supertunia Vista Snowdrift falling over the edge. You see, while the customers think they are seeing flowers, they are really seeing a shopping center habitat attracting bees, butterflies, hummingbirds, and little green lizards.

If you are looking for a new adventure in gardening, you may just want to consider a trough. You may find out you have an award-winning green thumb. Follow me on Facebook @NormaWinterTheGardenGuy for more pictures and garden inspiration. 



In the cool seasons, these troughs are full of colorful leaved heucheras like Dolce Spearmint Primo Wild Rose and Double Play Candy Corn Spirea. (Photos courtesy Norman Winter)

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