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INTER

October 2022

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245.30 ACRES | WILBARGER COUNTY



NEW LISTING

MILLER RANCH \$5,500/Ac

This is a terrific hunting property located 15 minutes south of Vernon and approximately 1 mile west of the famous 550k acre Waggoner Ranch. The land offers outstanding whitetail deer hunting. The terrain is level to rolling mesquite pasture, with 114 acres of farmland. Surface water consists of two stock ponds. There is an insulated heated and cooled storage container with an attached carport and a 40 x 60 barn. Deer blinds and feeders are negotiable.

167 ACRES + HOUSE | MONTAGUE COUNTY



4S RANCH \$2,213,148

This is a diverse property improved with a Barndominium. It is located 3.5 miles east of Sunset in Montague County. The land has approximately 60 acres of cultivation with the balance being heavily wooded. Topography is level to rolling offering impressive views. There are 3 stock ponds, Couch Branch Creek extends through the property, interior cross fencing, pens, loafing shed with tack room. The Barndominium consists of 1,600/sf, built in 2015, 2 bedrooms, 2 baths with an attached carport. The potential uses for this property are endless. Jon Moss Listing Agent- 940-867-6743

5.5 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY

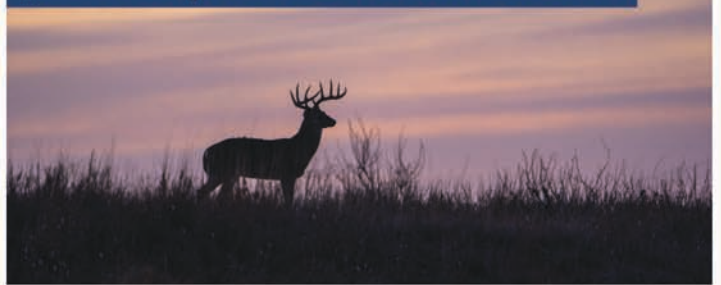


NEW LISTING

CRUMPLER RANCH HOUSE \$575,000

Spacious 2 story home located minutes from Wichita Falls. The house sits atop a hill with impressive views with no immediate neighbors. There are 5 bedrooms, 3.5 baths, isolated master bedroom, 1.5 baths on the 1st floor, 4 bedrooms, 2 baths on the 2nd floor, Austin stone exterior, metal and composition roof, 1,700/sf of covered wrap around porch, nice yard with mature trees, fenced around house, electric entry gate. Additional acreage available.

7,085.56 ACRES | WICHITA & WILBARGER COUNTIES



SWANSON RANCH \$1,895/Ac

Located south of Electra and west of Wichita Falls. This is an outstanding large combination ranch with unbelievable hunting. It's entire south and most of the west boundaries adjoin the famous 550k acre Waggoner Ranch. The land is diverse with level to rolling mesquite pasture, large plateaus and ridges with deep ravines, heavily wooded bottom land with Short and Long Creek traversing the ranch and 970 acres of tillable farmland. It has great access with frontage 3 sides. Great interior road system, several cattle working pens, numerous ponds. Equipment and cattle are negotiable.

121 ACRES + HOUSE | WICHITA COUNTY



PRICE REDUCED

REIS FARM \$595,000

Located 2.5 miles north of Electra, at the NE corner of Old Lake Road and Brosch Road. The house consists of 2,045 sf, brick, built in 2001, 3 bedrooms, 2 bath, 2 car garage, total electric, chain link fenced backyard, storm closet in master bath, new roof installed in 2015, 24' x 36' metal workshop built in 2009. There is 85 acres of cultivation, balance being native pasture both wooded and open, level to sloping terrain, seasonal creek, stock pond, no oil production.

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NORTH TEXAS FARM & RANCH



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ON THE COVER

On the cover is Wes O'Neal, whose cowboy career has spanned three of the most historic ranches in Texas, including the JA Ranch, Waggoner Ranch and Four Sixes Ranch. O'Neal is also the fourth recipient of the Ranching Heritage Association Working Cowboy Award. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

Hello readers, and welcome to the October issue of North Texas Farm & Ranch magazine.

There is sadness with this issue as we print NTFR magazine

without our longtime copy editor and writer, Judy Wade, who we lost in August. Many knew Judy, a longtime teacher and friend to all. I was always dazzled by her sparkling eyes and in awe of how many would stop to enjoy a chat with her at our booth at the Wichita Falls Farm and Ranch Expo. I will greatly miss talking with her when she would call the office to check in as well. We will also miss the stories she brought us, from events happening around the area, to dives into our history, and highlighting those hardworking cowboys and cowgirls who she knew deserved recognition. I hope you will join me in keeping her family and friends in your thoughts and prayers as they grieve the loss of such a strong, witty, and kind woman who was beautiful both inside and out.

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 a very happy October!



Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com

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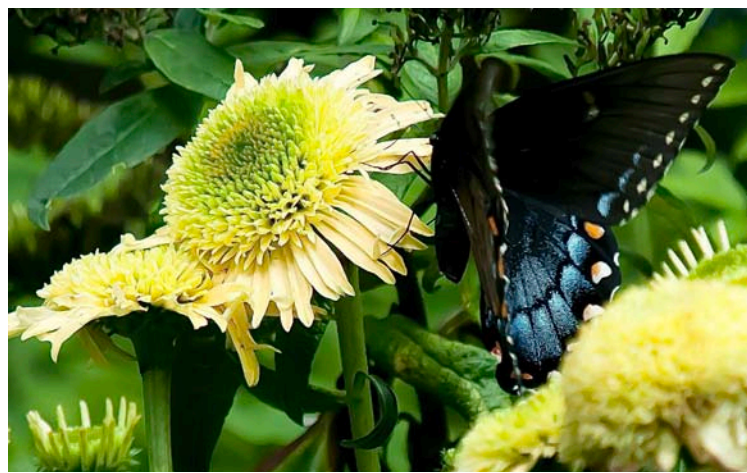
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The threeawns are a rather large family of grasses in the North Texas grazing lands.



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 North Texas Farm & Ranch

Expanding upon its commitment to elevate and positively impact the western industry, Teton Ridge unveiled an unprecedented new event - The American Performance Horseman that will make its debut on Friday, March 10, 2023, in Arlington, Tex. during The American Rodeo. READ MORE: <http://ntfronline.com/.../teton-ridge-launches.../>



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Grazing
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Feel free to drop us a line at
editor@ntfronline.com or share your comments
on our social media pages. You might even
see your name in the next issue!



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

"They are so efficient! With the fact that they are not gravity fed, I'm not losing a bunch of product on the ground! The pump administers only the amount that needs to be put out on the animal! With the Lewis Cattle Oiler, there is no waste. I can fill up the 8 gallon tank, on the Oiler, and it will last all summer long with the bison scratching on it ALL the time!"

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GUARANTEED SERVICE AFTER THE SALE



MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

The rains finally came to North Texas, and we are so very grateful for every drop that fell. In last month's column, I was apparently on my pity pot, and thanks to Phyllis Berry from Nocona, Texas, who assured me that things would get better. They did.

This is the first time in my memory that the hot weather broke in August and a significant rainfall event occurred at the same time. It reminded me more of the latter part of September, but thank goodness this happened with another 60 days or so of good growing weather ahead of us.

At our place, we depend on our native grasses to double as our hay source in addition to warm season grazing. Hopefully, we will be able to grow our standing hay supply and not have to rely on baled hay, which at today's price equals to a minimum of \$3 a head per day if this was the cows' only source of roughage. I knew we would not be able to add at another \$90 or more per month per cow so the writing was on the wall. I felt like the folks that sold out in July were the smartest folks around, and they still may be. We will find out in the next several months.

We weaned our spring-born calves 60 to 90 days early this year for several reasons, and chief among them was to be able to get our cows in the best shape possible prior to winter. Next, we wanted to get as many mouths off the pasture to conserve as much pasture as possible for the winter months. Since our calves were in really great shape, and for the life of me I do not know how, we could market them while the market was really good with the lighter weight calves bringing a premium and with 500-pound calves bringing close to \$900 to \$1,000.



"Mid-August rains turned brown pastures into spring overnight." - Rayford Pullen (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)

I know I was not the only one between a rock and a hard spot, but we were all looking for a silver lining somewhere. We are so very thankful for the rain in our area and are praying for the folks that missed out on the moisture.

Another thing we are doing is making sure every cow is either with a calf or bred. With an annual cost of \$500 or more just to maintain a cow, open cows just do not tote the note with the lost revenue coming off the top of our gross income. We are also looking at our older cows, 11 to 13 years old, really closely due to loss of

grazing this year. While many of these older cows are the mommas of some of these early weaned calves, the next couple of months will allow them to put on a couple hundred pounds, which if we end up selling, will make them more valuable as a cull cow.


Our early weaned calves will be receiving their vaccinations for blackleg, IBR and dewormed with an injectable product such as Ivermectin, Dectomax or Cydec-tin. We use the injectable wormers in the fall to hopefully control the grubs, ticks and lice.

Three to four weeks after wean-

ing, we will go through the calves and determine which heifers will be kept for replacements and which bull calves will be kept and developed for our bull sale program.

With feed costs such as they are, we certainly do not want to invest money in them and not realize a positive return.

At this point in time, I hate to delve into the winter months facing us because we are too busy enjoying the green grass and watching our hay crop accumulate.

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



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NEW ARMBED

2018 Chev. 3500 4X4, 6.6 turbo diesel, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power mirrors, windows & locks. #239683.....\$54,995



ARMBED

2016 Ford F-250 4x4, 6.2 V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows & locks. #C16031.....\$34,995



NEW SPEARBED

2018 Ford F-250 4x4, 6.2 V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows & locks. #C07547.....\$49,995



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2017 Ford F-250 XLT 4x4, 6.0 V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows, locks & mirrors. #D44007.....\$41,995



NEW SPEARBED

2012 Chev. 2500 4x4, 6.0L V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power locks. #104540.....\$24,995



WORK READY

2018 Ford F-250 4x4, 6.2 V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows, locks & mirrors. #C93551.....\$44,995



WORK READY

2017 Chev. 2500 4x4, 6.0 V8 gas auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows & locks. #336348.....\$29,995



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2017 Ford F-250 2WD, 6.2 V8, gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power mirrors, windows & locks. #E44718.....\$41,995



NEW SPEARBED

2019 Ford F-250 4x4, 6.2 V8 gas, auto, A/C, power windows & locks, posi trac. #B35479.....\$47,995



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WORK READY

2015 RAM 3500 Tradesman 4x2, 6.7L turbo diesel, auto, A/C, power mirrors, windows & locks. #589992.....\$32,995



WORK READY

2018 Chev. 2500 4x4, 6.0 V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows, locks & mirrors. #195907.....\$34,995



SPEARBED

2005 Chev. Duramax 3500 4x4, 6.6L diesel, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows & locks. #271325.....\$24,995



WORK READY

2016 Chev. 2500 4x4, 6.0L V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power windows & locks. #169797.....\$38,995



NEW SPEARBED

2015 Chev. 2500 4x4, 6.0L V8 gas, auto, A/C, tilt, cruise, power mirrors, windows & locks. #105877.....\$34,995



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AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK




People are shipping their calf crops and these guys are getting ready to hibernate.🐾



AG *elsewhere* WYOMING

PHOTO BY TRESSA LAWRENCE

October can bring a variety of weather to ranchers in Wyoming. This snow storm hit in mid-October of 2020, leaving ranchers scrambling to get their feed trucks ready a little sooner than anticipated. 



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New construction on 2 acres in a nice area south of Whitesboro and minutes to Hwy 377. The attractive barndominium design offers 2,100sf of interior living space, a large partial wrap around porch, and a 1,200 square foot insulated garage. Early July completion.

232 Stiles Rd, Whitesboro TX | \$569,900

LUXURY HOME ON 3.13 ACRES



This Striking French County-Style 4,400sf Luxury Home sits on 3-plus acres in the exclusive Butterfield Junction neighborhood across from the Isle du Bois State Park & Lake Ray Roberts. Ideal design for entertaining with Game & Media Rooms, a 600sf cvd patio and pool.

6247 Valley Creek, Pilot Point TX | \$1,599,000

13.67 ACRES WITH TREES



This choice tract is the perfect setting for a custom home on acreage. With about 3 acres of pasture at the front along Cr217, it has a gentle elevation rise into approximately 10 acres of oaks and other trees, making this an ideal property if you want character and privacy.

County Road 217, Collinsville TX | \$499,900

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LAND MARKET REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2022

By Jared Groce

Historic Sales Price Trend



Texas is in a perpetual state of drought, interrupted by the regular 1,000 year flood. August has proven that once again for us, but we are grateful for the rain.


August and September have historically been very slow months in the land market, and this year has been no exception. I am seeing agents lower the list price on land in mass quantities, but the buyers are just not as active right now as they have been, so the number of transactions are still below what they have been in the recent past. I have a feeling this will pick up again in October through the end of the year, yet others believe this is the beginning of the decline in land transactions in our area. Only time will tell.

The good news is land prices are still holding steady on closed transactions, and there is more inventory available now than we have seen in quite a while.

While there are still no "bargains" to be

had, there are many properties available that are very fairly priced for our market and are of good quality.

While the increased interest rates have helped to slow some of the business down, the

cash buyers are increasing their desire to park cash in a safe place to hedge against inflation, as well the 1031 exchange buyers who have a limited amount of time to get something else bought to defer their capital gains taxes. 

COOKE COUNTY				
CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
VALLEY VIEW	30.930	\$21,012.00	93.40	62
ERA	98.100	\$20,000.00	100.00	5
WHITESBORO	51.500	\$24,094	100.40	280
AVG	60.180	\$21,702.00	97.90	116

DENTON COUNTY				
CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
SANGER	14.000	\$24,245.00	85.10	9
PONDER	15.000	\$33,333.00	74.10	90
SANGER	40.000	\$35,000.00	100.00	160
KRUM	139.220	\$27,997.00	99.90	75
PILOT POINT	18.000	\$51,792.00	86.30	164
DENTON	30.000	\$53,167.00	100.00	86
SANGER	181.400	\$26,461.00	88.20	67
AVG	62.520	\$35,999.00	90.50	93

MONTAGUE COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
BOWIE	11.000	\$12,591.00	91.60	95
SAINT JO	180.180	\$8,500.00	86.00	91
MONTAGUE	20.500	\$17,268.00	99.70	109
SAINT JO	155.950	\$17,954.00	169.70	341
AVG	91.910	\$14,078.00	111.80	159

WISE COUNTY				
	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
PARADISE	10.000	\$200.00	1.00	1
CHICO	10.760	\$12,086.00	96.30	142
BRIDGEPORT	16.260	\$14,391.00	95.90	307
DECATUR	10.330	\$24,062.00	100.00	37
DECATUR	12.830	\$21,437.00	96.50	43
DECATUR	11.000	\$25,000.00	100.00	68
ALVORD	16.550	\$22,659.00	100.00	124
NEW FAIRVIEW	10.380	\$46,243.00	96.30	7
DECATUR	140.000	\$13,571.00	93.60	227
AVG	26.460	\$19,961.00	86.60	106



Prepare Rams for Breeding Season

By Barry Whitworth, DVM

The breeding season for most sheep breeds in the northern hemisphere normally runs from August through December. Most sheep producers will introduce their rams to the ewe flock beginning in late August or early September. For the sheep operation to be profitable, 95 percent of the ewes must become pregnant during the breeding season. To have high pregnancy rates, several husbandry practices need to be managed throughout the year. One critical factor for a successful breeding season is developing and managing rams.

Managing rams for the breeding season is a yearlong process. The process begins with selecting breeding prospects for the flock. Most rams are selected based on physical appearance. Obviously, an animal needs to have physical characteristics that are appealing, but producers should also consider genetic information. Sources of genetic information for the prospect come from reproductive records of the sire and dam or in the form of Expected Breeding Values. EBVs are heritable traits that can be measured. More information about EBVs can be found at the National Sheep Improvement Program.

Since physical condition plays an important role in reproductive potential, nutrition needs to be emphasized. Onset of puberty is influenced by age and weight. Puberty starts when young rams reach a weight of about 65 percent of their mature body weight. This will require young rams to be fed a high-quality diet. For rams to perform at their reproductive best, they should start the breeding season in a body condition score from 3.5 to four (1=emaciated and 5=obese). This requires rams to be body conditioned a few months



Managing rams for the breeding season is a yearlong process. The process begins with selecting breeding prospects for the flock. Most rams are selected based on physical appearance. (Courtesy photos)

before the breeding season. Rams that score below three will need to be fed a good plain of nutrition to ensure a BCS of 3.5 to four before being turned out. Also, rams that are in poor body condition often fail breeding soundness evaluations.

Another important tool in improving reproductive efficiency in the flock is a Breeding Soundness Evaluation. Sheep producers sometimes bypass a BSE due to time, labor and cost. However, rams that pass a BSE will improve the overall production of the flock with increases in the number of lambs born, lambing rates and other economic parameters. The evaluation has two components, a physical exam and a semen evaluation. The physical exam should inspect the mouth, teeth and eyes. Age should be determined for the animal. Confirmation of

the animal needs to be checked. There should be no issues with mobility so special attention should be given to legs and feet. The ram should be assigned a body condition score. The external reproductive organs (prepuce, penis, testicles, epididymis, scrotum) should be inspected. The scrotum should be measured and be at least 30 cm in diameter for ram lambs and 32 cm for older rams. The testicles should be palpated for abnormalities.

Once the physical exam is completed, the ram should be collected and the semen evaluated. At least 50 percent of the sperm cells should have progressive motility and 80 percent of the sperm should be normal. Any findings of white blood cells in the ejaculate should be investigated for infectious causes such as *Brucella ovis*.

Environmental conditions may

negatively impact sperm. For example, this summer has seen some very high temperatures. Extreme heat is detrimental to sperm production and morphology. Producers need to manage rams to prevent the negative impacts of hot weather. One of the best tools to combat heat stress is to provide shade and abundant amounts of cool fresh water. Wool lambs may benefit from shearing. Cold weather can be detrimental as well. Rams need to be protected from extreme cold temperatures.

Disease prevention is essential for a healthy flock. The number one health issue for sheep is internal parasites, so internal and external parasites need to be controlled. Rams need to be vaccinated for *Clostridium perfringens* Types C and D as well as tetanus. Producers should consult with their veterinarian for additional

information on vaccination for sheep flocks. Certain diseases in rams such as *B. ovis*, pizzle-rot, and urinary calculi can affect fertility. Producers may want to test for some of these diseases such as *B. ovis*. Other disease conditions will require constant monitoring for abnormalities.


Lastly, producers need to use proper male to female ratios during the breeding season. Mature rams can breed 30 to 50 ewes depending on the situation. In contrast, experts advise that ram lambs should be exposed to 15 to 30 ewes. Also, producers need to continually monitor rams during the breeding season. Any trouble with mobility, illness or extreme loss of body condition could result in fewer bred ewes. Producers need to be ready to replace rams with issues.

Reproductive efficiency of the flock depends on several factors.

Ewes and rams are equally responsible for a successful breeding season.

However, if one ewe has issues, a producer loses one set of lambs. If a ram goes bad, the producer stands to lose much more. This is why it is very important to manage rams carefully for a successful breeding season. Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension has a fact sheet that provides more detailed information on ram Breeding Soundness Evaluations. The fact sheet can be found at local OSU County Extension offices or at <https://extension.okstate.edu>.

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Return on Investment

By Krista Lucas Wynn

It is an interesting time in the horse breeding business. The market seems to be holding steady and prices are still on the high side specifically for barrel racing horses paid into incentives. An incentive is a relatively new term, where a breeder, owner or rider can pay their horse into it based on how one is bred. For example, if a horse is by the industry's leading stallion JL Dash Ta Heaven, that offspring is eligible for Ruby Buckle, Breeders Challenge, Future Fortunes, Triple Crown 100, Colorado Classic, Select Stallion Stakes, and Whitmire Ranch Incentive.

The offspring also become eligible to compete at the big money races put on by these incentives, creating motivation to breed to the stallions paid into these programs. In 2004, Future Fortunes was the first of its kind to bring together stallion owners to enhance the breeding of barrel horses. Owners pay a nomination fee to enroll the offspring of top stallions into the program, making them eligible for bonus money and prizes at certain events.

In 2018, the Pink Buckle barrel race was created to promote and increase the number of quality barrel racing horses. Offspring of Pink Buckle stallions are eligible to compete at the 4D race and futurity, held at the Lazy E Arena in Guthrie, Okla.

The event pays out life-changing money, with horses being paid into the incentive yearly. This year's race, October 3-9, will pay out \$3.3 million.

Ruby Buckle is basically a waiting list for Pink Buckle stallions and consists of three regional races. This incentive has paid out \$2.2 million to breeders, owners and riders in 2022, with the stallion list continuing to grow.



Pictured is Sharin Hall, 2021 Breeders Challenge Futurity Champion, winning more than \$140,000. (Photo courtesy Jade Ford at Breeders Challenge)

Recently, at the Ruby Buckle sale, seven-year-old stallion, Famous Sierra, sold for \$320,000, with his slot into the incentive being included. With high demand, stallion slots can go for thousands and thousands of dollars.

The Breeders Challenge, created in 2020, is an incentive that prides itself in promoting the stallion owners of the barrel racing industry.

Created by Lainie and Ray Whitmire, and Jade and Rick Ford, they strive to bring something new and exciting to the table.

"This is essentially our second year," Jade said. "Currently, we have paid \$340,000 over last year, and we hope it will continue growing."

With many stallions to choose from, owners of the offspring can pay a one-time nomination fee

of \$250 to enroll the offspring as a yearling and be eligible to compete at the qualifier races for a chance to compete at the finale. There is something for everyone at the Breeders Challenge events including futurities, derbys, amateur races, and the open.

"What sets us apart in a unique way is our single enrollment fee and a single entry fee," Jade explained. "Once you qualify for the Finale, your entry fees are covered."

The 2022 championship race is September 13-17 at Will Rogers Memorial Center in Fort Worth, Texas. The event will feature everyone from professional trainers, amateurs and world champions such as Jordan Briggs, who punched her ticket at the Lucky Dog in Memphis, Tenn., and also highlight the industry's top stal-

lions and owners.

"It will be a \$1.3 million Finale, and this year we have also added a youth and senior division," Jade said. "We aim to have a big event that is a celebration of everyone in our industry, especially the stallion owners that make it all possible."

Incentives such as the Breeders Challenge provides an opportunity to get a return on an investment that is essentially part of the family, and without the stallion owners' blood, sweat and tears producing quality barrel horses, there would be no offspring to compete on.

"Incentive programs offer tremendous opportunity," Jade said. "Stallion owners deserve something too."

For more information, visit www.breederschallenge.com.



Play Hurt, Not Injured

By Phillip Kitts

Here we are, rolled past the end of the 2022 rodeo season, and the list of casualties has grown and shrunk more than once.

It never fails, as each year rolls into July, the rodeo world receives story after story of athletes injured and having to take some time off. The shocking part would be how many athletes who are teetering between hurt and injured are probably making a critical decision when it comes to rolling on in the season.

So, what is the difference between hurt and injured? How can one play hurt, but not play injured? In this analysis, it is best to get to the root of the rodeo athlete. Every rodeo discipline comes with a certain amount of risk, especially the rough stock cowboys.

Starting in October, every rough stock athlete kicks off the new season with their eyes set on a gold buckle. Usually in the winter months the lower quantity of rodeos comes with a lesser injury list. Yes, guys still get hurt in the winter, but traditionally the injuries tend to be more severe but not as common.

As winter turns to spring and rodeo activity elevates, cowboys really focus on getting to as many rodeos as they can. In a lot of cases this will include three or more rodeos in one weekend. These numbers are not a hard fast rule. If a guy can set a run up right, he may compete at a rodeo on Tuesday, fly to his next on Wednesday and then progress through an entire week with this type of schedule.

Now, take a moment and imagine getting on these wild animals, getting thrashed around, then sitting in a plane or a car for hours to get to your next one. This is a recipe for injury, and with the pure quantity of risk these cowboys put themselves through it is hard not



Starting in October, every rough stock athlete kicks off the new season with their eyes set on a gold buckle.

imagine even more injuries.

Inherently what a rodeo cowboy does is going to result in some pain. If it is not just getting thrown around, then there is the rough get off or the animal who does not want to cooperate in the chute.

It is not always true, but a soft rule is these scenarios turn into hurt. The words, “no pain, no gain,” are not truly good ones, but they hold the truth for a rodeo cowboy. Getting on 100 head a year means pain becomes part of the game.

Injury is a whole different thing. When a guy breaks a bone or tears a tendon among the huge list of injuries that happen in the sport of rodeo, then a little pain is different.

This year alone, professional rodeo has seen a list ranging from broken bones to torn body parts, not including the dreaded

concussion.

This gets to the meat and potatoes of the discussion, when a guy is on a heater and sitting in the top 15 but starts to suffer some pain before and after rides.

The real pressure is that same cowboy knowing he must continue to get on in order to stay in the top 15. In the same scenario, the cowboy who suffers a flat injury, has to put enough focus on properly healing before coming back to protect his spot or even regain his spot in the standings.

The truth is this probably varies from cowboy to cowboy. Some guys just tolerate pain better, while others recover and cope with injuries better. Now the truth is a very shaded line that the best decisions are not always made. On a day to day, you can watch a rodeo and instantly notice a cowboy who needs to recognize

the difference between playing hurt and playing injured. It never fails that at nearly every big rodeo you will see more than one athlete hobble their way out of the arena. If they are interviewed, the answer is, “It is just little aches and pains of rodeo.”

Something that is noteworthy and should probably receive more attention is the cowboy who makes the tough call.

The one who recognizes the line between hurt and injured and when the line is crossed, makes the decision to preserve themselves with time off or the proper medical care.

The true praises should be paid to these cowboys who believe in their future and set a good example for the up and comers. There is no shame in the macho tough guy, but that same persona walks a real thin line.



On the other hand, maybe the sport of rodeo needs to find compromising ground and develop some type of protection for a cowboy who is hurt and must take some time off.

The reality is there is probably no good solution for the guy who is injured and living in the sport of rodeo. The comparison to other sports is not a very good one, but in this case it may fit.

In other sports, the injured reserve still receives a paycheck and is provided resources. Just the same in other sports, injuries can take you out of contention but in most cases, there is a grace period where a guy gets a chance to come back.

Fact is, rodeo has never been a "safe sport," and there is none tougher than the rodeo athlete. We can only hope tough and smart decision making can meet somewhere in the middle. 🐾



Rodeo has never been a "safe sport," and there is none tougher than the rodeo athlete. (Photos courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)



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Equine Ocular Disease Part 3 – Ocular Trauma

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM

It is no secret that horses like to hurt themselves, just ask any horse owner and they will be happy to share some horse injury stories. Oftentimes these injuries can involve the tissue around or near the eyes. This final installment in this series will focus on trauma related to ocular tissue and surrounding structures of the eye and discuss other abnormalities that focus on the tissue around the eyes.

Soft Tissue Injuries

Eyelids are commonly injured in horses from lacerations on feed buckets, stalls or various other structures. The eyelids for any species are essential for the health of the cornea. The eyelids spread the tears across the surface of the cornea to keep the cornea from drying out and secrete a specific layer of the tear film to keep the tears from evaporating so quickly. It is very important to repair any eyelid laceration as quickly and as accurately as possible versus removing the damaged eyelid tissue. Some eyelid lacerations will be severely damaged to the point that owners or veterinarians will think that it is impossible for the tissue to survive, but the rule is always try and save the eyelids even if it looks hopeless. Most of the time eyelid lacerations can be repaired standing with local anesthesia and sedation, but occasionally some repairs are needed under general anesthesia to do the best possible repair. Corneal ulceration or laceration is always a concern whenever there is trauma in close proximity to the eye. Corneal tissue and other components of the eye must be examined thoroughly to make sure there is no direct ocular injury and if there is presence of injury, it will need to be addressed as well.

Soft tissue infections can occur around the eye that can be dangerous to the integrity of the ocular tissue. Infections that can occur are mostly secondary to trauma or foreign bodies that have penetrated the tissue around the eye such as wood material or other objects. These infections can include the conjunctiva, muscle tissue that provides movement to the eye and abscesses that develop deep in the eye socket. The deeper infections are the most critical cases that can require surgery to access the abscess to drain and relieve the swelling that



Eyelids are commonly injured in horses from lacerations on feed buckets, stalls or various other structures. (Photos courtesy of Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM)

is associated with the abscess. These deep abscesses are often trapped between the orbital bone of the skull and the ocular tissue. Culture of the bacteria causing the infection and good drainage with active suction drains are often needed to have a successful outcome before too much damage occurs to the eye itself.

Lacerations around the face and orbit can cause damage to nerves that operate the eyelids and tear production to the eye. These injuries can be blunt leading to temporary nerve damage that can be managed with anti-inflammatory medications, time and sometimes alternative treatments such as acupuncture. While waiting for the nerve function to return the eye needs to be protected from drying out and often requires daily treatment. Complete lacerations or severing of nerves will lead to permanent dysfunction and often will require long term treatments such as a permanent closure of the eyelids or removal of the eye.

Ocular Cancers

Cancers of the eyelids, third eyelid and of the ocular surface are certainly another common issue that occurs. These cancers are more common in certain breeds such as Paints and Appaloosas. The most common cancer is

squamous cell carcinoma of light color skin horses around the eyes. SCC is a locally aggressive cancer that is slow to metastasize to other tissues or other locations. Because of the locally aggressive nature and fairly rapid growth rate, aggressive and early treatment is necessary to avoid removal of the eye. Local aggressive chemotherapies, cryotherapy and even local radiation treatments are options after surgical removal of the majority if not all of the mass. Other forms of cancer can plaque the ocular area such as melanoma and lymphoma, but these are less common compared to SCC.


Skull and Orbital Fractures

Skull fractures that involve the bones around the eye can significantly put the eye and ocular tissue at risk. The fractures often cause compression on the orbit itself and distortion of the eye and eyelid movement. Simple fractures around the eye sometimes only need to be surgically mobilized back into the correct positions with bone hooks or other methods to take the pressure off the eye and allow them to heal without implants. More severe fractures can require reconstruction plates and screws to fix the bones back into correct position until the

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fracture heels. A common simple fracture is the bone that makes the top arch of the eye called the zygomatic process of the frontal bone. This bone is often fractured and depressed into the eye from blunt trauma such as running into unmovable objections or getting kicked from other horses. The zygomatic process fracture can be repaired simply by using a bone hook passed under the upper eyelid and bone to use careful traction to pull the bone back into place without the need of plates and screws. The reason the bone typically stays in place is the fracture ends will interdigitate with each other to provide enough rigidity to hold the bone fragments in place.

Complex bone fractures can require more extensive repairs with a combination of plates, screws, wires and even suture to hold fracture skull pieces in place. Whenever there are serious injuries that involve bone, ocular tissue and the sinus cavity, infection can be a complicating factor. Sinus infections, bone sequestrums and intraocular infections are a risk factor with traumatic injuries to the skull. These complications are not always avoidable and need to be addressed whenever they arise. 



Lacerations around the face and orbit can cause damage to nerves that operate the eyelids and tear production to the eye.

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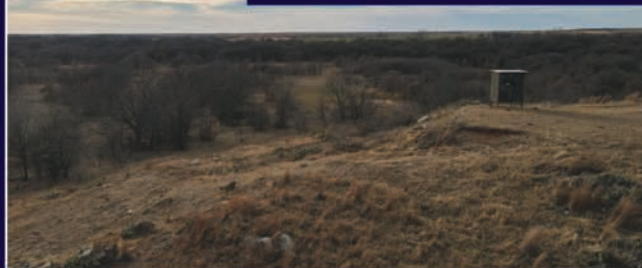


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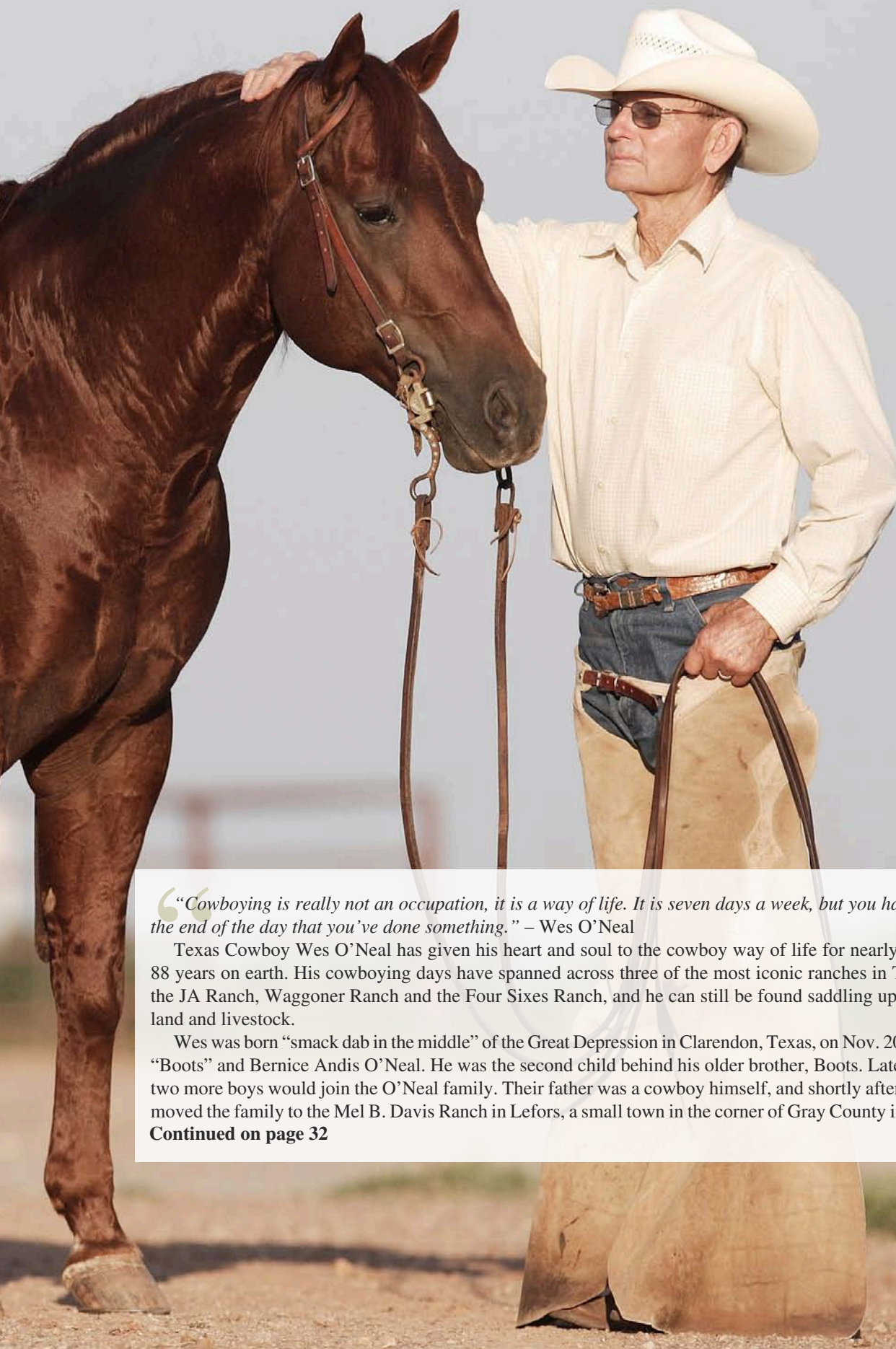
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WES O'NEAL

Cowboying: It's a Way of Life

Cowboy Wes O'Neal and stallion Doc O Boots aka "Boots" in 2008. (Photo courtesy Wes O'Neal)



“Cowboying is really not an occupation, it is a way of life. It is seven days a week, but you have fulfillment at the end of the day that you’ve done something.” – Wes O’Neal

Texas Cowboy Wes O’Neal has given his heart and soul to the cowboy way of life for nearly every bit of his 88 years on earth. His cowboying days have spanned across three of the most iconic ranches in Texas, including the JA Ranch, Waggoner Ranch and the Four Sixes Ranch, and he can still be found saddling up to care for both land and livestock.

Wes was born “smack dab in the middle” of the Great Depression in Clarendon, Texas, on Nov. 20, 1933, to James “Boots” and Bernice Andis O’Neal. He was the second child behind his older brother, Boots. Later, four girls and two more boys would join the O’Neal family. Their father was a cowboy himself, and shortly after Wes’s birth, he moved the family to the Mel B. Davis Ranch in Lefors, a small town in the corner of Gray County in the Panhandle.

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Continued from page 31

It is where Wes began his education.

However, in 1941, the senior O'Neal's pay grossed a mere \$720. With so many mouths to feed, he decided it was time to stop cowboying, and the family moved to Amarillo, where he went to work for a construction company helping with the building of Pantex. But Lefors was home, and they returned, where Wes remained the rest of his childhood while his father worked for the county.

His cowboying days began at just 13 years old, breaking broncs with Boots for area ranchers. His formal education came to an end in 10th grade when the brothers left school to begin working full time.

"I left school in the 10th grade. I tell people that schooling was getting in the way of my education, but actually, there just wasn't any money," Wes said. "There were six kids still at home, and Dad's health was failing. I left to help out a bit."

He continued working odd jobs for a few small ranches before landing at the historic JA Ranch. The ranch, established in 1875, is one of the oldest privately owned cattle operations in the Texas Panhandle.

"I learned more there than any other place, but I guess it was because I had so much to learn," Wes recalled.

It was the perfect place to hone his craft. The JA Ranch encompassed 10,000 cows on 320,000 acres. Wes was able to work side-by-side with Boots, and the pair broke horses for the ranch, receiving \$15 for riding each four-year-old a total of five times. Then, the horse was sent off with a cowboy.

When he moved to cowboying out on the wagon, every meal was made on a pot rack and Dutch oven. The menu included beef, gravy, beans, and potatoes. They



Cowboy Wes O'Neal's cowboy career has spanned across three of the most historic ranches in Texas, including the JA Ranch, Waggoner Ranch and Four Sixes Ranch. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

ran seven to eight thousand cows every year while shipping an estimated four million pounds of beef for consumption.

The wagon was pulled by four large Percheron horses, and the cook had to have the ability to both prepare meals and drive the wagon, which moved every three to four days. In 1954, ranch management quit using the wagon when it became too difficult to find a cook who would also drive.

Jobs on the wagon were not for the faint of heart. It pulled out in late March and did not pull back in until Thanksgiving and the cowboys slept on bedrolls in teepees.

Wes was eventually promoted to wagon boss, where he served for two years until his manager was let go in 1957. He decided it was time to move on as well and did odd jobs before being drafted into the Army. He would go on to do six months of active duty in

Fort Carson, Colo., followed by five years in the Reserves.

"I never fired a shot or missed a meal," Wes said. "It was during the time between Korea and Vietnam. We were just playing soldier. At one time in those five years, they called me up to go to Fort Sill for a two-week tune-up."

On Sept. 1, 1958, Wes went to work for the Waggoner Ranch where he put in 58 years of uninterrupted service. He met his beautiful wife, Patricia, on the ranch, and they were married for 53 years until her passing in 2013. The couple had two daughters, Tracy and Tammy, along with eight grandchildren, including six boys and two girls.

The Waggoner Ranch was founded by Dan Waggoner, who purchased land in Wise County and began investing in longhorn cattle. He continued to add to his land holdings until the 1870s, at which point his ranch included property in Wilbarger, Archer, Wichita, Baylor, Knox, and Foard counties. The headquarters were established in Vernon, and before the sale of the Waggoner in 2016, the ranch included 525,000 contiguous acres, making it the largest ranch in the nation under one fence.

Wes began on the ranch as a working cowboy before being promoted to wagon boss, a title he held for 12 years. As wagon boss, Wes oversaw around 20 cowboys and 200 horses in the remuda. He was under the direction of the ranch foreman, and his responsibilities included gathering cattle, branding, weaning calves, loading and trucking cattle, and much more.

"You're also responsible for what I call culling the undesirables out of the beef herd. You keep count of that. In the fall, you're weaning and separating steers from heifers. They go to different places, but you're responsible for counting them. Back when I was


Continued on page 34



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**Continued from page 32**

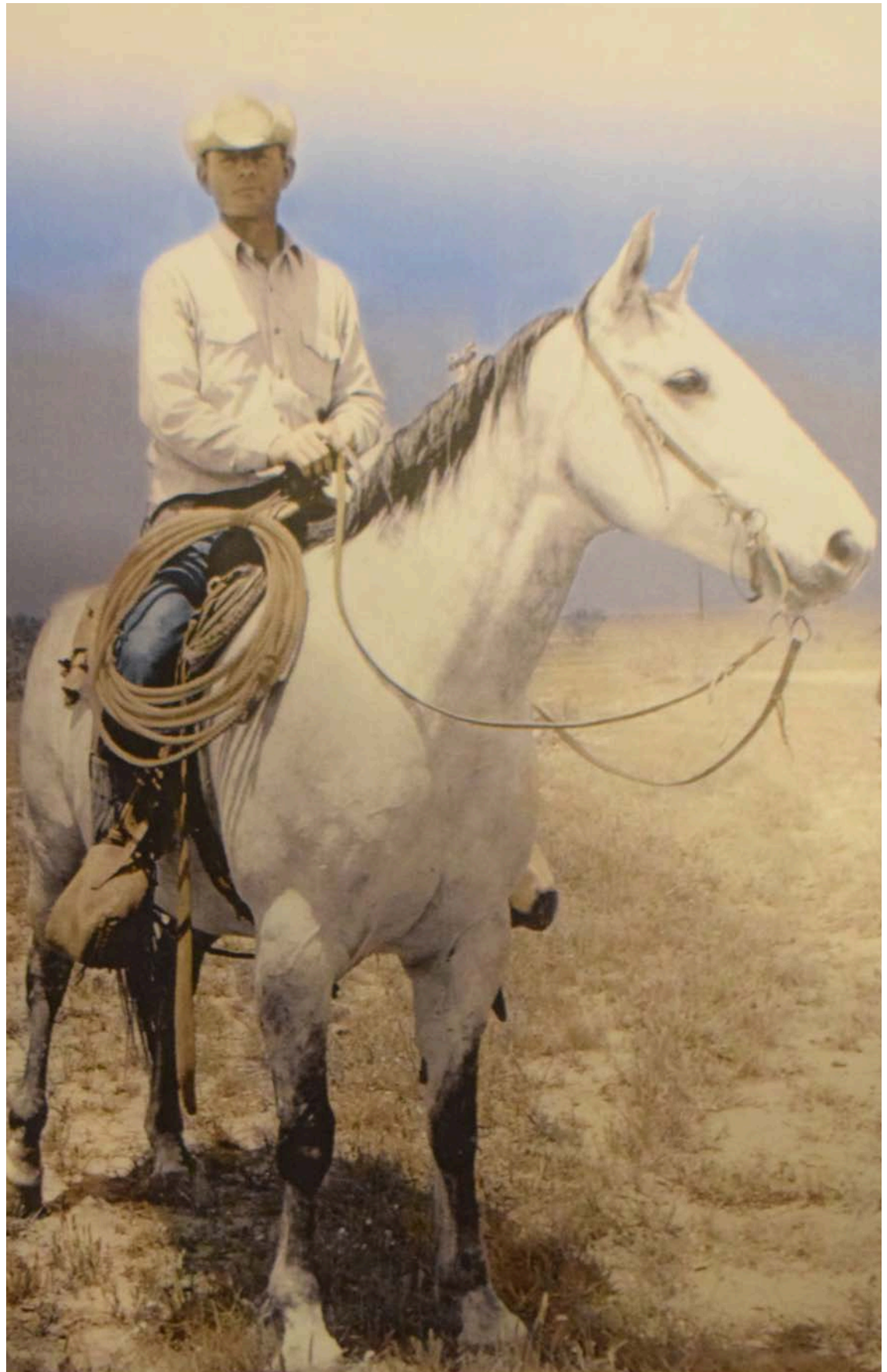
doing it, there were no computers, no internet, and not even cell phones. You just kept all that in a tally book in your shirt pocket,” Wes said.

The biggest challenge of a cowboy’s job in his opinion is being mentally tough. However, for Wes, every single second was worth the hazards of sleeping on hard ground, long days and nights, and all the aches and pains.

“Cowboying is not an occupation, it is a way of life. You’ve either got it or you ain’t got it. For a lot of people, it is seven days a week, but there is fulfillment in it. You’re not punching that eight to five clock. You’re somewhat individual still because you’re out there taking care of livestock. You are also a conservationist taking care of the land,” Wes said. “Even though we don’t own the cattle, we tend to them just like they were ours. We go out there and help the cow have the calf, save an old mare’s colt, or help one get out of the fence when they get tangled up. You have satisfaction at the end of the day that you’ve done something. If you’re just there on an assembly line putting wheels on Cadillacs, when that five o’clock whistle blows, if you just have three wheels on, you quit anyway. It’ll be there the next morning. In cowboying, if you’re trying to pen that old bull who is mad at you and five o’clock comes, you don’t just quit him. You stay until you get ‘er done.”

In 1975, Wes was moved to White Face, horse headquarters of the Waggoner Ranch near Electra. He was named horse manager, while Boots, who had previously held the position, was promoted to overall ranch foreman, and the two continued to work together. Their younger brother, Joel, also joined them on the Waggoner Ranch, where he worked for 50 years before retirement when the ranch was sold.

As horse manager, Wes was



Cowboy Wes O'Neal says cowboying is not an occupation, but a way of life. (Photo courtesy Wes O'Neal)



responsible for raising and breaking all the horses provided to the cowboys on the ranch. During his time as manager, several advances were made, including keeping records that could be referred to regarding the outcomes of mare and stud crosses. Those that did not produce the best offspring were eliminated from the program, allowing a remarkable improvement in the quality of horses for the ranch. Wes stayed at White Face until 2000, when he semi-retired.

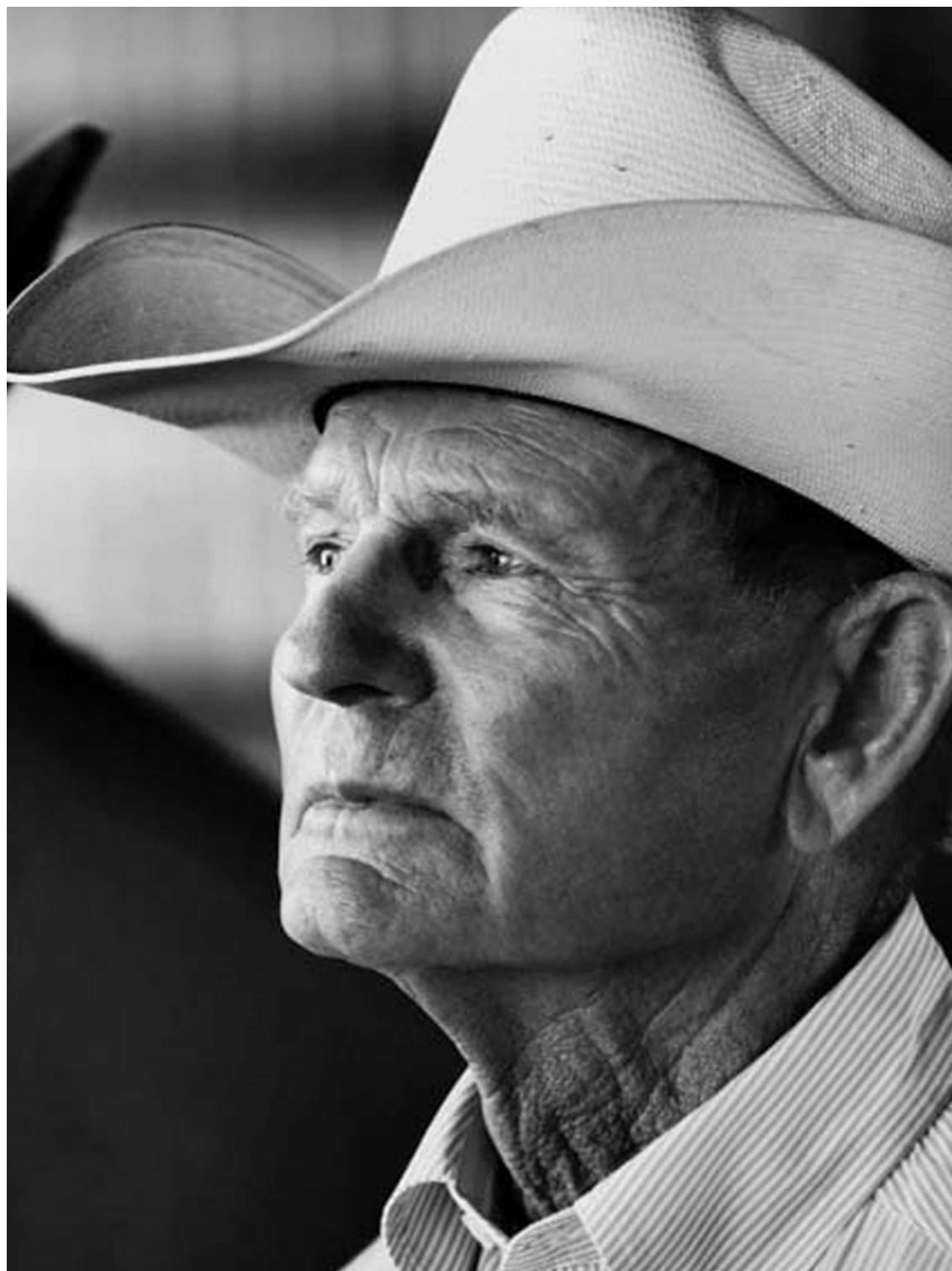
“They wanted me to stay a little while and get the new man acclimated. Show him the things I had done,” Wes said.

He wound up staying until 2016 when the historic ranch was sold. During his career, Wes saw many changes to the cattle industry, such as ranchers beginning to use goosenecks in the 1970s. Instead of having to saddle up to lope cows to the backside of a pasture, they were loaded up in a trailer and hauled. It made the task much quicker, and it required fewer horses and men to do the job. In the 1990s, cell phones came along, further changing how cattle operations were ran.

“Cell phones were really a great communication help. If you’re down there in the pasture, you can just call anybody on the line if you need some help. If you’re gathering bulls, you can check with each other. A lot of ranches also started using helicopters. Waggoner Ranch used one, but I think there will always be a place for a man on a horse in rough country,” Wes predicted.

He recalled Ray Hunt also showed horsemen more humane ways to start a horse, another significant change to the industry.

“He showed us how to take a little more time to mess with them and that you could saddle them without tying up a foot. The Ranch Horse Association of America made all of us better horsemen. At the first show I



Cowboy Wes O'Neal has seen many changes over the course of his career, which began when he was just 13 years old. (Photo courtesy Wes O'Neal)

went to, Bill Smith had the only horse that would lope in the correct lead or change leads when you asked him. You go to one of those shows now, you better be mounted if you’re going to get in the money,” Wes chuckled. “The

ranchers also have improved their horses. They have taken that old foundation bloodline and crossed them on these world champion reining and cutting horses. They have bred a horse that you can cowboy on or go to an arena and

show him. Nearly all the ranches now have arenas and roping cattle, cutting cattle, where you can tune your horses.”

While there have been many changes over Wes’s cowboy ca-

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Wes O'Neal's main piece of advice to other cowboys is to always be aware. (Photo courtesy Wes O'Neal)

Continued from page 35

reer, the advice he always gives new cowboys has not.

"You have got to be alert. Keep your eye on the wagon boss because he might signal you. Don't ride up to the herd and just go over there and get your cell phone and start looking. Don't go visiting with the next man. Stay in your portion there that you're supposed to be guarding and be ready to go if the wagon boss needs you to come help. You've got to know when to ride up, when to pull up and when to shut up. That's what Buster Welch said," Wes said with a smile.

He also warns cowboys must be prepared for what they are getting themselves into. It must be a passion, not something done for the riches.

"If you're going to cowboy, you'll accept the fact you're never going to be rich and probably going to be injured from time to time," Wes explained.

Despite pushing 90, Wes still was not ready to hang up his cowboy hat after the sale of the Waggoner Ranch. Instead, he went to work on the Four Sixes as a dayworker. The Four Sixes was founded in the 1870s by Samuel Burk Burnett, and is one

of the nation's most well-known ranches thanks to its production of some of the best American Quarter Horses in the country along with recent Hollywood attention. The ranch spans two disparate properties in the Rolling Plains and the Panhandle, with headquarters near Guthrie, Texas.

While it was not where he called home for more than 50 years like the Waggoner Ranch, the work was similar, and he fit right in.

"It was no different, it's the same. You catch a horse and go make a roundup. You're either branding or weaning calves, gath-

ering bulls or whatever needs to be done," Wes said.

At the time, the ranch had property in South Dakota, two in Montana, three in Wyoming, and two in Nevada.

"They leased them during the dry weather of 2011. It got so dry they had to move a bunch of cattle off from Guthrie, so from 2016 to 2021 in the spring and fall, I would go with them branding, and then in the fall, weaning calves," Wes said.

His last trip was as recent as the spring of 2021. Wes makes his home in Holliday, and three to

Continued on page 39



Wes O'Neal says it has been a great life working as a cowboy, and he has met many wonderful people.



Wes O'Neal and his beautiful wife, Patricia, who he met while working on the Waggoner Ranch. (Photos courtesy Wes O'Neal)



Wes O'Neal was the 2013 recipient of this Working Ranch Cowboy award. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

Continued from page 37

four days a week, he can be found horseback beside his grandson, Cole Hatfield, who works the Cowan Camp of the Waggoner Ranch, which includes 35,000 acres in his care.

“We just got done gathering the bulls. It has been a lifesaver for me. I never did have a hobby. I didn’t fish, didn’t hunt much, didn’t play golf, so there wasn’t a whole lot for me to do. It’s a long day just sitting around here. We get along well, and I’m trying to school him a little, but he’s a good cowboy. His dad was a cowboy, too,” Wes said.

This month, Wes will be honored as the fourth recipient of the Ranching Heritage Association Working Cowboy Award during the 44th Annual National Golden Spur Award dinner.


The Ranching Heritage Association, a national non-profit membership organization supporting the programs of the center, sponsors the award on an annual basis to honor a working cowboy skilled in all aspects of ranch work and respected by the ranch crew and the ranching community.

The press release notes that award nominations for Wes described him as “the real deal” working cowboy who has served for decades as a role model for young cowboys.

Wes is confident about the younger cowboys he has had the chance to mentor and about the future of agriculture.

“I think that the cowboy nation is in good shape,” Wes said. “There are good, young cowboys on all these ranches.”

As for Wes, he plans on many more days in the saddle with Cole and is thankful for the years he has had as a cowboy.

“I know that I am 88, and I am headed down the trail to the end of my cowboy days, but it’s been a great life. I have met so many different, wonderful people,” Wes concluded. 



(Above) Wes O’Neal horseback with his great-grandson, Hayes Wes Hatfield, by his side. Photo courtesy Wes O’Neal. (Left) Wes O’Neal can still be found saddling up three to four days a week, caring for the land and livestock. Photo by Dani Blackburn.



Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Vilhauer

No Bake Reese's Peanut Butter Chocolate Banana Cream Pie

Time: 25 minutes + 6 hours chill time | **Serves:** 10

Ingredients:

Crust:
2 1/2 cups graham cracker crumbs
1/2 cup melted butter
Filling:
1/2 cup chocolate chips
1/4 cup cream
1/4 cup smooth peanut butter
1 cup half and half
1/4 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tbsp cornstarch
2 tbsp smooth peanut butter
1 tsp vanilla
2 bananas, sliced
Whipped cream, extra banana, mini peanut butter cups and peanut butter for garnish

Directions:


Crust:
Stir together graham crumbs and melted butter and press firmly into the bottom and up the sides of a 9 inch-pie plate. Bake at 350 degrees F for 8 to 9 minutes, until it looks slightly dry. (This step is optional and just helps the crust to hold up better)
Filling:
In a medium bowl, combine chocolate chips, cream and peanut butter. Microwave on high in 20-second intervals, stirring each time, until melted. Pour into the bottom of the crust.
In a medium saucepan, whisk together half and half, sugar, eggs and cornstarch until smooth. Cook over

medium heat, stirring constantly, until thickened — this can take up to 10 or 15 minutes but don't rush it.

When the filling has thickened, stir in peanut butter and vanilla until smooth.

Stir in sliced bananas. Pour this mixture into crust over chocolate. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 6 hours or overnight until set.

Top with sweetened whipped cream, sliced bananas, Reese's peanut butter cups, and peanut butter drizzle as desired.

(To drizzle peanut butter, simply heat in the microwave until it can be poured, then use a spoon or put in a decorating bag and drizzle over the pie). 



JESSE JEWELZ

By Jesse Kader

Fall is my favorite season as we transition to cooler weather and a new wardrobe. Beautiful maxi dresses are one of my favorite things, and this one is no exception. The mixed prints and embroidery make this a statement piece for so many occasions. See this beauty and more at www.jessesjewelz.com.[®]



WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

Appreciating the Quiet

Do you appreciate the quiet times in your life? I must admit this is something I sometimes have trouble with. My life has not always been as calm as it is now. When we were raising our daughter, my days were anything but calm.

My nest has been empty for more than 20 years, and my care of aging family members and pets as they came to their rainbow bridge crossing a few years ago ended as well. In the years since I have been exploring a new sense of purpose and have become more involved in our ranching life.

As I sit here on this very tranquil Saturday, I am recalling my years of tumult and pandemonium. I remember when I longed for a pause and wished for an escape to find some peace and quiet. Be careful what you wish for my friends because one day you will get it and realize how much you miss all the commotion you once had.

When I recount my first days and months living in the country, it was not so much the quiet that I noticed as much as it was the very different noises from what I was used to living in the city.

My husband had more than cows back then. He loved all kinds of fowl. In fact, when we married there were dozens of peacocks gracing the ranch as well as chickens, ducks and pheasants. Our little farmhouse did not have air conditioning yet so we slept with the windows open. We married in March so the nights were



In the years since her caregiving days came to an end, Annette Bridges has been exploring a new sense of purpose and has become more involved in ranching life. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

not too hot, but I can also say that our slumber was short because peacocks and roosters are early risers.

These days, we do not have all the critters we once did and even our cows seem quieter to me than my first memories except when it is time to wean calves.

We have more neighbors surrounding our ranch acres than 40

years ago as farms and ranches have sold and subdivided so we do have more vehicle traffic now that I could do without.

We have one cutting horse rancher who I think rarely sleeps as I hear his truck or tractor driving by at all hours some nights.

I guess the quiet that bothers me most comes from my own uncertainties about what to do with

my time when my husband does not need my help. My old routines around the house have lost their appeal and some are more difficult, so I often sit consumed by the hush.


It is in my hours of solitude when I write. I also find joy in planning and creating products to sell in my gift shop. Still, I often find myself longing for more and wondering what else I can do.

I am committed to a healthier me so I have added more exercise to my daily routines. My limited capabilities these days make this type of exercise require a bit of creativity, but I am determined to move my body more any way that I can.

It is also in these hours of stillness that I think of my sweet departed mother. I ponder how she coped with her last three years on this earth when she became stationary in a wheelchair.

She was never one to sit still and needed to find ways to stay busy. Painting became her passion. If she was awake, she had a paintbrush in her hand and canvas on the table in front of her.

These memories of my mamma inspire me to keep thinking of new and fresh ideas to explore and experience while I sit in my stillness.

Honestly, I have found when I relish in the serenity of my life and find gratitude in every moment is when I appreciate the quiet times in my ranch life the most and when new inspirations begin to bloom and blossom. 

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The Bobcat

Guest submission by Irene Henry

There is a bobcat mounted on our mantle for all to see.
My sons brought him to our house that is how it came to be.
There is more to the story that I will tell you.
I know you won't believe me I swear that it is true.
My sons were 13 and 17 years when they went for a ride.
They took off across the pasture their dogs along their side.
They came across a bobcat just out laying in the sun.
The dogs began to chase him together they did run.
The bobcat ran out of room in the canyon he would rest.
The boys caught up with them and then there was the test.
They picked up sticks and rocks and threw them at that cat.
They knocked him kind of loopy and he hit the mat.
They got home safe and sound with blood everywhere.
The pride for their great adventure both of them would share.
We stuffed that cat and put him up for everyone to see.
Because nobody would believe us about how he came to be.
I am going to get them one big stick and pay for their plane fair.
I am going send them to Alaska just to get me a polar bear. 🐻



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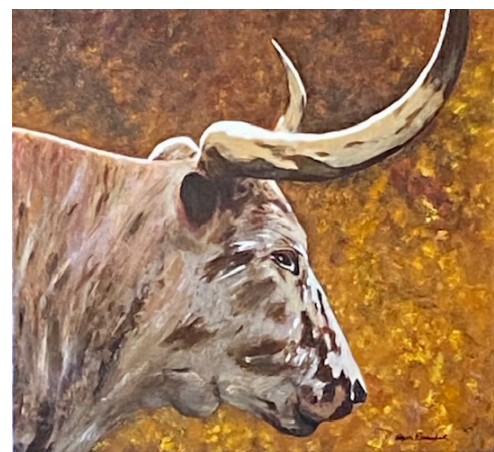
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On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean | tonydean.tx1@gmail.com


Annual threeawn

The threeawns are a rather large family of grasses in North Texas grazing lands. There are up to 11 different species, about half of them annuals and the rest perennials. They all have at least one common identifying trait which is the presence of three hair-like awns arranged like helicopter blades above each small seed.

As its name indicates, Annual threeawn must come up from seed each year. Bunches grow from six to 20 inches tall and can branch at the stems. The seeds mature in late summer, and once mature become rigid and capable of attaching themselves to any object that touches the plants. If you have walked through pastures in low-quarter shoes, you probably got a few threeawn seeds in your socks. The stiff seeds can get caught in mouths and eyes of livestock and contaminate wool and mohair.

This grass does have one redeeming value. It is considered a pioneer grass because it is an aggressive invader and quickly establishes on areas of bare or depleted soil, thereby furnishing at least some cover on the land to protect against erosion. It is also called Oldfield threeawn or Prairie threeawn.

Annual threeawn can be considered a DECOM grass, meaning, "don't ever count on me." Do not be fooled by a few green leaves in early spring, it will soon become more of a liability.

Proper grazing management is a good way to eventually reduce the amount of Annual threeawn in a pasture. If the better grasses are healthy and increasing, they will begin to crowd out the Annual threeawn. 



Grazing Value of This Plant

Annual Threeawn



- Must germinate from seed each year.
- Short life span.
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- Grazing available a few weeks per year.



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Confessions of a HUNTER

By Andy Anderson

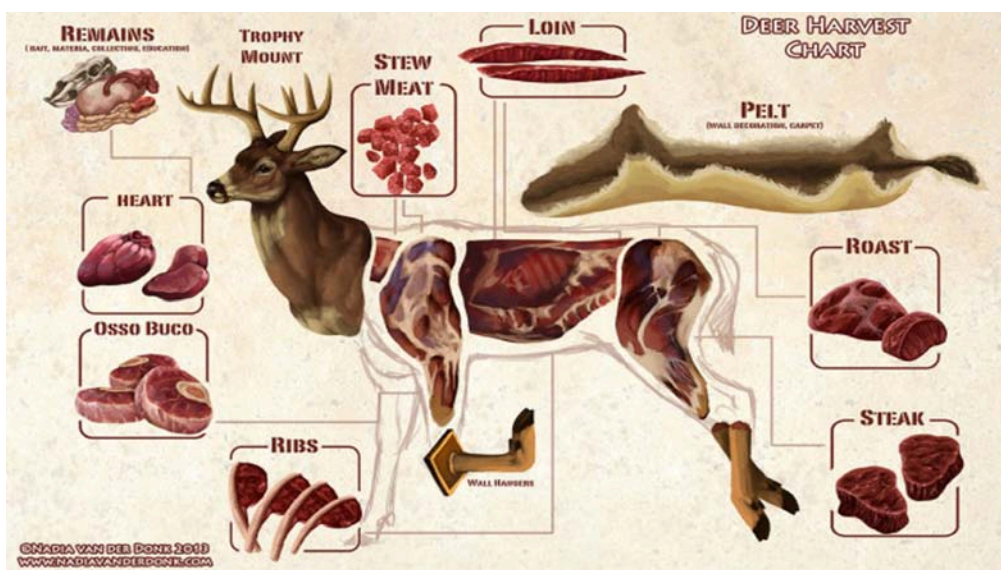
Venison – Tender and Flavorful

As the brisk north winds begin to blow, and the landscape begins to erupt into a collage of color, the signs of fall begin to show themselves. This also marks a time for football, Halloween candy and hunting. This time-honored tradition of man entering the woods and plains across the country with thoughts and dreams of harvesting that trophy buck or filling the freezer sparks a flurry of emotions. The most notable and sought after Whitetail deer is often at the top of the list, and for good reason.

I find Whitetail meat to be full of flavor, tender and healthy. My family and I consume venison nearly year round. My wife especially loves the homemade deer jerky. She has been known to clean out our stockpile in just a few days. The kiddos love it as well.

Over the years I have spoken to many people on the taste of venison. Opinions vary, and are often associated with someone having had a bad experience, a tangy dry taste, or just the thought of eating “Bambi” is disturbing to them. After spending a few minutes discussing their experience, I find that it often leads to an invite to my home for a meal to prove my point. Case in point, my mother-in-law; to her I was eating Bambi.

One night I took out some back-strap, pounded out some nice patties and chicken fried them. Complete with homemade mashed potatoes, sweet corn, garlic bread and homemade gravy, I served it up with the upmost confidence. My mother-in-law, to her credit, approached the dining experience open minded and eagerly. Within a few bites I could tell she liked it. No words were spoken, and after her second helping of “Bambi,” she paid me the absolute best complement I have ever been given. “Andy, if I were on death row, I would request this as my last meal!” As you can tell, I treasure that compliment over all others.



Courtesy photo


However, like Chef Auguste Gusteau from the Disney movie Ratatouille who says, “Anyone can cook,” to which I agree, you still have to learn, and you have to use the right ingredients.

Harvesting a deer is one thing; what you do with it after the kill is just as important, if not more important, than the aspect of hunting. Like most things these days, everyone has an opinion on the matter and is an expert. Don’t believe me? Just search the net and see for yourself. There are literally hundreds of ways to not only dress, but process the carcass. Some make no sense to me and some I have tried and modified over the years. For the sake of arguing, what I am about to offer is my opinion and experience, what works for me, how I like the results of my labor to be and what my family expects.

Evisceration of the animal is fairly simple: remove the internal organs. Just use caution around the bladder and stomach. Should either

one or both rupture, make sure to wash the meat down as soon as possible.

The next step is to get the meat cooled down. If you plan to have the carcass processed professionally get it to them quickly. If that is not an option, getting it into a walk-in cooler is preferred, but icing it down is just as good. Let it hang or cool for at least three days before final cuts.

For those of us who prefer to DIY, I prefer to quarter the carcass. Place in a cooler with ice and let it sit for a few days. Each day drain the water and add more ice until the color of the water is a light pink color. Process the cuts as desired. I have found that this process is as close to beef as any other. The blood, in my opinion, is what affects the taste. Remove the blood and you remove the bad taste. Professional butchers and processors all have different methods and ideas about the end result, but this works for me and is what my family prefers. 

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THE GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

Butter Pecan and Raspberry Beret Like Dessert for the Garden

Gardeners, I am here to tell you that you must get double coded. You are probably thinking there must be a security breach affecting the landscape. I assure you it is a cupcake. At least it looks like a cupcake, and there are two colors. The names Butter Pecan and Raspberry Beret sound good enough to eat, but I promise it is as though these new coneflowers were on the dessert menu for the landscape.

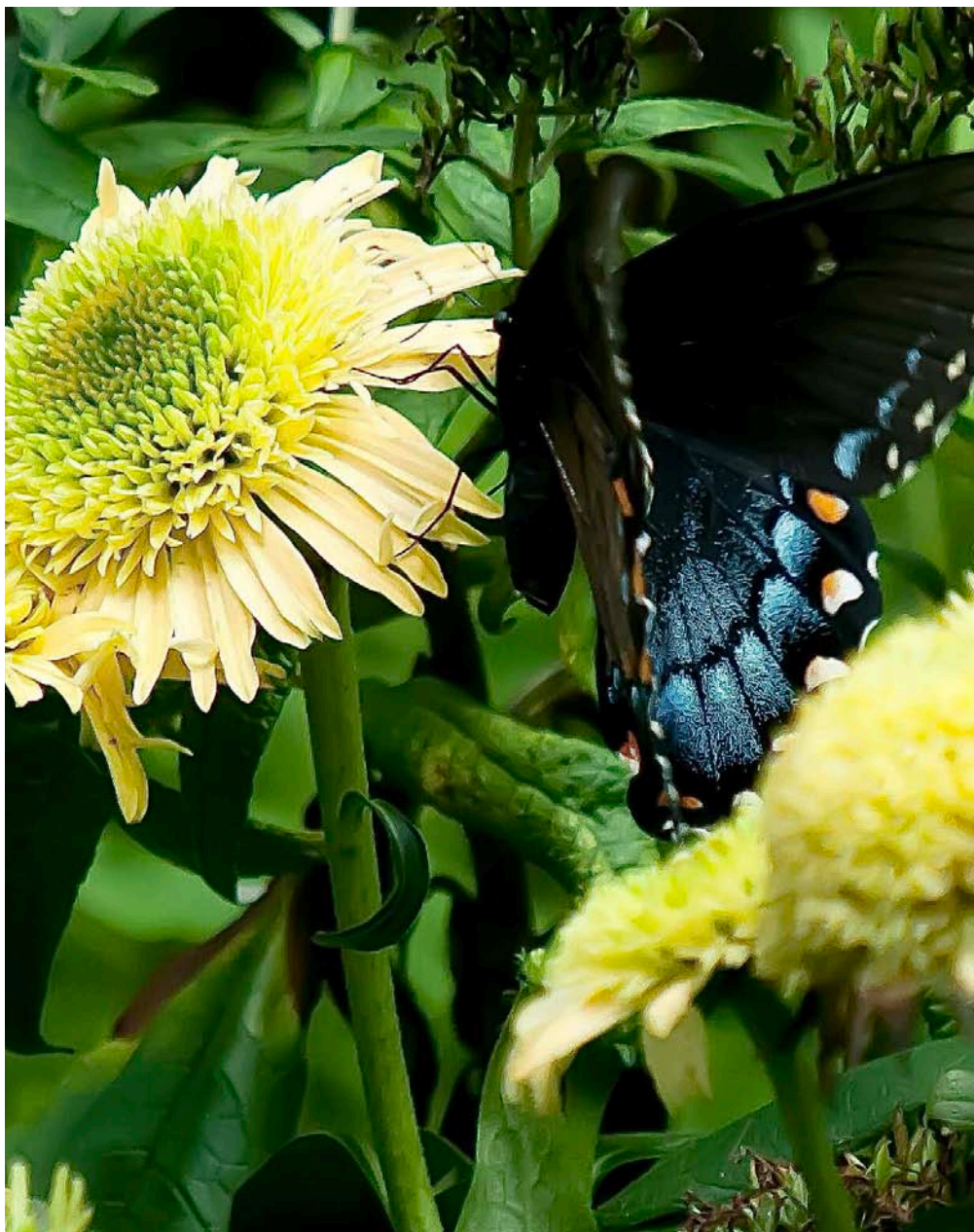
As you might be guessing, Double Coded is the name for two new hybrid echinacea making their debut as part of the Color Coded series, one of the hottest groups of coneflowers being introduced by Proven Winners. Double Coded obviously tells you these are double flowered varieties, and I promise you will not be disappointed. That is unless you let your neighbors beat you to the checkout line.

The Double Coded Butter Pecan is called melon in its color description. It shows off different shades of yellow as it goes through the aging process, leaning toward a rich pastel. The Double Coded Raspberry Beret yields various shades of pink finishing with a rich vibrant raspberry color.

They both are obviously chock full of native DNA and reach about 20-inches in height. Double Coded Butter Pecan spreads 16 to 18-inches, while Double Coded Raspberry Beret is slightly larger spreading up to 24-inches. To be honest, I gawk at them every time I walk by. I am just amazed at their beauty and feel I have only just begun to tap into the garden combination possibilities.

I had more Double Coded Butter Pecan plants to try. My first pairing of these was with this year's hot new Augusta Lavender heliotrope. This is a match made in heaven I assure you. The color contrast is perfect for those that have a slight leaning toward pastels. The yellow orange centers of August Lavender echo

Continued on page 54



This female Eastern Tiger Swallowtail has found the Double Coded Butter Pecan to be just perfect. (Photo courtesy Norman Winter)

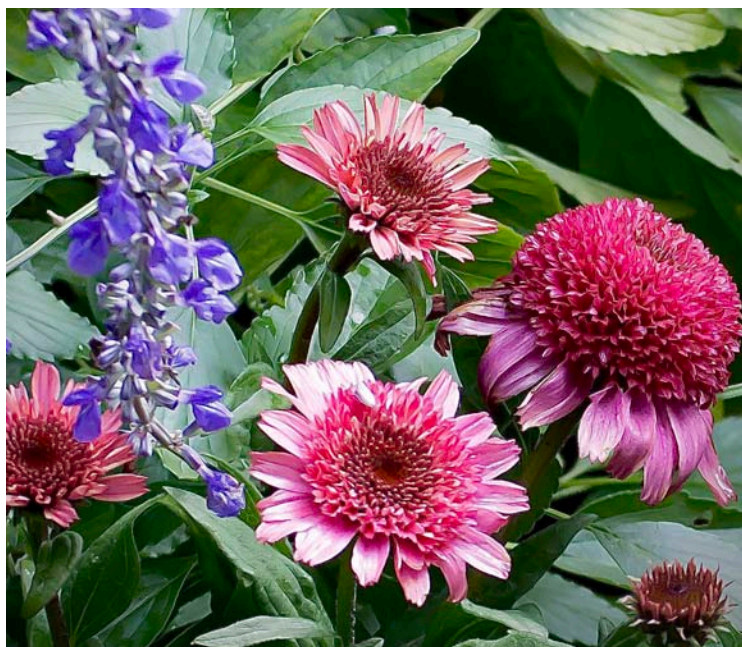
Continued from page 53

the Butter Pecan to perfection.

In another area of the landscape, I paired Butter Pecan and Raspberry Beret together in an informal drift and in front of Rockin Playin the Blues salvia. Pugster Amethyst buddleia is to the side and also in close proximity. The Butter Pecan and Raspberry Beret have a natural attraction for each other and creates an automatic no-fail marriage design.

I am always watching to see if pollinators go to certain blooms and especially tight double flowered selections like these Double Coded coneflowers. I am happy to report that even though it might appear to be more work on the pollinators, bees and butterflies like Eastern Tiger Swallowtails know how to get the job done.

To me, the echinacea, our humble purple coneflower, has been transformed into the ultimate



Each stage of the maturing process in the Double Coded Raspberry Beret coneflowers is a floral delight. (Photo courtesy Norman Winter)


collector plant. I wish I could grow them all. Of course, it would take a spread as big as South Fork to

accommodate them. So, for now I would suggest putting the Color Coded and Double Coded variet-

ies on your list.

Whenever you decide to plant, choose a site in full sun for best flower performance. The soil need not be luxuriantly fertile. Space your Color Coded and Double Coded echinacea plants 16 to 20-inches apart in an informal drift or sweep.

Partnership opportunities with these new coneflowers is unlimited. They will rock the cottage garden, pollinator garden and today's modern perennial garden. They are recommended for Zones 4-8. Based on how coneflowers did for me in Savannah, I feel sure they can stretch to zone 9a.

There has never been a time so exciting to be a gardener, and next year's new introductions will keep us all enthralled with both our landscape and containers. Follow me on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy for more photos and garden inspiration. 



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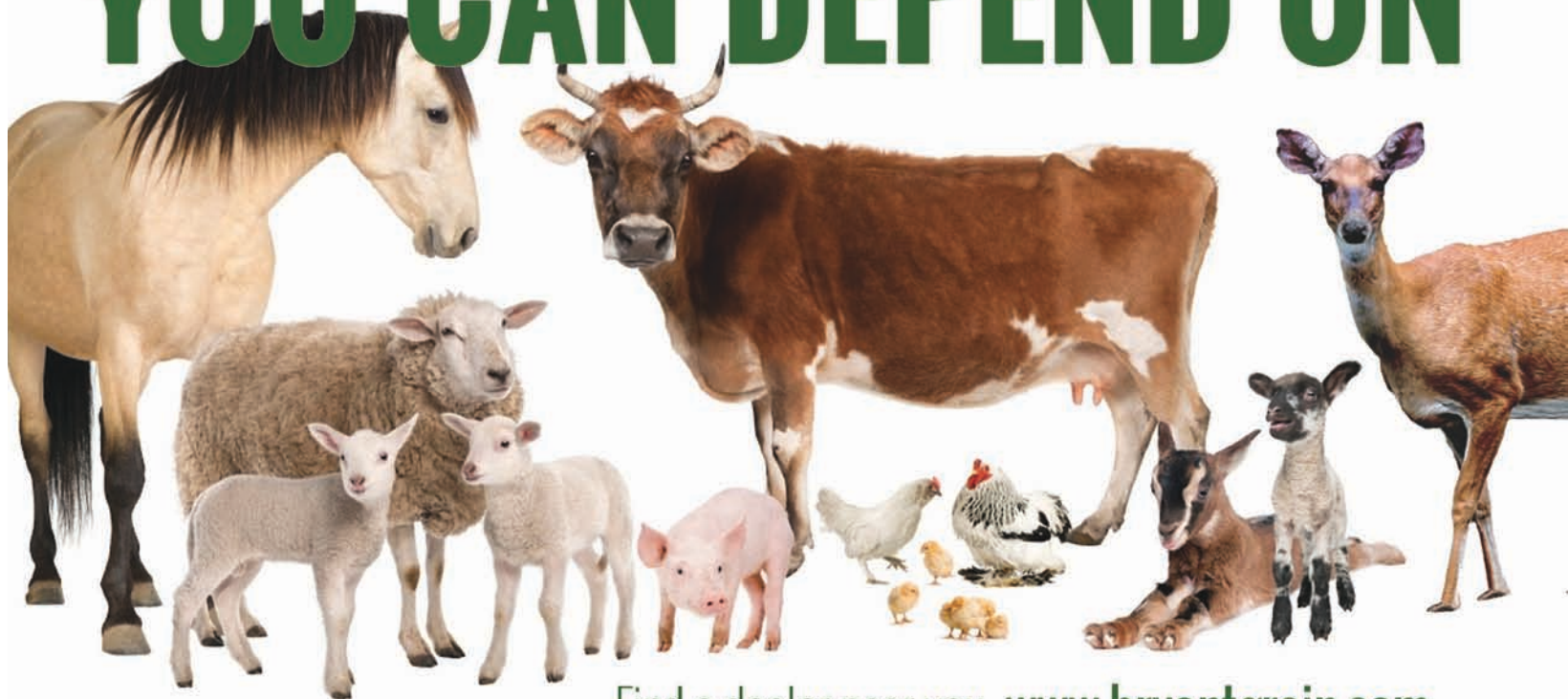
By Jelly Cocanougher

Stepping out of our trucks, we melted into the cooling sand, having to keep moving so we didn't sink further.

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