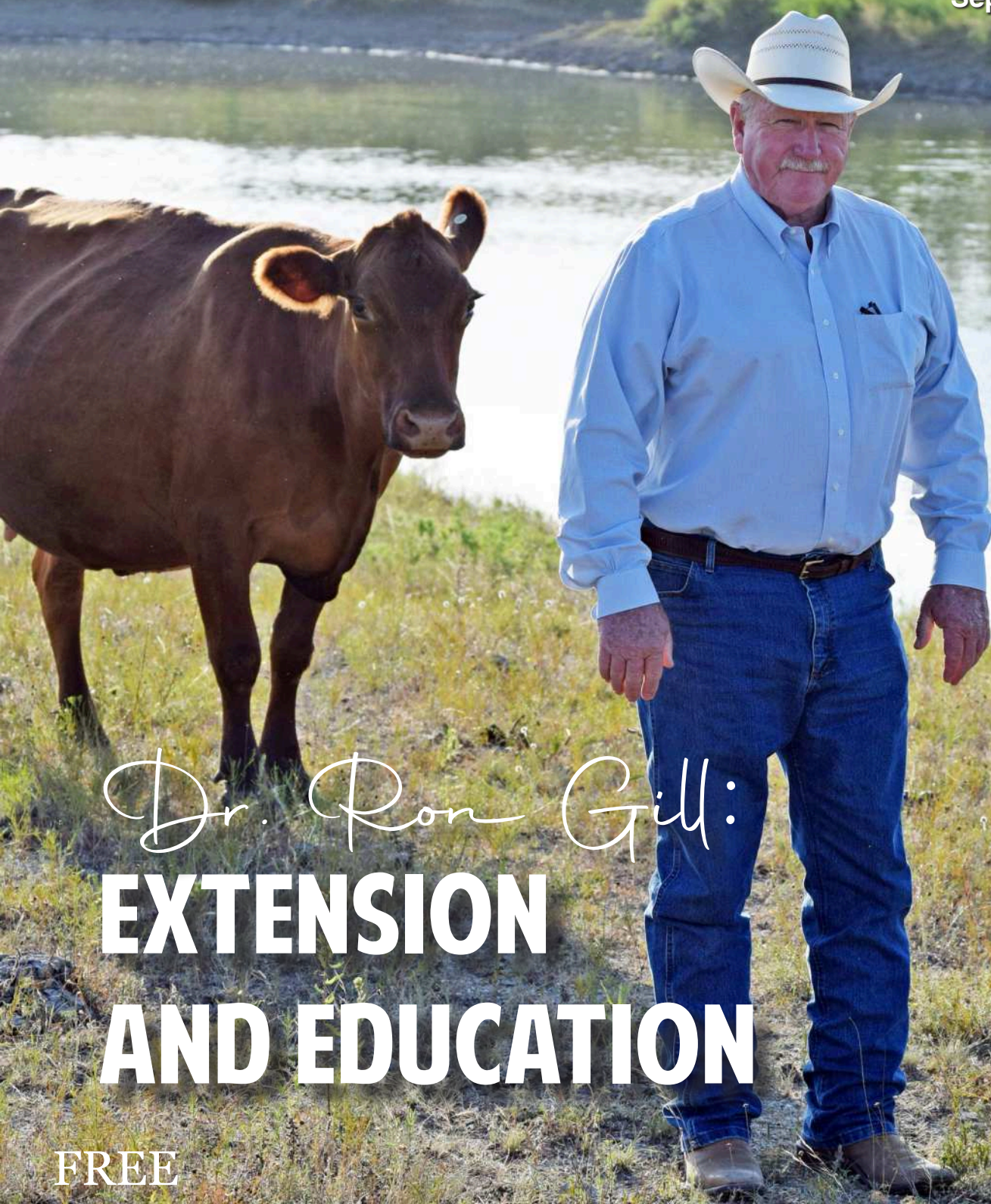


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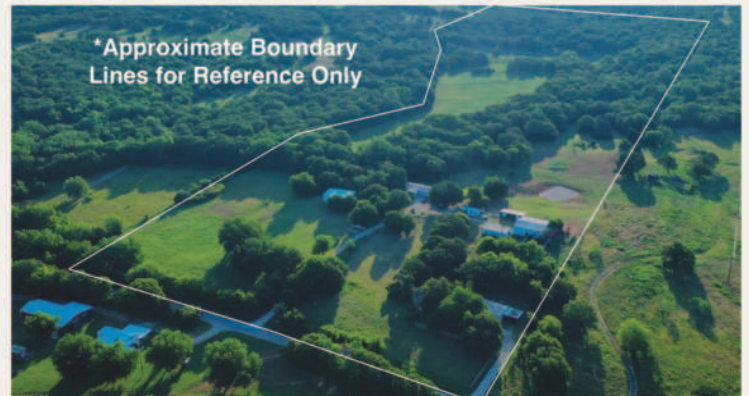
9 CLAY STREET NOCONA, TEXAS

Sitting right under 2 acres of prime real estate, this location has highway 82 frontage as well as Clay Street and Willow Street frontage, which gives the property great access from the 3 main roads. The property includes a feed store of 4,250 sqft, storage buildings and various covered storage buildings. Also included on the property is a 60' and 70' working truck scale. GREAT OPPORTUNITY to own a historic piece of property in Montague County with a top-tier location along highway 82.



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publishing

PUBLISHER

JM Winter

EDITOR

Dani Blackburn
editor@ntfronline.com

production

ART DIRECTOR

Rosie Cole
rosie@postoakmedia.net

advertising executives

Kathy Miller
kathy@postoakmedia.net

Sherrie Nelson
sherrie@postoakmedia.net

Rosemary Stephens
rosemary@postoakmedia.net

Marissa Mcmillian
marissa@postoakmedia.net

distribution

MANAGER

Brenda Bingham
accounting@postoakmedia.net

DISTRIBUTORS

Pat Blackburn
Riley Blackburn
Paul Evans

contribution

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Rayford Pullen
Lindsey Monk
Norman Winter
Krista Lucas Wynn
Phillip Kitts
Lacey Vilhauer
Jessica Kader
Robert Lang
Barry Whitworth, DVM
Annette Bridges
Dave Alexander
Tony Dean
Andy Anderson
Jelly Cocanougher
Jared Groce
Tressa Lawrence
Martha Crump
Dr. Garrett Metcalf
Robert Wells, PhD

COPY EDITORS

Krista Lucas Wynn

administration

Brenda Bingham
accounting@postoakmedia.net

CONTACT US

North Texas Farm & Ranch magazine
200 Walnut St., Bowie, TX 76230
940-872-5922, www.ntfronline.com

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ON THE COVER

On the cover is Dr. Ron Gill, professor and Extension livestock specialist and associate department head for Extension. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

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

Fall has finally arrived, and with it, we hope it brings some much needed cooler temperatures and even a bit of rain. The kids



are back in school, including my own. After meet the teacher, I decided I wanted to go to school with my oldest. As an eighth grader, he now gets to take some pretty fun electives, including an agriculture class. This year he will be learning about various cuts of meats, plants, and so much more, all at the hands of one of his favorite teachers. It left me wishing agriculture was a required class for every student in the country, but I am thankful the majority of students in our area have this opportunity. Thank you to all the hard working teachers who make it possible!

Speaking of education, this month I had the chance to sit down with Dr. Ron Gill, who has dedicated his life to sharing his knowledge of agriculture with others. As an Extension livestock specialist, he has traveled the country teaching and places an emphasis on livestock handling and stockmanship as well as practical implications for each producer. The differences he has made in the industry are too numerous to mention here, but I hope you enjoy reading more about Dr. Gill in the pages to come.

Meanwhile, turn the pages to read as Jared Groce reports on the current real estate market, Dr. Barry Whitworth shares information regarding skin diseases in livestock, Rayford Pullen discusses what is to come, and Tressa Lawrence gives us a glimpse into agriculture in Wyoming.

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 September!

Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com

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44 Jesses Jewelz

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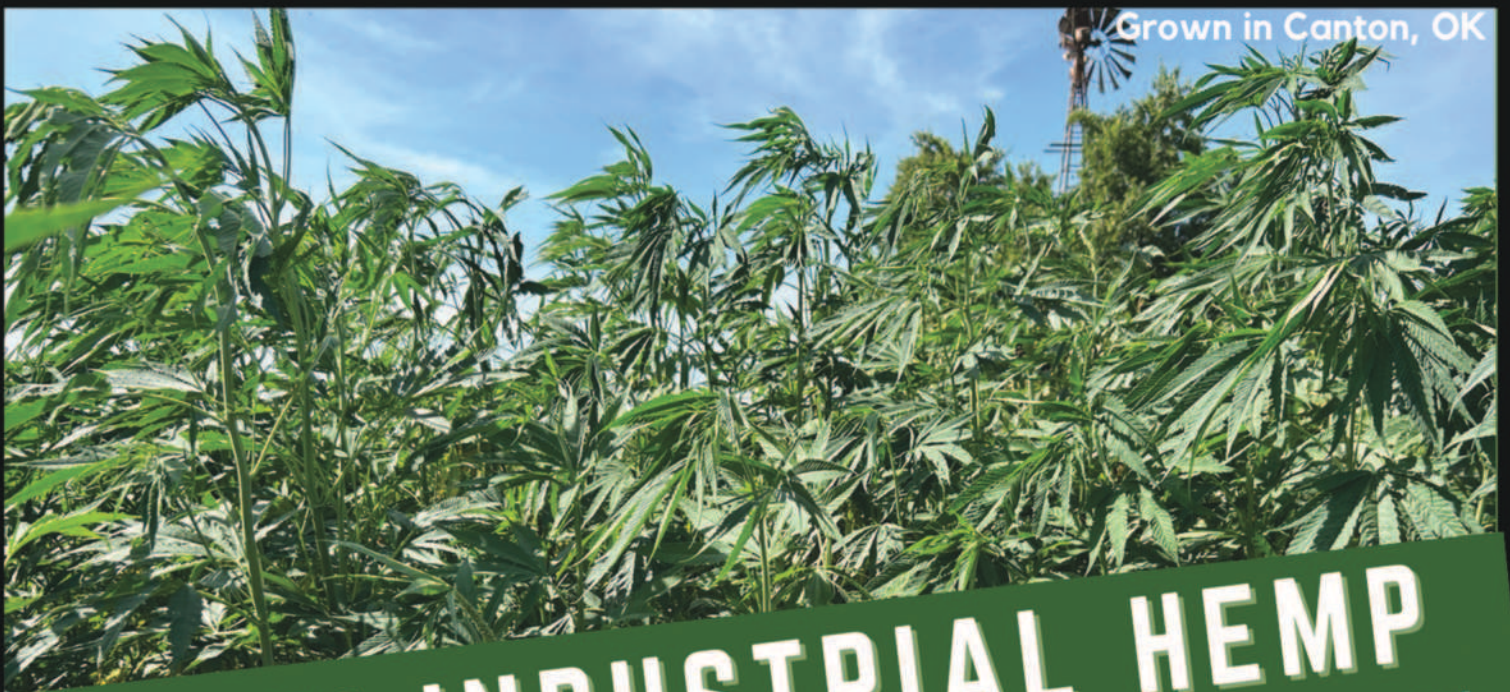
50 On the Road with Dave

This year marks the third annual Birth Place of Western Swing Festival in Fort Worth. You don't want to miss it.

60 The Garden Guy

Pink cashmere has showed it has the same habit and toughness we have come to expect with Superbena verbenas.

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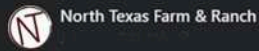
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This month's Lacey's Pantry brings us a delicious recipe for sheet pan tacos.
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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

I really hate to mention this, but there are about 75 days until we expect the first freeze here in North Texas, which occurs around November 15. I mention this because if we are going to make any pasture changes, like overseed or disc for winter pasture production, the time is near.

Temperatures normally begin falling the last week or so of this month while at the same time, day length gets progressively shorter. If we want fall and winter grazing, we need to have these crops up and growing as quickly as possible while the growing conditions are still good.

Under ideal conditions, we can begin grazing around the first of December and many times sooner. One thing for sure, we may hold off grazing, or graze lightly to have forage available during January and hopefully February. This will all depend on the grazing pressure you apply and of course, the weather.

Around here, we plan to increase our acreage of overseeded cool season annuals hoping we can reduce the amount of store-bought feed this winter. For every ton of feed we do not have to purchase, we can have four acres of ryegrass overseeded for the same money and have the ability to either graze it until June or cut it for hay.

It has been a little warm around our place this summer, and with the heat comes decreased forage quality, decreased gains and decreased milk production. As the temperatures moderate and the rain arrives, we should have 60 or so good days of gain for the spring born calves. With weaned calves bringing anywhere from \$1,400 to \$1,800 per head, depending on the weight and quality, we need to optimize the use of the forage



If we are going to make any pasture changes, like overseed or disc for winter pasture production, for our cattle, the time is near. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)


we have available to get the best gains.

As we begin to make the transition from summer to fall, we are now getting ready for our fall calving season to begin. I have had some producers having health problems with their spring born calves mostly related to respiratory problems, as well as foot rot. I am not sure if the heat brought on the respiratory issues, and I

certainly do not know why the foot issues came about. On our place, we give a modified-live IBR respiratory complex vaccination when we give our first blackleg vaccination when calves are around two to three months old, and since we develop our heifers and bulls, we will do it again at weaning. With the current market, we surely want to do all in our power to cut down on the morbidity and mortality of

our calves. It is great for you and great for the industry since later on down the road these healthy vaccinated and immune calves will require fewer antibiotics and greatly reduce mortality.

So do the right things for yourself and the industry and enjoy the fruits of your labor and your love for the business.

It is a wonderful time to be in the cattle business. 



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PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY TRESSA LAWRENCE



Crisp fall mornings fueled with coffee and cattle work are on many people's agendas in the upcoming months. May your calves be healthy and fat, and good luck out there! 

Noble Learning:

Noble Research Institute's inaugural two-day training event, Essentials of Regenerative Ranching, brought together farmers and ranchers who are eager to improve the health of their land, livestock, and livelihood.

This first delivery of the course, conducted July 11-12, 2023, at Tarleton State University in Stephenville, Texas, provided producers with an immersive experience that combined facilitator-led classroom learning with hands-on activities in the field, as well as ample opportunities for ranchers to connect and problem-solve with their peers.

"I gained some real practical, hands-on knowledge that I'll definitely be going back and implementing," said Brendan Bennett, a rancher from San Augustine, Texas. "Also, there's a wealth of information and experience from the other producers here. I look forward to being able to go back home to the farm and know that I have them as a resource if I have questions."

Through classroom sessions and engaging field demonstrations, Noble's facilitators guided ranchers to a deeper understanding of regenerative principles and how to effectively implement regenerative practices in their own operations.

"We've designed Essentials of Regenerative Ranching to offer farmers and ranchers guidance in using core principles and proven monitoring methods," said Hugh Aljoe, director of ranches, outreach and partnerships at Noble Research Institute. "This program allows them to overcome obstacles, become more informed



Ranchers Kristopher and Kenneth Alles of Jacksboro, Texas, discuss regenerative ranching practices at the first Essentials of Regenerative Ranching course offered by Noble Research Institute. (Photo courtesy Noble Research Institute)

problem-solvers and be more resilient to the highs and lows of the industry."

By participating in Essentials, ranchers join a community of like-minded producers who are shaping the future of ranching and leaving a lasting impact on their land and families.

During the training, collaborative discussions and the exchange of ideas create a vibrant learning environment, fostering a sense of community and support among participants.


"We are delighted to have hosted the Essentials of Regenerative

Ranching training at Tarleton State University," said Zhan Aljoe, director of the Tarleton Agriculture Center at the university.

"It was a privilege to witness the enthusiasm and commitment of the participating farmers and ranchers in learning innovative techniques to enhance their ranching operations. We are proud to contribute to their success and support the noble cause of regenerative agriculture."

The Essentials of Regenerative Ranching program is one of many solutions offered as part of Noble's ongoing commitment to

advancing regenerative agricultural practices and empowering farmers and ranchers to thrive in a rapidly changing industry. By equipping participants with the tools and knowledge needed to implement regenerative ranching techniques, Noble Research Institute continues to be at the forefront of driving positive change in the agriculture sector.

An upcoming Essentials of Regenerative Agriculture two-day course is scheduled for Oct. 31-Nov. 1 in Ardmore, Okla. For more information and to register, visit www.noble.org/essentials. 

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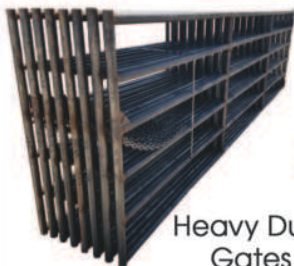
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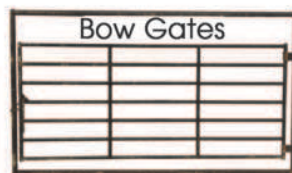
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**179.92 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY**



**HOLTER FARM**

**\$2,250/Ac**

Secluded combination property 10 minutes from Wichita Falls. Consists of 134 acres of farmland, the balance is heavily wooded native pasture primarily being mesquites, with hardwoods along a wet weather creek. The creek is unnamed and meanders through the wooded area with water in it most of the year. There are two ponds being between 1 and 2 acres when full. The ponds offer duck hunting, fishing and watering livestock. The farm also offers great hunting of turkey, hogs, dove, coyotes, bobcats, etc.

**119.39 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY**



**BRIXEY RANCH**

**\$5,450/Ac**

Brixey Ranch, 119.39 Acres, located southwest corner of Brixey and Whitaker Rd. 2,820' frontage on Brixey Rd, 1,600' Whitaker Rd. This would be a great tract to subdivide. Open pasture with scattered mesquites, rolling topo, impressive views, one stock pond, livestock barn, corrals, electricity is available, one water well. There are two pumpjacks on the property, but do not appear to be active. The seller may consider sub-dividing on a case by case basis, owner finance available. Contact Listing Agent Jon Moss – 940-867-6743.

**254.20 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY**



**ALEXANDER RANCH**

**\$4,200/Ac**

Nice all around property located 15 minutes from Wichita Falls. Ideal for running cattle, hunting, or building a home. Moderate mesquite coverage, above average grasses, rolling topography with tremendous views, 2 seasonal creeks, 3 stock ponds, completely fenced and cross fenced, livestock pens, electricity available, water available. Light oil production isolated to the southeast corner, minerals are negotiable with an acceptable contract.

**210 ACRES | ARCHER COUNTY**



**HOLLIDAY CREEK RANCH**

**\$3,300/Ac**

Diverse ranch that offers amenities that appeal to all types of buyers, recreation to agricultural, build a full-time residence, weekend getaway and all uses in between. The Holliday Creek Ranch has it all. Primarily level to slightly sloping topography, Holliday Creek frontage and other seasonal creeks, heavily wooded along the creeks, moderate to heavy mesquite coverage, stock pond, fenced boundary. Elec and water appears available. Owner Finance Available.

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# LAND MARKET REPORT

## JULY LAND SALES

By Jared Groce

Demand remains strong for some properties, while the number of buyers for others has dropped. We are seeing a decrease in the demand for lower price point homes, with increased demand for raw land over \$1,000,000. There is still a lot of people with 1031 money who are trying to defer capital gains taxes, and they have a limited amount of time to get that money spent. The higher interest rates are keeping first-time home buyers on the sidelines, as well as folks who need to borrow a lot of the money to buy and build on land. The 100-plus degree temps are not helping anyone want to go out and look at land either! Try to stay cool and hydrated, and as always, "Get some dirt on your hands!" 

### COOKE COUNTY

| CITY        | ACRES         | \$ / ACRE          | ASK/SELL RATIO | DOM        |
|-------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| GAINESVILLE | 10.010        | \$19,980.00        | 90.10          | 20         |
| GAINESVILLE | 15.130        | \$15,995.00        | 100.00         | 300        |
| MUENSTER    | 17.000        | \$17,000.00        | 100.00         | 55         |
| GAINESVILLE | 46.670        | \$9,000.00         | 75.00          | 182        |
| MUENSTER    | 122.000       | \$11,250.00        | 77.60          | 255        |
| GAINESVILLE | 88.920        | \$16,869.00        | 91.20          | 217        |
| <b>AVG</b>  | <b>49.960</b> | <b>\$15,016.00</b> | <b>89.00</b>   | <b>172</b> |

### DENTON COUNTY

| CITY       | ACRES         | \$ / ACRE          | ASK/SELL RATIO | DOM       |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|-----------|
| OAK POINT  | 12.500        | \$72,000.00        | 90.50          | 86        |
| <b>AVG</b> | <b>12.500</b> | <b>\$72,000.00</b> | <b>90.50</b>   | <b>86</b> |

### MONTAGUE COUNTY

|            | ACRES         | \$ / ACRE          | ASK/SELL RATIO | DOM        |
|------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|------------|
| RINGGOLD   | 10.250        | \$7,512.00         | 96.40          | 465        |
| RINGGOLD   | 10.260        | \$7,992.00         | 96.50          | 461        |
| NOCONA     | 11.220        | \$7,736.00         | 97.30          | 249        |
| NOCONA     | 15.000        | \$7,950.00         | 100.00         | 426        |
| NOCONA     | 15.000        | \$8,000.00         | 93.00          | 369        |
| SUNSET     | 14.900        | \$14,430.00        | 97.80          | 254        |
| BOWIE      | 16.150        | \$14,551.00        | 92.20          | 104        |
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# Dermatophilosis

By Barry Whitworth, DVM

The rain is almost always a welcome sight. Unfortunately, an abundance of moisture and warm temperatures produce some unwanted diseases in animals. One of these diseases is a skin condition called Dermatophilosis. Dermatophilosis is caused by a bacteria known as *Dermatophilus congolensis*. Dermatophilus means skin loving. Congolensis was the species name chosen by René Van Saceghemthe, a Belgium military veterinarian stationed in the Congo in 1915. Common names for the skin infection are rain scald, rain rot, and streptotrichosis. In sheep the disease is named according to the location of the outbreak. Sometimes it is called lumpy wool disease while other times it is called strawberry-foot rot. Strawberry-foot rot is uncommon in the United States. Cattle are the animal most commonly infected, but horses, sheep, goats, and some other animals can be infected as well.

*D. congolensis* is gram positive bacteria that thrives in moist warm conditions. The bacteria can be found on the skin of many animals. When skin is continuously wet the top layers soften which allow for the bacteria to penetrate and grow. The bacteria can also gain entry from direct contact or trauma caused by insect bites, ultraviolet light, and injuries from shearing.

Initial clinic signs include small circular crust-like scabs or tufts of hair in the crust (paintbrush lesions) with the skin underneath being red or purulent (puss). Sometimes the crust enlarges and may be mistaken for a wart. The crust will separate during the healing process which leaves a bald spot. The size of lesions can vary from a half inch to very large areas when several lesions merge



Cattle are the animal most commonly infected with Dermatophilosis, but horses, sheep, goats, and some other animals can be infected as well. (Courtesy photo)

together. On rare occasions, some animals will become seriously ill with the disease. Lesions found on the udder or teats can impede nursing by calves.

The disease is initially diagnosed based on the characteristics of the skin lesions. It is confirmed by making and staining an impression smear of the skin under the crust or the crust on a microscope slide. With a microscope, the stained slide is viewed for parallel rows of coccoid cells which are commonly called “railroad tracks.” Other means to diagnose

are bacterial cultures and histopathology.

Sores may spontaneously improve when the weather turns dry or if the animal is placed in dry conditions. Bathing the animal with antibacterial soaps to remove the crust will soothe the skin but may not stop the infection. In severe cases antibiotics are usually effective. Several different classes of antibiotics have been used, so producers should consult their veterinarian for what works best in their area. Most animals do well with appropriate therapy.

Prevention and control of the disease revolves around minimizing the environmental conditions that cause the disease, preventing contact with infected animals, biosecurity, and a good herd health program.

The skin is the barrier to *D. congolensis*. To maintain the skin barrier, animals require proper nutrition with special emphasis on minerals and vitamins. Animals need relief from excessive moisture, so they can dry out. Shepherds need to be careful about

**Continued on page 20**



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**Continued from page 18**

shearing sheep during extended rainy periods. Shearers need to keep clippers clean and disinfected between animals. Grooming tools need to be cleaned in between animals as well. Lastly, infected animals need to be isolated from the herd until healed.

Producers need to remember that *D. congolensis* is a zoonotic pathogen. When livestock producers are treating infected animals, they need to wear protective clothing and especially gloves.


Fortunately, or unfortunately depending on how a livestock producer views the weather, summer usually produces dry weather which will most likely eliminate any problems with *D. congolensis*. However, if rainy conditions continue, producers need to observe cattle for skin infections. Any signs of infection need to be dealt with promptly to prevent spreading of the organism. For more in-

formation about Dermatophilosis, livestock producers should contact their veterinarian or their extension agriculture educator.

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Cattle are the animal most commonly infected with Dermatophilosis, but horses, sheep, goats, and some other animals can be infected as well. (Courtesy photo)

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# Proud Flesh - An Age Old Problem

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf

If you have been around horses very long you know horses love to hurt themselves a lot, and when they do it is many times on their lower extremities. This is the favorite place for a horse to grow proud flesh, or as veterinarians call it, exuberant granulation tissue. Many people think of granulation tissue or proud flesh as a negative outcome of wounds, but it does have a purpose in helping the horse heal. Unfortunately it does not always behave the way we want it to, and sometimes it is both the horse's and the people's fault when it comes to taking care of these wounds.

## Phases of Wound Healing

There are three main phases of wound healing in the horse, inflammatory phase, proliferative phase and maturation/remodeling phase. Inflammatory phase occurs within minutes and lasts for hours after a wound is created. In the inflammatory phase, swelling, hemostasis and migration of white blood cells to the wound is initiated. This inflammatory phase is one of the most important steps in setting the stage for the rest of the phases. Granulation tissue is part of the natural healing process for wounds in horses during the proliferation phase. It becomes present in the wound bed of horses around five to seven days after the wounding occurred. This tissue is made up of fibroblasts and lots of new blood vessels that form from the edges of the wound. This tissue will fill in the gaps between the wound and will convert part of the cells to myofibroblasts. These myofibroblasts have very small microscopic muscle fibers that help pull the wound edges closer together during what is called contraction. Contraction occurs



Many people think of granulation tissue or proud flesh as a negative outcome of wounds, but it does have a purpose in helping the horse heal. (Courtesy photos)

around 10 to 14 days after wounding, and this helps reduce the size of the wound by up to 40 to 80 percent to allow the rest of the wound to be healed by epithelialization. The last phase is when the wound strengthens by the replacement of

poorly organized collagen tissues with more organized, cross-linked and better quality collagen tissue.

## Where It Goes Wrong

There are many reasons horses heal slowly, especially on their extremities, but the difficulty in

wounds in horses and granulation tissue lies in the fact that horses do not produce a very good inflammatory phase when the wound is created. This phase becomes mediocre and prolonged compared to other animal species and even when compared to ponies. This phase seems to be the key to jump starting the healing process, and horses just do not do it very well. Getting stuck in this prolonged inflammatory phase leads to proud flesh formation.

Other factors that lead to poor wound healing in the lower limbs of horses are they do not have muscle tissue in the limbs that help provide blood supply to the wound. Limb wounds tend to be dirtier and contaminated because they are closer to the ground. Motion is also a problem on the limbs, especially when wounds occur over a joint that is a high motion point. Blood supply also is a factor in wound healing in horses' legs and is just not as good as in the upper part of their bodies.

## How We Make It Worse

Many times part of the reason wounds grow so much proud flesh is because of the things that are applied to the wounds. Some of the most harmful products to wounds are caustic wound powders or wonder dusts that claim to burn back and destroy granulation tissue. The problem with these products is they cause more inflammation and are indiscriminate at what they destroy in the wound such as the newly formed and very delicate skin that is coming across the wound.

Some antimicrobial wound dressings have been shown to delay wound healing through research and should not be used in certain stages of the wound





healing process. Lastly wound dressings that are too occlusive can cause the wound to be starved of oxygen and lead to more proud flesh production.

### Managing and Minimizing Proud Flesh

Proud flesh can lead to delayed wound healing because the new cells growing from the edge of the wound cannot migrate up over a mound of granulation tissue as well as they can over a flat wound bed.

One method of managing granulation tissue when it does become too proud is by sharply cutting it flat with a scalpel blade. This removes the excessive tissue and refreshes the wound to encourage proper healing.

Another method is by medical treatment of granulation tissue with topical steroids which also helps reduce the production of excessive granulation tissue and keeps the proud flesh from form-

ing, but when used too much can lead to delayed wound healing.

There are studies that have compared wound dressing ointments and recently a study found that triple antibiotic wound ointment (Neosporin) produced the least amount of proud flesh when compared to others.

Another very safe and effective wound ointment is SSD or silver sulfadiazine wound ointment often used for burn wounds in people. Even honey, specifically Manuka honey wound dressings or ointments, help improve wound healing.

Biological products such as amnion can help reduce proud flesh and improve wound healing. Amnion is tissue that surrounds the fetus in the womb and is rich in stem cells, growth factors and anti-inflammatory cytokines that help reduce scar tissue and promotes healing.

Another biological produce

produced from the bladder of pigs called A-cell has been applied to wounds to promote better healing. Skin grafting wounds are also a very good way to reduce the wound size or even completely cover the wound to get it healed with new skin cells. There are many methods and techniques to graft skin in horses and often are dictated by the size, shape and location of the wound.

### Take Away for Horse Owners

1. Clean the wound as soon as possible with mild soap and water or diluted Betadine solution products.

2. Often it is recommended to have wounds examined as soon as possible by a veterinarian, especially if the wound is over a joint or other important structures.

3. Closing the wound if possible with sutures will help reduce having proud flesh.

4. Use appropriate wound dressings and ointments your

veterinarian advises. The rule of thumb is if you cannot put the ointment in your eye. It is not safe for a wound.

5. If proud flesh begins to form have it cut off or have your veterinarian prescribe a steroid cream such as Triamcinolone or Betamethasone to help safely shrink down the granulation tissue.

6. Skin grafting is another method to cover a wound more quickly with new skin to reduce granulation tissue formation.

The approach to dealing with wounds and proud flesh is rather a simple one and does not require a magic ointment or treatment to keep it under control.

Remember the goal is to keep it under control early on and to avoid things that are used on the wound from making it worse. If you are concerned your treatment or care is not working for your horse please reach out to your veterinarian for help. (N)



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# The Will to Win

By Krista Lucas Wynn

There is no shortage of barrel racers in North Texas, and the competition is fierce. One Vernon, Texas, cowgirl is making her way to the top, all while juggling school, business and the hardships life can bring.

Shelby Oglesby got her start in the rodeo world as soon as she was old enough to sit on a horse, and she has never known anything different. Her parents introduced her to playdays and junior rodeos, where her obsession with barrel racing grew into a lifelong dream of one day making the Wrangler National Finals Rodeo.

"I was born in Clifton, Texas, but our family business moved us to Vernon when I was nine," Oglesby said. "I graduated from Northside High School in 2021 and went on to attend Western Oklahoma State College, where I rodeoed on a scholarship for two years, and now have one semester left to graduate in December with my animal science associate's degree."

When she is not busy with school, Oglesby can be found competing at rodeos and barrel races. This year, she has climbed the United Professional Rodeo Association standings with the help of two great horses. She runs an eight-year-old mare, "Sister," in the smaller setups, but she owes most of her recent success to a seven-year-old gelding, "Funky."

"I have also had him for a little over a year, and he and I definitely didn't have a fairy tale beginning together," Oglesby said. "Long story short, by May of this year things started to look up. Things just started clicking in the outdoor pens, and all of the hard work and tough times have made it so worth it."

Not only is Oglesby making moves in the rodeo world, she also just purchased her first business as an entrepreneur. The former Diamond One Boutique will now be known as Outlaw Couture Boutique, a western boutique with a goal to bring back the original western styles.

"I purchased the business from my great friend, Ima Champion," she said. "It is a new adventure in my life that I am super excited about and plan to grow the business into something huge."

Oglesby has had to go through tough times as well, to get to the good. She lost her dad about six months ago, but Oglesby knows how



Shelby Oglesby has won or placed at multiple UPRA rodeos this summer. (Photo courtesy Shelby Oglesby)


proud he must be of the year she is having.

"There have been two things that have gotten me through this miserable time," Oglesby said. "One has been knowing my dad is not in pain any more, and the second thing is my dad was undoubtedly my biggest fan, right there with my wonderful mom. He wanted nothing more than to see me win and succeed."

After several years of being a struggling barrel racer, Oglesby wishes she could still call her dad after a big win. Her newfound success in and out of the arena has undoubtedly made her dad proud in more ways than one. Oglesby has fought through tragedy to come out the other side stronger. This summer, she has won or placed at multiple UPRA rodeos.

"I feel like the whole summer has really been a highlight, but if I had to choose one of the year so far, it would have to be winning the first UPRA of my career, in the town I was born in, Clifton," she said. "It was also Funky's first rodeo win, so it made it pretty special."

As of August, Oglesby was second in the UPRA standings, behind Annika Ruth, of Marshall, Texas. Oglesby looks forward to making her first UPRA finals, finishing school and growing her business.

"The NFR will always be a goal, and I will try my very hardest to make it happen," the young cowgirl said. "I am just going to be ready, willing and open for whatever God has in store for me and my life." 



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# Is the Desire to be Mainstream Hurting Rodeo?

By Phillip Kitts

In the last 10 years of rodeo, the growth and development of the sport of rodeo has made leaps and bounds. The truth is, the Professional Bull Riders has really set the standard for cutting edge developments, as they have capitalized on television exposure as well as streaming services. Amongst this, they have embraced a much larger demographic. Along with these accomplishments, they incorporated the youth and family mentality that seems to go hand in hand with the sport. Not all of their approaches have been successful, but in general, they made some huge strides in bringing rodeo to the forefront.

In recent years the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has adopted the same approach by connecting with organizations that provide streaming options which evolved into regular spots on the cable television networks. Initially, the rodeo world seemed extremely excited at the potential these platforms were going to offer, and the sites were set on bringing the sport to the masses to reap the benefits of the sport catching up with the rest of the world.

It did not take long for the signs to start to appear that this approach may not be the best one. In the first year or two, the same streaming networks started to disappear or move on to other things. As soon as this happened, it was some of the die-hard fans that pointed out there were problems. They were the ones to voice the fact the same networks that were providing good streaming content were getting blocked from the world of professional rodeo. It may be coincidence or just a fact, but other networks to see the financial value in providing video coverage of the sport, and suddenly deals were being done.

When Covid made its appearance, the capability of viewing rodeo via computer and television turned out to be a big deal. As soon as rodeos started happening, those who could not get to their local rodeo because of cancellations or social distancing could still be a part of their passion. In general, 2020 was a good thing for many rodeos who suddenly saw interest from networks looking to cover their event.



In recent years the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association has connected with organizations that provide streaming options which evolved into regular spots on cable television networks. (Courtesy photo)

However, this same thing changed significantly in 2021. It was this year that many rodeos started to point out their attendance was dropping. Now the comparison leaves plenty to be desired. In 2020, people were eager to get out so attendance dropping cannot be directly tied to streaming or television coverage, but many rodeos still make this claim. Some have gone as far as to claim that with streaming, people would rather watch their favorite rodeo at home than to deal with the crowds.

If you talk to many rodeos who saw great success in 2020, you will quickly find many of them have now grown disgruntled. All the infrastructure they put in to provide streaming capabilities for 2020 now goes unused. As soon as rodeo went back to their regular schedule they were left forgotten about or abandoned,

and in some cases stuck with bills that went along with the upgrades that they struggled to pay because of the revenue changes.

Among the same list is a large group of smaller rodeos who were nearly completely abandoned in 2023 since changes had to be made to the schedule for financial reasons. Meanwhile many of these small rodeos had sold multi-year sponsorships based on streaming or TV exposure. Luckily, a bunch of these small rodeos banded together enough to at least get some of them covered for 2023.

Now, late into the 2023 season, if you look closely into the activities within the pro rodeo streaming networks, it has evolved into pure chaos. With sudden dismissal of more than one top name in broadcasting and controversy in

**Continued on page 28**



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the replacements hired, the hostility is growing at such a rapid rate.

If this is not enough to really drive a wedge into the rodeo world late into the August rodeos, who were promised full coverage of their rodeo, are now being downgraded to streaming and being told that because of personnel cuts they are unable to provide in person interviews and coverage.

These cases fall in line with the group of small rodeos who were forced to take a stand when they were abandoned.

They had based their rodeo and sponsorships around promises made by these networks and find themselves having to improvise so as to not look bad to their supporters.


The hard truth is that in the modern climate business will always outweigh anything, this even applies in the sport of rodeo and the western lifestyle. However,

this begs the question how long before the roots of the sport are exposed and the core value of being a person of your word causes a complete campaign against the TV coverage of the sport?

Still to this day there are many deals done in the rodeo industry with nothing more than a handshake, and if someone proves to not stick behind the value of that handshake, they often fade into oblivion quickly.

Will the pro rodeo world take a stand and force the networks to do right?

Will pro rodeo recognize the injustice? That is a question many people are waiting to see answered.

Are we about to see these networks fade? We will leave you to judge, but on the rodeo road many say the winds of change are coming, and the biggest voice will be those athletes who are left out of the system. 



When Covid made its appearance, the capability of viewing rodeo via computer and television turned out to be a big deal. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts, Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

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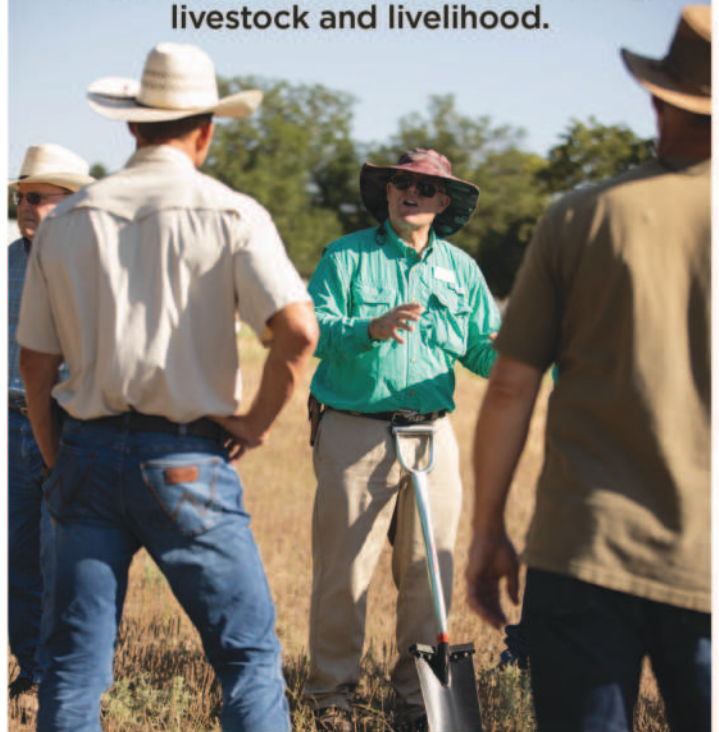
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# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## Butterfly and Buddy

One might think living over four decades on a working cattle ranch there would not be anything not seen or experienced. The truth about this city girl is the more I embrace my life as a cattle rancher the more first-times happen. Remember, I've told y'all before that it took me almost 40 years to become comfortable with my life in the country. Perhaps the surprises that continue to occur is largely due to my increased awareness of and participation in our ranching operation.

The summer drought of 2022 brought many unwanted firsts for our ranch, but amongst the ugliness was some beautiful and precious, too.

When the herd was in our southwest pasture, we could place the water tanks along the east fence that was close enough to allow for filling with water hoses rather than hauling the water tank. Of course, filling with water hoses was much slower so it meant I spent many hours hanging out during the process.

Our calves became very curious about their human mamma standing around their water tanks so I had many observers. I was soon able to give their sweet heads lots of rubs and I wondered if they would eat cubes out of my hand. It's funny to me that hand feeding was never an idea that crossed my mind before. I will say that our Charolaise bull has produced the tamest calves we've ever had.

It wasn't long before I had two calves in particular that were always ready for me to feed them. I named them Buddy and Butterfly. In fact to this day now many months later they will still find me when I'm nearby to see if I have some cubes exclusively for them. Of course I make sure I do!


I continue to be amazed how love can be felt and happen at the most unexpected times and ways. Even when I say I don't want to love again not wanting to experience the heartbreak of death again, opportunities to love still appear. Even when struggling through horrible and difficult times, tenderness and sweetness can still be experienced.



Butterfly and Buddy. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

I certainly love my sweet Buddy and Butterfly. Besides their adorable desire to eat cubes out of my hand, it tickles my heart how they seem to know my voice. I hadn't been certain whether or not they had learned their names when I called them or if they recognized the sound of my voice. One day recently I was checking on the herd from the road. Parked in the ditch I was looking through binoculars when I discovered the birth of twins. I got super excited not only at how perky they were but

also about their colors. One was white and one was black. Another first for our ranch!

I was telling my daughter the twin news on the telephone when apparently Buddy was certain he heard my voice and came running to the fence. Butterfly immediately followed him! I had to apologize for not having a bucket of cubes with me. I'm pretty sure they didn't understand. Now I'm convinced these two sweethearts know the sound of their human mamma's voice. 



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The determination of many countless individuals can lead to significant progress within agriculture. One person who has spent decades making a difference via agricultural education while encouraging a balance of integration and practicality is Dr. Ron Gill, Texas A&M professor and Extension livestock specialist and associate department head for Extension.

“I’ll use a line Dr. Dan Householder wrote. ‘When you’re green, you’re growing, and when you get ripe, you get rotten. If you ever think you know enough, you are going to become stagnant and not keep up,’” Dr. Gill said of the importance of continued education for producers. “I focus on implementing the best technology and the best method to what can practically be done. You must find out what works best for you.”

Dr. Gill provides leadership in Extension programming related to animal well-being and low-stress livestock handling and assists in statewide programming efforts for Beef Safety and Quality Assurance. His work has led to the implementation of protocols still in use today, including Vac-45. He has been the recipient of the National Beef Quality Assurance 2018 Educator Award, Vice Chancellor’s Award in Excellence, and Specialist of the Year, and it all started growing up as the son of a ranch manager in a rural community.

#### **From the Beginning**

Dr. Gill’s father was a ranch manager, and the family lived in various small towns across the state before settling in Fluvanna, Texas.

**Continued on page 36**





# Dr. Ron Gill: **EXTENSION AND EDUCATION**



Dr. Ron Gill on Buddy. (Photo courtesy Dr. Ron Gill)



**Continued from page 35**

In addition to ranch management, the family sharecropped and chopped cotton, hoeing weeds and grass out of cotton fields, and in high school Dr. Gill ran a farrow to finishing hog operation. He and his boss built a cattle feedlot where, as a teenager, Dr. Gill worked, managing all of the livestock feeding operations. He enjoyed his time in the small town and is proud of his background.

“We grew up pretty poor. Very rural. Every time I hear someone talk about growing up in a rural area and attending a small school and being disadvantaged because of it, I get pretty fuzzed up. It is a problem if you let it be. Looking back, I think I might have had as good, or even better, of an education than a lot of people who attended bigger schools. I got to do things I never would have at a bigger school,” Dr. Gill said.

His two older brothers attended Angelo State, and Dr. Gill followed in their footsteps with the intention of studying ag business.

“I was interested in accounting and economics. We had moved around enough doing ranch management that I decided I didn’t want to stay in that line of work and move all the time just trying to find a better job for my family. I just got tired of it as a kid I suppose. I thought managing ranches through trust departments and banks might be a way to stay in the ranching side,” Dr. Gill recalled.

Dr. Gill was a part of Angelo State’s livestock judging teams, an experience that was valuable to him in hindsight.

“I learned how to speak in public through that. Everyone undervalues judging experience for kids. It is where they can learn to speak and analyze what they are talking about. That was a big help to me,” Dr. Gill said.

Professor Gil Engdahl along with Don Shelby were mentors for the young Dr. Gill and helped guide him down the right path dur-

**Continued on page 38**




Dr. Ron Gill in the feedyard during a demonstration.



Dr. Ron Gill at TCFA Bushland. (Photos courtesy Dr. Ron Gill)



A photograph of a young boy in a light blue polo shirt and jeans, carrying a black cooler and a leash, walking a large, shaggy, light-colored dog across a grassy field. In the background, there is a metal gate and a fence, with trees and a cloudy sky above.

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Dr. Ron Gill conducts a cattle-handling expo.

### Continued from page 36

ing his time as an undergraduate. Engdahl, took him on as an assistant coach for the judging teams while he completed his master's work. He chose to study range animal nutrition for his graduate degree, which included looking at grazing systems and beef cattle nutrition. During his time in graduate school, he did sheep and goat work, along with working at Leddy's Western Wear Store and the research station at Angelo. He even founded a business with a few classmates rounding up livestock.

"We had a knack for getting things gathered no one else could, so we started the business. We got a lot of feral goats caught for people. That spawned my interest in

stockmanship," Dr. Gill explained.

Around the time Dr. Gill was finishing his master's degree, a bit of fate occurred when Professor L.D. Wythe walked by him at the Angelo Stock Show while he was judging and asked the young Dr. Gill if he would like to come to Texas A&M to coach their judging teams.

"I had no intention of getting my doctorate at that point and time, but I decided to go. That's how I wound up at Texas A&M University, coaching judging teams. I had always been interested in horses, and I started colts at the ranch and while I was at Angelo State. I received my PhD in equine nutrition, specifically brood mare nutrition and its impact on milk production and foal

growth. In cattle, we knew body condition affected reproductive rate, but they never had really accepted that in the horse industry," Dr. Gill said.

At the time, it was believed protein was more important. A study was conducted to prove energy intake was a bigger factor in determining reproductive efficiency for horses. While working on the study and earning his PhD, Dr. Gill coached the livestock judging team. In his last year, he switched to coaching the horse judging team and that team won the All-American Congress contest and did well at the World Show.

"It was fun to branch out while I was in the horse program. I had never heard of a livestock specialist or a horse specialist, but B.F.

Yeates and Dr. Householder were our Extension specialists back then and B.F. had me go to some clinics with him. That was my first introduction to Extension work. I enjoyed research, but it wasn't what I wanted to do the rest of my life, so the educational side of things appealed to me," Dr. Gill said.

### Texas A&M Extension

In 1862, Congress passed the Morrill Act. This provided for a university in each state to educate its citizens in agricultural and mechanical fields, known as land-grant universities.

However, Congress realized these universities would need to be supported with research capabilities. The Hatch Act was passed to found research farms for the





universities to study agricultural-related problems faced by citizens. On Jan. 29, 1915, the Texas Agricultural Extension Service was established.

In the later part of the 1960s, research Extension centers were built around Texas to house specialists. Each was focused on its surrounding geographical region. At the end of his PhD work, Dr. Gill heard about a regional livestock specialist position open in Dallas.

"I knew about sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and cattle. The position in Dallas intrigued me and the area was the heaviest concentration of horses in the state at the time. I had an interview with the director, and they hired me to come to Dallas in 1984," Dr. Gill said.

His area covered a 22-county radius. He worked with county extension agents and conducted educational programs on horses, cattle, and sheep. Along the way, he began to focus more on cattle work.

His career has been a busy one. As an Extension specialist Dr. Gill has conducted between 80 to 110 educational activities a year. As the associate department head, Dr. Gill also oversees handling the administrative budget for the Animal Science Extension Unit. There are 14 specialists in his unit, going across all species and meats, along with Extension veterinarians.

His regional area now also includes Vernon, with 22 counties, and Stephenville, 24 counties, renamed the North Central Region. His regions go alongside his statewide responsibilities. Extension does several big events a year in addition to its educational programs, including the Beef Cattle Short Course and the Ranch Raised Beef Conference.

In addition to annual educational events and special events, Extension has made significant improvements in multiple areas. In 1990, one of the highlights of Dr. Gill's Extension career was



Dr. Ron Gill, Texas A&M professor and Extension livestock specialist and associate department head for Extension. (Photos courtesy Dr. Ron Gill)

the Texas A&M Ranch to Rail Program.

"Producers would take as few as five head of calves, and we would comingle them and take the cattle to feed yards in Amarillo. We would feed them and try to give the producers carcass data back to look at the genetics in their herd, because there wasn't a way for producers to do that at the time. The first two years of that, we realized we couldn't keep them healthy enough to evaluate genetics," Dr. Gill recalled. "The sickness rate was too high. So, we began doing a lot of survey work. I surveyed all the producers sending cattle, including their vaccination protocols and nutrition management."

They discovered ranchers using certain vaccines and weaning programs had a lower sickness rate. They began fine-tuning and the Vac-45 program was established. It became the industry standard, and still remains so

today.

"It was developed from the Ranch to Rail program. We took a lot of heat for that because we named vaccines by brand name that were working, and which ones were not working. From a university standpoint, there were obvious issues with doing that, but there were real differences and people needed to know that. We developed programs and worked with cattle auctions like Superior Video Livestock Auction and Beef Improvement Organization such as the Northeast Texas Beef Improvement Organization (NETBIO) program in East Texas to implement their value added calf vaccination and weaning protocols. It has held up since 1993," Dr. Gill said.

The modified live and other vaccinations that worked the best also happened to be more sensitive in how they were handled. They discovered cow-calf producers did not handle the vaccines very

well. To combat the issue, Dr. Gill developed "Chuteside Manners and Management."

"You still hear people discussing Chuteside," Dr. Gill said. "It changed how people handled vaccines at the cow-calf level. I went all over the United States doing trainings for pharmaceutical companies in the late 1990s. Their vets weren't even doing that. Most don't know that Texas A&M developed Vac-45, but that and Chuteside are two things I am proud of in my career. They have set the standard with how we vaccinate and the 45-day weaning period. Prior to that, everyone was weaning in 21 to 30 days. We figured out at 45 days there was a significant drop in sickness rates, and we tried to show producers how they could make 45 days pay for itself."

In 2007, Ranch Stewardship Live began, an effort with Dr. Gill, Todd McCartney, Curt Pate, and Kyle Klement, a road show where they would conduct eight, two-day stockmanship trainings. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association eventually caught wind of what they were doing, and a short time later, they were continuing the stewardship and stockmanship trainings on behalf of the Beef Quality Assurance and NCBA.

"In the first couple of years we were trying to work with auction markets and help them understand the exposure they had to animal welfare issues and why handling was so important in those environments. To this day, it still needs a lot of work, but I think we started a conversation in that area," Dr. Gill said. "After the first two years, we tried to change the program up, and did producer trainings. We would do anywhere from four to six a year with NCBA and I would do 15 to 20 a year in Texas through our Extension programs. To this day it is one of the more visible ways we help support the industry as a whole."

**Continued on page 40**





## Continued from page 39

In 2000, it was brought to the attention of Extension and cattle raisers that there was not an official beef quality assurance for cow-calf operators. The Texas Cattle Feeders founded the first BQA program in 1986, but Extension did not have a BQA training or certification program for the cow-calf or stocker cattle sectors. Dr. Gill helped put together the BQA manual for Texas and developed a certification training that was rolled out in 2001, which has been done collaboratively with the Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers and Texas Beef Council ever since.

Currently, Extension does quite a bit of work with the cattle feeders. A feed yard technician program was started in the Panhandle and has since expanded statewide to include up to 600 kids across Texas.

“Cattle feeders and dairy operators were looking for labor. We looked at workforce career education starting out in six to eight high schools in the Panhandle, and it has grown from there. The Texas Education Agency approved it as an industry-based certification program,” Dr. Gill said.

The training includes processing, classroom education, mechanics, welding, physical plant management, grain management, and multiple other moving parts. A mock interview is conducted to help prepare students for the future.

During Covid, Texas collaborated with North Dakota and West Virginia for a webinar series on the intersection of cattle and beef with a total of 17 webinars that included a full gamut of beef production, marketing, ground meat, imports, and exports.

“We had national speakers on the subject matter, and it helped squash some of the crazy things going on about that time,” Dr. Gill said. “We had around 1,500 people engaged, including legislatures, senators, representatives, and



Dr. Ron Gill with his herd in Wise County. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

legal aides. This was very helpful in understanding what was going on because everyone wanted laws passed to regulate “something.” It is probably the most impactful program I have been involved in.”

Dr. Dan Hale, the meat specialist for Extension, founded Ranch TV on YouTube, which includes some of Dr. Gill’s training videos.

“He took the time to begin videoing a lot of educational segments and established Ranch TV. We have around 1,400 educational video clips on there now. It is the best online educational material we have,” Dr. Gill said. “In the first few years we created most of the video content on beef cattle production and product development.”

About 10 years ago Dr. Gill began recording stockmanship demonstrations and putting them up on Ranch TV as well. Extension realized they could reach more and different individuals virtually than in person.

“When Covid stopped the in-person Stockmanship and Stewardship (S&S) trainings, NCBA and our sponsor decided to have

us put together and conduct a virtual S&S event. That virtual event was so successful that this fall will be its third year that we have conducted a virtual event for the S&S program,” Dr. Gill said.

Most of the education programs Dr. Gill conducts focus on the production issues related to raising livestock. However, another program Dr. Gill has conducted and is fond of is Retiring into Ranching, which covers the unforeseen expenses and time obligations for cattle producers who want to purchase cattle during their Golden Years.

Dr. Gill has become more involved with the NCBA and TS-CRA and their Cattle Health and Well-Being committees for cattle raisers in Texas and nationally. He is a member of the NCBA cattle health and well-being advisory group, which looks on an international basis as to what is coming and forming ideas that can be sent back down through the states and their own Extension programs to help educate producers on upcoming changes. For example, the committee looks at any diseases

and regulations occurring worldwide and how those might impact the industry in America.

“We have really ramped up the biosecurity component of the BQA program to get people here more concerned when it comes to allowing animals in the country or on their place,” Dr. Gill explained.

In addition to his multiple responsibilities as an Extension educator, Dr. Gill has been judging youth horse contests since 1986. He was the superintendent of the youth heifer show at the State Fair for 29 years, from 1985 to 2009.

He helped B.F. Yeates, Dr. Householder, Roger Blackmon and Jack Brainard found the Stock Horse of Texas Association, with a simple mission: “Helping People Ride a Better Horse.” Dr. Gill is a part of the Grazing Lands Coalition as a member of the livestock wing, and encouraged his wife, Debbie, to found Women in Ranching. At the end of the day, Dr. Gill just wants what is best for each producer.

When he starts talking about stockmanship and cattle handling

**Continued on page 42**



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**Continued from page 40**

Dr. Gill made the following observation: “Ranching must be fun. We can’t take all the fun out of it because if we did, nobody would want to spend that many hours doing it. What some people consider fun may not necessarily be in the best interest of the cows,” Dr. Gill said. “Where is that balance? Part of what we do is teach people how to teach because hardly nobody in ag teaches anyone anything. We just expect them to learn it. And get hurt in the process and get smarter from that. We can do better. We try to explain it so you can break it into smaller parts and explain it to someone else. Which no one did before. There’s always been great stockmen. But they couldn’t tell you why they were good or what worked, they just knew where to be. We’ve tried to change that conversation.”

**His Own Herd**

Dr. Gill’s hands-on experience with his own cattle has helped him have a better grasp for educating others. He began raising his own cattle in 1988. He moved to the North Texas town of Boyd and had the chance to lease a ranch south of Bowie. He purchased his own cattle and pastured cows for a few others.

In 1989, he received a call from Sam Woody Acola, asking if Dr. Gill would partner him in the cattle business.

The Acola property has been in the Acola family since 1854 when it was settled by Sam Woody. The Acola family still owns the property and in 1997 Dr. Gill was able to buy the partnership out and lease the ranch where he continues to run the cattle operations of Gill Cattle Company.

Dr. Gill also bought out the partnership with his dad, who was ranching in Fort Sumner, N.M., and moved all those cattle to the Texas area, and leased another ranch in Springtown. He leased a place in Mineral Wells for a bit, forming Gill Cattle Company with his brother, with up to 900 cows at that point. They had a preconditioning operation and ran yearling cattle along with a hay operation.

Eventually, Dr. Gill’s role as associate department head of Extension took him and his wife, Debbie, to College Station from 2009, but in 2020, the couple decided they were tired of driving back and forth to care for their ranches and settled between Chico and Crafton, Texas, where they remain today.

“Being able to walk across that line from Extension to research and education and then to the industry side helps. Being in the cattle business also changes how you perceive data sometimes. A lot of people think cattle are a



(Above) Dr. Ron Gill speaks to the crowd during a sheep and goat expo. (Left) Dr. Ron Gill on Sarge. (Photos courtesy Dr. Ron Gill)





distraction from what we do, but it makes us more valuable. I think as educators we really understand the practical side of it. There is a balance there,” Dr. Gill said. “We get so disciplined in Extension and research, but ranch management is a broad aspect of what has to be done, from financial to marketing.”

Dr. Gill and Debbie host many groups on their property brought in by the Texas Beef Council to help educate outside groups.

“The Beef Council is so good about bringing in different people. They have brought dietitians, meat buyers from China, educators, they do such a good job of organizing some of these educational, or exposure, events. These people get to come in and meet someone in agriculture and understand a little more about it. Our cattle don’t run off, and we’re close enough to Dallas-Fort Worth, that we host a lot of these events,” Dr. Gill said.

#### What’s Next?

“From a professional standpoint, my goal has been to hire people for this next round of Specialists in the ANSC Extension Unit that will be better than we were. Nobody will ever know who hired all these people, but I have replaced 85 percent of the people I worked

with over the years. My goal has been last long enough to get us replaced with good people. I’ll be happy with going off into the sunset without a problem when it is time,” Dr. Gill said.

Dr. Gill has hired a livestock sustainability educator, a position he felt was needed, and the first Extension Specialist in this field in the nation. There is a lot of research involved in sustainability, and he tasked her with taking that research and seeing what needed to be done on the production side of ranching.

He is always looking toward the future and what type of educators the industry will most need. Dr. Gill hopes his next hire will be a meat specialist who can be a liaison between the packing industry and producers.

“That is how Extension is different from research. Our job is to interpret what research or industry innovation that is done and figure out what can be implemented at the production level and increase profitability and sustainability at the same time. That’s why Extension was formed, and that’s what sets the United States apart from nearly every other nation. We are the only ones with Extension,” Dr. Gill explained.

In the future, Dr. Gill would like to do more stockmanship training, and he has been

dabbling in facility design, another passion he would like to pursue, while still raising cattle.

“I would like to help someone else get into it, too. Our kids are not going to come back into the cattle operation. I would like to find someone who can make that transition and keep going. That would be satisfying to me. A lot of times it seems like ranches just get turned over to whoever has the most property around, not necessarily someone who is trying to get started,” Dr. Gill said.

At the end of the day, his biggest wish is that his career has made a difference.

“I hope some of it has been impactful. You can’t pick up a publication now that doesn’t have something about cattle handling or stockmanship or the importance for it. I don’t know if I can take credit for it or not, but it has happened during our tenure. You discover something that needs attention and put effort into it, and it normally pays off,” Dr. Gill concluded.

Products of his professional efforts can be found at [agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/](http://agrilifelearn.tamu.edu/) and videos can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMIemZhPXcHg1Ox5vY-hulg/featured> or just search YouTube for Ranch TV at Texas A&M AgriLife Extension.

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By Jesse Kader

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# Lacey's Pantry

By Lacey Vilhauer

## Grilled Chicken Panini with Zucchini, Tomato, Bacon and Mozzarella

Total time: 30 minutes

Servings: 2




### Instructions:

Season zucchini with salt and pepper. Heat a grill pan over medium-high heat.

Spray with oil and add the zucchini. Grill on each side about 2 minutes each, until grill marks form. Set aside. Cook bacon and set aside. Spray one side of each slice of bread. Heat a large non-stick skillet over medium-low heat. Place 2 slices of bread oiled side down on the skillet.

Top each piece of bread with 1 ounce of cheese, divide the zucchini on top, grilled chicken, bacon, tomato slices and basil and the remaining cheese.

Top with the remaining bread oil side up. Use a panini press, heavy pot or skillet to press it down and cook until the bottom piece of bread is golden, about 4 to 5 minutes.

Use a spatula to carefully flip the sandwich over. Cook until the other slice of bread is golden brown, about 3 to 4 minutes. Cut in half diagonally and serve. 





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| 2:30            | Robert Huston and Western Swing RULES     | 12pm           | Lake Travis Fiddlers - 2nd Rodeo | 1:30             | J.D. Barham's CowJazz Band   |
| 5:30            | Steve Markwardt and his A-List Swing Band | 3pm            | The Western Flyers               | 4pm              | Billy Mata's Texas Tradition |
| 8:30            | Jody Nix and the Texas Cowboys            | 5pm            | Veteran's Day Honor Guard        | 7pm              | Special Guest Floyd Domino   |
|                 |                                           | 5:30           | Kelly Spinks & Miles of Texas    | 10pm             | Bob Wills' Texas Playboys    |
|                 |                                           | 8:30           | Jake Hooker & the Outsiders      |                  | Special Guest Katie Shore    |
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It is a delicate balance between keeping the herd healthy, keeping the land healthy and watching resources when heat is up and rainfall is down. (Photo courtesy Crump Ranch)

# Vitamin A Requirements for Beef Cattle

By Martha Crump

Toward the last of July, we started our vacation by driving up to Garden City, Kan., to attend a producer's weekend at Pokey Feed-yard. I was amazed during our trip from Clay County, Texas, northward, everything, and I do mean everything, was green. I am not sure I have ever seen such verdant countryside all the way through North Texas to the Oklahoma panhandle, straight on into Kansas. All we have heard is the word "drought," and it is moving our way. Yes, we left temperatures that had been consistently into the 100-plus degree range, but we had experienced just enough rainfall to keep the grass green. After being gone for two weeks and coming back to the continuation of 100-plus degree weather, things were not quite so green, but still better than our neighbors to the west. However, we are Texans, and we are no strangers to excessive summertime heat and low rainfall totals.

Once back home, the checking and moving started. Check tank levels; check pasture grass; check mineral tubs; rotate out of pastures that had experienced enough grazing; move out of pastures with native grasses so they can develop seed, and so it goes. It is a delicate balance between keeping the herd healthy, keeping the land healthy and watching resources when heat is up and rainfall is down. My husband's favorite saying is, "If it were easy, everyone would do it."

Easy or not, we are back to that age old waiting game of enduring the heat and praying for rain. Everything that pertains to agriculture has at least one mention of the drought patterns and effects, and to that end a recent article caught my eye. The article stated that "over the last 12 months, numerous veterinarians throughout Oklahoma, Texas, Kansas, and Colorado have expressed concern about stillborn births and a

potential link to inadequate Vitamin A in cow herds, and that for this year in particular, cow/calf operations in the Southern Great Plains region should be diligent in making sure cows receive adequate supplemental Vitamin A this winter and spring."

If you asked animal nutritionists and veterinarians, a very large number of them would tell you Vitamin A is the most important supplement in beef cattle production. It is a fat-soluble vitamin and has many vital functions. It is necessary for adequate bone formation, general growth, energy, metabolism, skin and hoof tissue maintenance, reproduction, and vision in low light just to name a few. Vitamin A helps to maintain the delicate tissues lining the respiratory, digestive and reproductive tracts, keeping them pliable and functional. A Vitamin A deficiency thickens these tissues, causing

**Continued on page 52**



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**Continued from page 50**

them to become more brittle and increases susceptibility to infection because the lining tissues cannot as easily defend against pathogens. Additionally, if the gut is hard/brittle it cannot absorb nutrients, which will result in poor gain. In terms of reproduction, if a bull is Vitamin A deficient, spermatogenesis or reproductive capacity is impaired, and a cow with low Vitamin A is more prone to resorb or abort her fetus. For calves, it is significant to remember that this vitamin does not cross the placenta in high enough levels to meet their requirements. Calves are able to get sufficient levels through colostrum immediately after they are born if the vitamin status of the cow prior to calving is adequate to ensure colostrum levels. Calf growth will not proceed at a normal rate (decreased vigor and increased susceptibility to illness) if the calf is deficient. Other general herd deficiency symptoms include night blindness, skeletal deformation and skin lesions.

The good news is, while grazing on green grass, cattle can and do get plenty of vitamin A.

A significant source of vitamin A is beta-carotene, which is found in green forages. Green leafy forage, green hay, dehydrated alfalfa meal, and yellow corn are examples of rich sources of carotene. While lush, immature forage is especially high in carotene, this concentration is destroyed rapidly as the plant matures with exposure to sunlight, air, and high temperatures. Drought can compound Vitamin A deficiency because plants go dormant earlier in the year resulting in a longer period before animals eat green grass again. Dormant plants do not contain the levels of beta-carotene needed compared to levels found in green forage during the growing months. While cattle do have the ability to store Vitamin A in the liver, this supply can only last two to four months when they are not getting sufficient levels through



The next meeting of the WFACW organization will be Sept. 19, 2023 at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, Texas.

diet or supplementation.

It is important to pay attention to vitamin A status in a cattle herd when feeding hay as well. Depending on storage, carotenes will deteriorate at varying rates. If stored outside of cover, there will be little to no carotene found in the outer layers of the bale where it is brown and sun bleached. Deeper into the bale, if the hay was harvested under optimum conditions, there is a chance that there will be considerably more carotene. Bear in mind the longer hay is stored, the less vitamin A potential it will have. This rule also applies to free-choice mineral and concentrated feed products. Vitamin A activity can decay over time in products, and the decline will be exacerbated by exposure to heat, light, moisture, and inorganic minerals.

Supplementation of Vitamin A

depends on the type of cattle you have and what the grazing and feed sources are providing as well. Vitamin requirements are generally expressed in international units (IU). Pregnant cows and heifers should be supplemented with 30,000-100,000IU/head/day of Vitamin A when green forage is not available. Currently some studies indicate that there are benefits to using higher levels of supplementation, while others do not. On a positive note, higher vitamin supplementation rates do not appear to be a risky approach from a toxicologic standpoint.

In addition to standard mineral packages and commercial concentrate feed products, Vitamin A can also be supplied by injectable products and liquid drench forms.

Bear in mind that other vitamins are essential as well where

herd health is concerned, but a discussion of Vitamin A was a timely reminder due to the heat stress and lack of rainfall on grazing lands. A good, readily available mineral supplement is never a bad investment in herd health. If you are unsure about what would be best for your personal needs, have a chat with your local veterinarian to get started.

Hopefully, you have had a chance to visit with some of your local WFACW CattleWomen over the summer months. We have been active with the North Texas Rehab Dinner & Live Auction where we contributed close to \$3,000 dollars through the sale of specialty baked goods.

We had a booth at the Ranch Round-Up and also conducted the kids' arena rodeo events, then followed up with a Grilling 101 Event for the area 4-H youth camp in Wichita Falls. This was spearheaded by Texas State Cattle-Women President, Casey Matzke, with members of the WFACW riding herd and helping to corral any strays.

If you have been thinking about joining our organization, September is the time to check us out. Drop in one of our September meetings to spend some time with a great bunch of women and check out the fall calendar of events. October is the month for signing up as a new member or renewing an existing membership. We would love to have you join in the fun. Be sure to find us on Facebook and follow along as we post regularly about all things beef.

The next meeting of the WFACW organization will be Sept. 19, 2023 at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, Texas. Members attending the midday meeting are encouraged to bring their lunch and enjoy eating and visiting starting at 11:30 a.m., followed by the business meeting at noon. Evening meetings will resume in September, starting at 5:30 p.m., for a meal, followed by a recap of the noon business





meeting at 6 p.m. As the meeting time nears, follow the WFACW Facebook page for additional meeting information regarding both meeting times. Our meeting dates/times may also be found on the State CattleWomen's Facebook page.

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A good, readily available mineral supplement is never a bad investment in herd health. If you are unsure about what would be best for your personal needs, have a chat with your local veterinarian to get started. (Photo courtesy Crump Ranch)

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Noble Research Institute livestock consultant Robert Wells offers best management practices that can help ranchers survive market- and weather-related disruptions and allow for more profit year-in and year-out.

# Noble Learning:

## Top 10 Ways to Make Cow Herds More Profitable

By Robert Wells, Ph.D.

The ranching business has always been subject to the variability and extremes of external factors, such as market volatility and weather extremes. Neither of these seem to be letting up any time soon.

So for ranchers to economically survive market downturns as well as capitalize on good times, it helps to get back to the basics, fine-tune their operations and plan for the long-term. An extremely viable strategy is to start working more with nature and less against it through implementation of regenerative ranching principles.

The following is a Top 10 list of management practices and concepts to consider that can help keep you from paying to be in the ranching business and losing money for the next few years. Remember, the difference

between someone who is a hobbyist or professional is if they pay to do it or they are paid for what they do.

### 1. Don't buy average or inferior bulls.

Spending as little as \$750 to \$1,000 more on the purchase price of a better bull with known genetics could net you an additional approximately \$1,500 more per bull, annually. If breeding for a terminal market, this is accomplished by purchasing a bull that will excel in growth traits that allow the rancher to sell the maximum total pounds of weaned calves off the ranch while still having a moderately sized cow in the herd. If you are breeding for replacement females, then consider using genetics from a sire (live bull or artificial insemination) that will create a female that will fit the environment and management that you

expect her to work in. Consider traits such as milking ability, mature weight, mature height, carcass and growth characteristics that are the optimal combination to be successful within the context of your operation.

### 2. Join a cattle marketing alliance and consider where to market.

Using a marketing alliance can help increase the probability of receiving top or even premium pricing for your cattle, since you can leverage the strength of numbers an alliance can provide. Market your cattle in a venue that will maximize your return on the investment of raising and selling a quality calf. If you are the only producer at the sale on a given day who is offering cattle that have been preconditioned and vaccinated, do not

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expect to receive a premium price, because the order buyers will just blend your cattle into the load with other general cattle bought on the same day. Alliances can help you coordinate the best times and locations to optimize your profits when you sell. They also can help you to determine desirable genetic traits to select for, especially with herd bulls.

### 3. Keep cow size moderate.

Larger cows require more forage to sustain themselves on a daily basis. This can affect pasture stocking rates. A 1,400-pound cow is 200 pounds or 17 percent larger than a 1,200-pound cow, and she is going to be taking in 11 percent more forage.

That's why stocking rate must be considered if you change your average cow size from 1,200 to 1,400 pounds. If you cannot increase the forage production accordingly, you will have to decrease the stocking rate by 11 percent fewer cows to still have enough forage for the number of cows in the pasture.

The heavier cow should wean a heavier calf, but this increase will not be enough to offset the reduced cow numbers nor the associated costs of the heavier cows. Moderation in size can help the bottom line. Know the average weight of your cows when they are in a body condition score of five. Purchase replacements that will be moderate in frame and weight or buy bulls that will help to achieve more moderate frame scores in female offspring. The expected progeny difference (EPD) traits of mature size and weight are examples of selection tools that can help your decision-making.

### 4. Treat your cows as an employee.

Your cows should be expected to work daily for you. A successfully productive cow will efficiently deliver a calf to the weaning pen each year, with little cost and few problems along the way. In order to do this, you must select



Using a marketing alliance can help increase the probability of receiving top or even premium pricing for your cattle, since you can leverage the strength of numbers an alliance can provide. (Photos courtesy Noble Research Institute)

the right female, then develop her so she will be successful in the environment where you expect her to work.

### 5. Cull cows.

When reducing herd numbers, first cull what I call the three O's: old, open and ornery cows. Then, consider additional culls as the situation warrants. Older cows have a difficult time maintaining weight while usually weaning an even smaller calf. Carrying an open cow through the winter is analogous to hiring an employee, paying them monthly but then not expecting them to show up to work for the next year. Ornery cows damage equipment, injure people and reduce efficiency when they are difficult to work in the pen or if they take part of the herd to the trees when you come into the pasture.

### 6. Develop a short and defined breeding season.

Increasing the number of earlier-calving cows within your defined calving season will increase the average weaning weight at marketing time. Consider this: if a calf is born 30 days earlier in the calving season and gains two pounds per day while on the cow, the calf will weigh 60 pounds more than its later peers at the same weaning date in the fall.

That is roughly a 10 percent to 12 percent increase in weaning weight achieved simply by making sure more calves are born in the first third of the calving season.

Also, make sure that timing of the breeding season is in synchronization with the best forage availability and quality on the ranch. Time the breeding season and subsequent calving season

so that when cows are in peak lactation with their highest nutritional demand for the year (two to three months post calving), your pastures have the highest forage quality and quantity available.

### 7. Control feed expenses.

As stated above in number six, it is best to schedule the calving season to match the average cow's highest nutritional demand, about two to three months post calving, to availability of the best quality and quantity of pasture.

For most ranches, this means calving in early spring if its pastures are dominated by warm-season grasses. Unless there are adequate cool-season forages available to support the cow's peak nutritional requirements during peak lactation, cows should not be calving in the winter months.

Manure scoring is a great way





to monitor if a cow is getting enough nutrition in almost real time. A cow grazing pastures that supply enough nutrition to meet her requirements will have a manure score of three (range one to five; one excessive nutrition, five inadequate nutrition). Manure scores give the producer an estimate of the digestibility of the pasture forage the cow has been eating for the past 36 to 72 hours.

This method allows you to identify nutritional deficiencies before they manifest into lower body condition scores. If you must feed hay, provide high-enough quality hay that additional feed supplementation is not necessary. It takes a free-choice diet (28.4 pounds dry matter/day) of either pasture or hay that is at least 9.9 percent crude protein and 57.6 percent total digestible nutrients to meet a 1,200-pound cow's highest nutritional requirements during peak lactation (two to three

months post calving).

#### **8. Utilize Heterosis.**

Heterosis, or hybrid vigor, is an often-overlooked tool to increase the commercial cattleman's overall efficiency. Heterosis is an easy tool to implement for most cattlemen and can increase weaning weights, cow fertility and longevity, improve growth performance, and produce a more desirable feeder calf.

#### **9. If feeding hay, don't waste it.**

Hay feeding is probably the most expensive form of delivering forage to the cow. If you are locked into this system by the forage type available on your operation, make sure you don't waste hay by using antiquated-style hay rings.

A modified cone hay feeder can reduce hay loss by eight percent to 15 percent compared to older, typical-style feeders. Feeding hay may be necessary during

weather emergencies, when cattle are penned for working or other management activities (weaning, estrus synchronization, etc.). Otherwise, the need for hay throughout the winter is a sign the ranch is stocked more heavily than the land resources can sustain naturally, especially in native pasture systems.


#### **10. Keep records.**

The old saying is true: you can't manage what you don't measure. The more records you keep – from how much feed/mineral and hay is fed to weaning weights and percent weaned calves – the more powerful your management decisions can become.

Develop key performance indicators to benchmark how your operation compares to itself over time and to others of similar size and in the same area annually. Keeping pasture and grazing management records is also a vital activity for the intentional rancher, as these records will inform future

management decisions and explain past performance of the pasture and the livestock that grazed it. The number of acres that you manage is your finite resource, thus management should focus on appropriately reducing costs and optimally increasing revenue to increase profit per acre.

Keep in mind the above-referenced management practices will help most producers survive market - and weather-related disruptions and will allow for more profit year-in and year-out. Pastures that have been managed regeneratively will have more soil organic carbon and thus have a higher degree of water-holding content.

This in itself will help producers manage through many weather extremes. Additionally, regeneratively minded ranchers who implement the above practices will more than likely be those who are better pasture managers and will have healthier soils, as well. 



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# Grazing North Texas: Buffalobur

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

Buffalobur is another one of those North Texas grazing land plants we need to be aware of, but not because it is good for grazing. This shallow tap-rooted annual is in the potato family, as is its cousin, Silverleaf nightshade. Both are poisonous plants.

Besides being a poisonous plant, buffalobur is just about the most unfriendly plant around.


It forms a rounded mound from 12 to 30 inches tall and has stout, golden yellow prickles on the stems and leaves. I have vivid memories as a boy of walking into buffalobur while hoeing weeds in my uncle's cotton patch. It just took a few encounters for me to learn to watch for this bad boy.

Because of the dense prickles all over the plant, it is normally not chosen by livestock or wildlife for grazing.

With very little consumed, the fact that it is considered poisonous is not normally an issue. The seeds, which resemble little pieces of lava, are consumed by quail, dove and songbirds.

The seed pods are shaped so that the plant retains seeds well into winter, which allows the seed to be available for a long period of time. Bees and other pollinators are attracted to the yellow flowers.

Buffalobur can grow in almost all areas of Texas and in other states. In the Southwestern states, the Zunis Indians made tea from buffalobur by placing a pinch of the powdered root in a small amount of water.

They chewed the root of Silverleaf nightshade and placed it in the cavity of an aching tooth. The nightshade family of plants has a history of medicinal use in other parts of the world, as well. 



The buffalobur plant. This shallow tap-rooted annual is in the potato family, as is its cousin, Silverleaf nightshade. Both are poisonous plants.



## Grazing Value of This Plant

### Buffalobur



Due to sharp prickles all over the plant, Buffalobur is seldom grazed by livestock.

(Left) A buffalobur flower. It forms a rounded mound from 12 to 30 inches tall and has stout, golden yellow prickles on the stems and leaves.



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# The Garden Guy

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## Pink Cashmere Will Put a Happy Face on Torrid Summer

Nothing quite like Pink Cashmere to put the happy face on a summer that has turned oppressive from heat and humidity. No, this is not part of The Garden Guy's latest watering wardrobe, but a new Superbena verbenas making its debut in 2024.

The past three years, Superbena verbenas have steadily climbed the lists of most popular butterfly plants at The Garden Guy's house. Varieties like Cobalt, Stormburst, Whiteout, and Royal Chambray can hold their own with a lantana any day of the week when it comes to bringing in pollinators.

Immediately Pink Cashmere showed it had that same habit and toughness that we have come to expect with Superbena verbenas. Mine were planted in April and were performing like an award winner as we turned toward August.

Pink Cashmere is kind of an apple blossom color to me with shades of dark and light pink and some florets that are white. The blooms are large and the foliage vigorous and disease free. Best of all these blooms are always being shown affection from hummingbirds, bees and butterflies like Eastern Tiger and Spicebush Swallowtails.

The plants will reach about 12-inches tall and have the potential of a 30-inch spread. This means you can use them as a floral carpet-like groundcover, have it



Superbena Pink Cashmere verbenas will be making its debut in 2024. The Garden Guy took this picture at the Young's Plant Farm 2023 Garden Tour in Auburn, Ala.

tumble over walls, the rim of containers and plummet from baskets.

When you get yours next

spring, choose a location with plenty of sunlight. The soil should be fertile, organic rich and drain

freely. This is why they are so easy to grow in containers since you use potting soil.

Prepared landscape mixes and planting on raised beds help duplicate this environment in the landscape.

Space your plants 10 to 14 inches apart if you are going to plant an informal drift or sweep in the landscape. Use an application of controlled release granules at planting again in mid-summer.

Those I received for trial purposes were used in window boxes and containers. Controlled release granules were used at planting and then a switch to water-soluble feeding since watering is a daily regimen.

One growing technique that has proven itself time and again when I was with Mississippi State University, and in my own garden, is proactively cutting back. In the hot, humid south, we all go through those times when verbenas look tired, open and generally unproductive.

This is a great time to cut back by a third and feed with a water-soluble fertilizer.

Generating new growth means more of those incredible blossoms. In containers, The Garden Guy likes to feed with a dilute water-soluble mix about every two weeks. The response is almost magical.

Superbena Pink Cashmere offers so many plant partnership






possibilities. In my containers, I partnered with the new yellow Supertunia Saffron Finch petunia also making its debut in 2024. There is something special about the soft yellow and pink together.

In the window box we used Superbena Pink Cashmere verberna, with Unplugged So Blue salvia, Supertunia Saffron Finch petunia, Supertunia Mini Vista Sweet Sangria, and Supertunia Mini Vista Indigo petunias which turned out nothing short of stunning.

The Garden Guy has always been a flaming orange kind of guy, but Superbena Pink Cashmere has convinced me I need some pink in my garden too.

I imagine it will be a competitive spring at the garden center, so get ready to elbow your way to the table where Superbena Pink Cashmere will be on display. Follow me on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy for more photos and garden inspiration. 



This Spicebush Swallowtail also finds the Superbena Pink Cashmere verberna to be on the nectar menu. (Photos courtesy Norman Winter)



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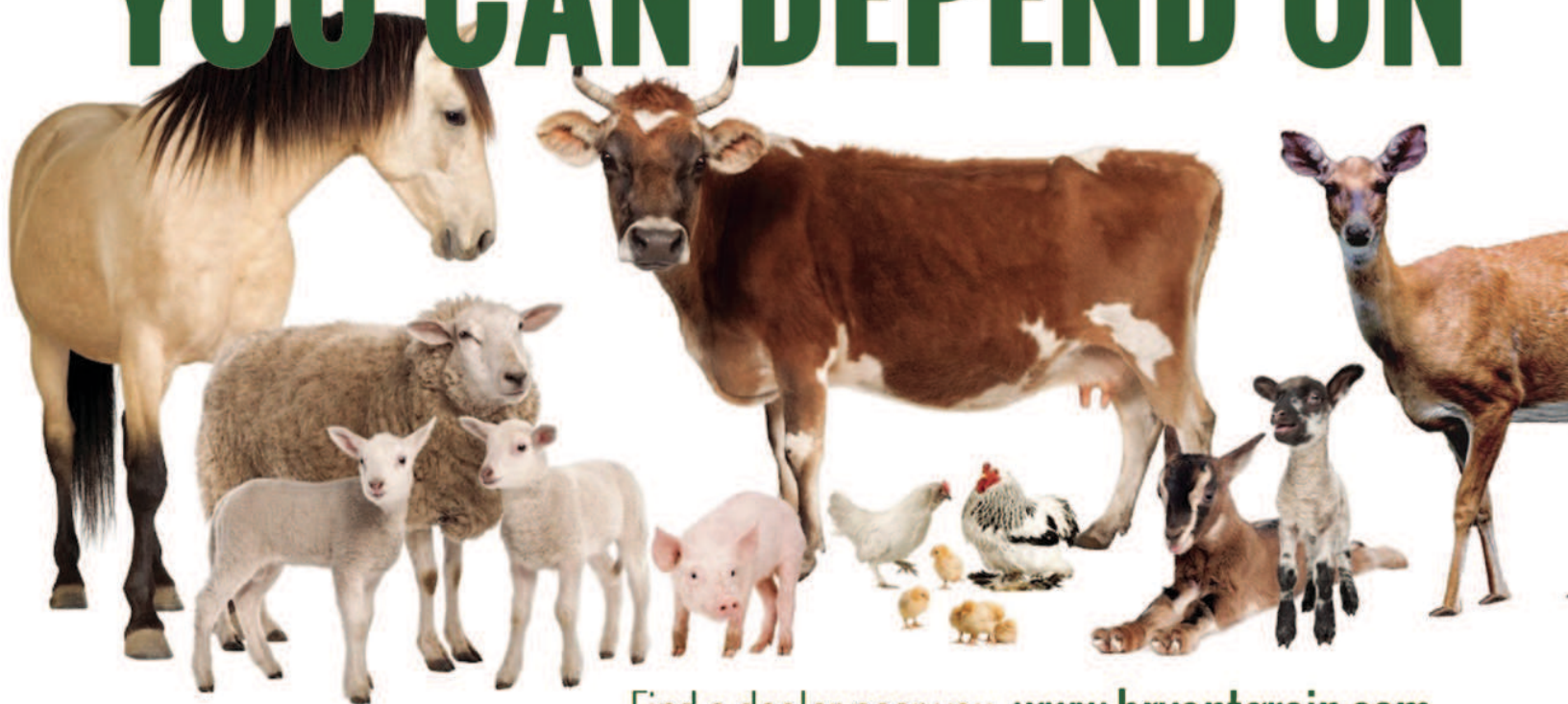
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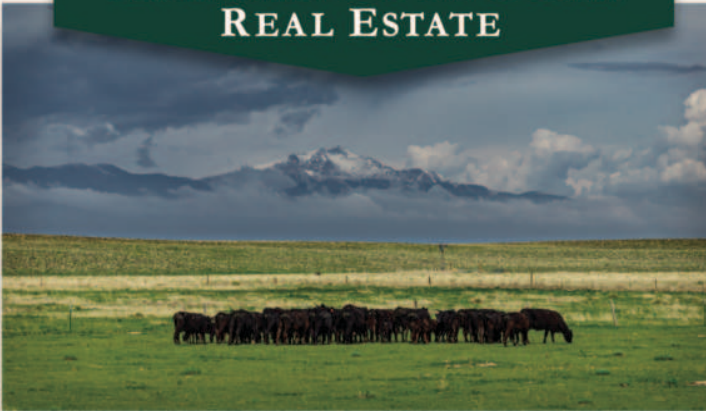
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