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MEGARGEL, TX

Furnished 3,360sf not including spacious upstairs foamed loft storage. 3 bed 2 bath office, gym, game room, open kitchen & island laundry room. built in storm shelter. 3 car covered drive thru parking. 2,400 sft foamed equipment building & 600 sft cabin with full bath kitchen, laundry room with washer/dryer hookup, pipe cattle pens, head shutte, cattle guards, loafing sheds. Master, his/her walk-in closets. Powered custom blinds & vaulted ceilings. Easy access to covered parking. Heated bath floor dual shower heads, 6x6 shower, drop-in bathtub. Kohler fixtures sealed natural concrete, mood lighting. Kitchen, Viking 48 in side-by-side fridge, 36 in Tuscan Range dual fuel custom soft close cabinets, crown molding, 7x4 island, granite countertops. Foamed all areas of home, equipment building barn, loft. Spacious Gameroom. Custom Crown molding. Fireplace. Lennox Heat pumps. Private gates, custom work stone entrance 3 tanks. Automatic Non freeze waterer. Bobby Norris- \$2,995,000



CLEBURNE, TX

A must see property not even a quarter mile from I-35. Property backs up to a new commercial business park. Huge commercial development potential within the Burleson city limits. A tremendous buy and hold property or get started right away. With rolling terrain and elevations this property is filled with hardwoods as well. Location at its best!! Bobby Norris - \$2,250,000



SPRINGTOWN, TX

This winter view comes to life in the spring. The fence line along the road is filled with plums and mustang grapevines. There are a variety of trees including oak, elm, cedar, Mesquite and mulberry. The open field on the western portion was graded with connecting properties in the 80's giving many years for the soil to have settled, helping prevent heavy washout common with Texas storms and keeping it fairly level. Deer and other wildlife frequent this patch of land, making it a beautiful spot for a home or getaway with large open fields around it.. Bobby Norris- \$166,000



GRANDVIEW, TX

Country living! This house and 10 acres in the country has so much potential. t 3 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, 3 car garage, school district, with 2 acres. Bobby Norris- \$410,000

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Just under 50 acres this property has it all. The 4BD/2BTH home has been recently renovated to include granite countertops, ceramic tile, new vinyl flooring and new Whirlpool appliances. The property included a 5-stall barn with water and electric and a 32X40 shop with electricity.



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.



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Sire Side: Skipper W Pete McCue, Piggin String Flying Bob Yellow Jacket Plaudit, King Plaudit TB by Plaudit TB (Kentucky Derby Winner)

DAM Side: Skipper W. Pete McCue, Dewitt Bar by Three Bars, Bright Bar by Three Bars, Royal Bar by Three Bars, Joe Hancock, Leo by Joe Reed II by Joe Reed, Wagner's Rainy Day, Question Mark by Plaudit by King Plaudit TB by Plaudit TB (Kentucky Derby Winner), Questionnaire (Belmont Stakes Winner)

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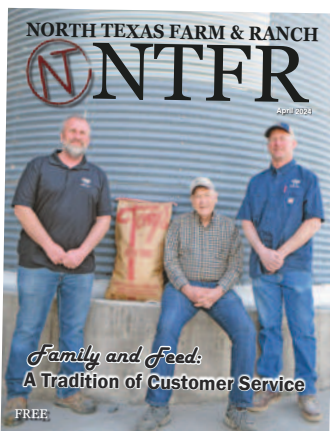


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ON THE COVER

On the cover are Jeff, Joe, and Damian Hellman, all part of the Tony's Seed & Feed legacy. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



letter from the editor

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

As we head into the warmer days of spring and soak in the site of new life all around, don't forget to keep those affected by the Texas Panhandle wildfires in your thoughts and prayers. As we move on to the tasks

April brings, they will be still be putting the pieces of their life back together from this tragic event. If you feel lead to help, the Noble Foundation and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension both have resources available for donations listed on their websites.

In this month's profile, we meet brothers Jeff Hellman and Damian Hellman, owners of Tony's Feed & Seed. The duo took over the business from their father, Joe, who retired with 66 years under his belt. While they have witnessed many changes over the years in the agricultural lifestyle and its customers, one thing that has not changed at this local feed store is their dedication to customer service.

Turn the pages to find out what happened in land real estate for February, learn more about vaccinations needed this spring, discover a new delicious recipe for strawberry sorbet in Lacey's Pantry, and so much more.

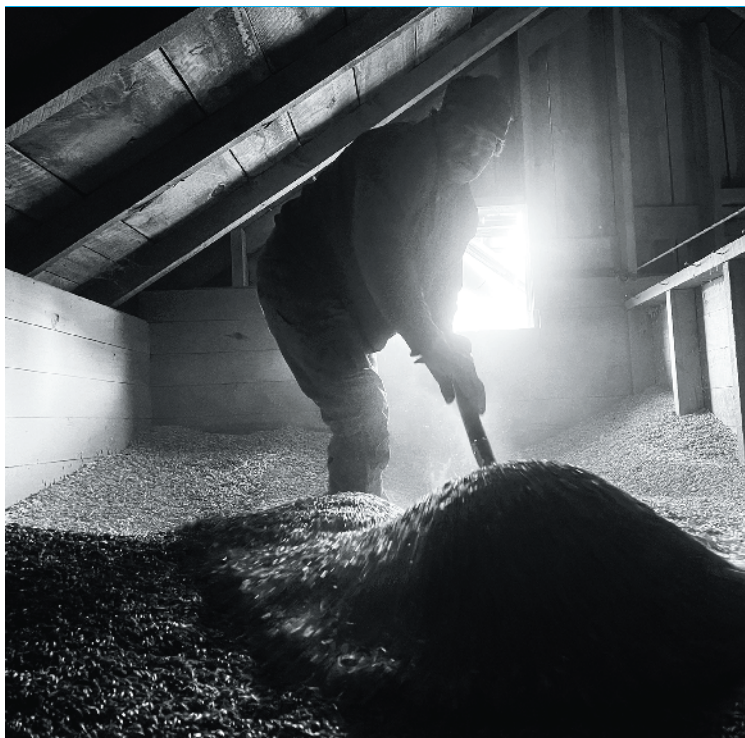
To subscribe by mail call 940-872-5922. Make sure to like our Facebook page and follow us on Instagram and Twitter. Wishing you all a very Happy April!



Dani Blackburn

Dani Blackburn, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com

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Senior Horse Care

We are seeing horses live to older ages than ever before. Maintaining a senior horse can be a difficult, but is possible.

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Mountain out of a Molehill

As spring comes around, homeowners and farmers find themselves dealing with mounds in their grounds.

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On the Road

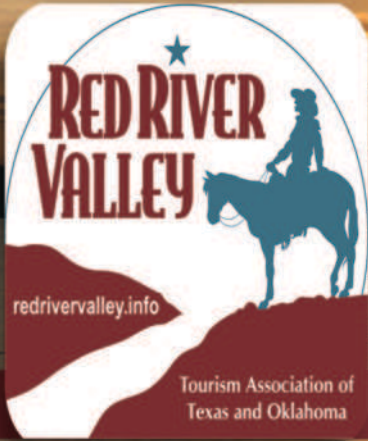
Local celebrity dancers of the greater Gainesville area brought the house down at "Dancing With Our Stars."

58

Grazing North Texas

If moisture is adequate, there are several winter annual grasses that dominate the landscape.

Events
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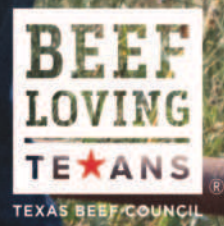
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5d · 🌐

This time of the year is fun for a garden writer as we get the opportunity to look forward to 2024. This month the focus is Supertunia Vista Jazzberry petunia, Proven Winners 2024 Annual of the Year.

READ MORE: <https://ntfronline.com/2024/02/the-garden-guy-35/>



TWITTER FEED

NTFR Magazine @NTFRMagazine

With spring approaching, producers should be aware of a disease associated with rapidly growing forages. Hypomagnesemia is commonly referred to as grass tetany.

ntfronline.com/2024/02/grass-...



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SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION OPENED

Application for the Pat Shores Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000 for the fall semester 2024 is now open.

The scholarship will be awarded by the Wichita Falls Area Cattlewomen, is an organization of women who are involved in or support the beef industry.

Applicants must meet the following criteria.

1. Students must be classified as a sophomore or above with an agriculture related major.
2. Students must have a GPA of at least 2.5.
3. They must be a resident of Texas and a graduate of a high school in one of the following counties; Archer, Baylor, Clay, Montague, Wichita, Young or Jack.
4. Previous one-time winners may apply.
5. Completed applications must be received no later than May 15, 2024. The winners will be announced June 1, 2024.
6. Interested applicants may contact Jane Ridenour at (940) 733-3579, Kathy Smyers at (940) 631-2598 or wfacattlewomen@gmail.com.

Jane Ridenour
Scholarship Chairman

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MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com

Spring has sprung and hopefully the rains will continue where our country will heal from the previous droughts and our grasses will thrive. We are especially hopeful for the Panhandle of Texas where our neighbors and friends have been dealt a deadly blow to homes, ranges, livestock, and people. Keep them in your prayers as they will not be able to return to normal for many years if at all. Having lost their ability to benefit from this great cattle market is a double whammy for all of them.

Now is the time of year when we need to take care of business as it relates to our new calves that have been hitting the ground this spring. First and foremost is vaccinating for Blackleg followed by deworming with a white wormer and the IBR complex. Blackleg is a soil-born disease and with pastures extremely short this spring our calves have been grazing the green grass as soon as it shows itself, making them even more vulnerable to picking contaminants from the soil. In my observations, calves that become infected and die do so when they are in the picture of health and weigh in the 350 to 400-pound range. For whatever the reason, they seem to die close to a water source such as a stock tank. Death is usually the first symptom of blackleg and in my time in the cattle business I have only seen one calf with blackleg that was still alive but eventually died.

After we get our calves covered, we need to focus our attention on our cows and bulls. Number one on my list for vaccinations is Lepto-Vibrio. With the wild hog population continuing to grow, the incidence of lepto will likely increase accordingly. Next on our list is deworming our



Now is the time of year when we need to take care of business. (Photo courtesy Rayford Pullen)


cattle two years old and younger and the older ones if needed, in our opinion. As cattle get older they do develop some immunity to internal parasites, but when conditions get tough, as they have been, you may want to consider deworming, especially if they are running in high concentrations and having free moisture on the leaves of our grass.

We have also had a few incidents of lice showing up on our

cattle this spring. The number one symptom is the loss of hair resulting from the cattle rubbing on tree limbs or any other thing they can to get some relief from the irritation caused by lice. In any case, as the saying goes “In May, the lice go away,” so we don’t have much longer to deal with them.

With our cattle in good health, free choice mineral available and our bulls ready to go to work, getting our cows rebred is the

next order of business. Our cows are putting on weight, giving lots of milk the calves are turning the crank. According to my figuring the other day, if our calves are gaining two-and-a-half to three pounds per day, at four dollars per pound on sale day at weaning, they are adding \$10 to \$12 of value per day. Put the pencil to it, it is an exercise you will enjoy doing.

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



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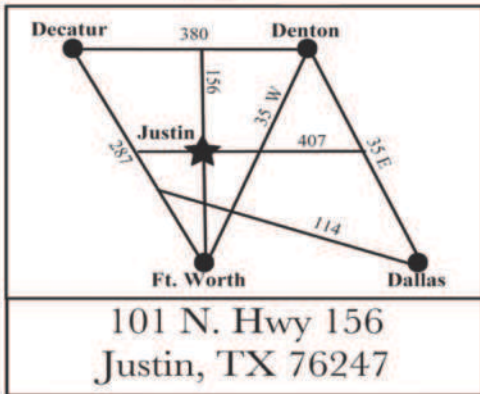
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AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK




Another load of grain in to keep feeding the calves until the green grass can really start popping. 

AG *elsewhere* WYOMING

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY TRESSA LAWRENCE



Babies are tucked away in every nook and cranny. Many ranchers across Wyoming have baby animals popping up all over this time of year. 

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Land Market Report


FEBRUARY LAND SALES

By Jared Groce

Spring is upon us at long last, as we welcome the green grasses and budding trees back from dormancy. Unfortunately for some of our neighbors to the west, the season change has been marked with the worst wildfires in Texas history. If you are able to assist our fellow Texans, please do so. God knows they need all of the help they can get. My company is gathering fencing supplies that we can deliver to the panhandle, so anyone with extra posts or wire can contact us for pick-up and we will deliver it out west.

In the rural real estate market, things are pretty stable as they have been for the past several months. There are not a lot of transactions, and prices remain stable as well. We are not seeing as many investors who were buying up larger tracts and splitting them up into smaller tracts. Typically, springtime brings on more buyers and sellers, but since this is an election year – all bets are off. I have said for years that this phenomena occurs every four years, and regardless of who wins, the phones start to ring as soon as the election is over.

Interest rates have settled down somewhat, and most agree that they will likely decrease a fair amount this year. Some of the land banks have programs set up so that a borrower can do a rate modification without the need for an expensive refinance episode. These programs are great for folks buying today who can easily reduce their rate in the near future.

Now is the time to get those soil samples sent in so you can determine how to properly fertilize your fields, pastures, or yards. Soil sample kits are available from your local Extension Agent or NRCS office. It is also the second best time to plant trees – the best time was 20 years ago, so quit waiting. 

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
GUNTER	10.970	\$16,864.00	92.50	26
DENISON	10.200	\$25,980.00	94.60	67
POTTSBORO	12.260	\$26,509.00	98.20	529
SHERMAN	19.530	\$20,430.00	84.00	9
WHITESBORO	29.000	\$13,793.00	100.00	206
SHERMAN	31.630	\$24,502.00	90.70	203
DENISON	11.000	\$88,636.00	88.60	344
AVG	17.800	\$30,959.00	92.70	198

DENTON COUNTY

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
KRUM	10	\$37,500	93.8	68
SANGER	45	\$12,000	100	269
SANGER	50.49	\$12,000	100	37
JUSTIN	32	\$35,781	84.4	28
AVG	34.370	\$24,320.00	94.50	101

WISE COUNTY

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
ALVORD	10.220	\$13,693.00	84.80	89
ALVORD	10.220	\$15,160.00	93.90	82
ALVORD	10.220	\$15,160.00	93.90	82
CHICO	10.710	\$22,976.00	95.70	200
DECATUR	10.500	\$36,000.00	94.50	40
SUNSET	57.750	\$11,931.00	99.10	139
AVG	18.270	\$19,153.00	93.70	105

MONTAGUE COUNTY

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
SAINT JO	10.020	\$16,966.00	95.00	8
NOCONA	28.830	\$7,500.00	94.30	688
MONTAGUE	21.000	\$13,370.00	95.50	359
SAINT JO	31.290	\$10,227.00	97.40	57
BOWIE	80.870	\$13,602.00	91.70	533
BOWIE	238.870	\$16,417.00	99.30	137
AVG	68.480	\$13,014.00	95.50	297

COLLIN COUNTY

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
LEONARD	35.000	\$12,857.00	78.30	174
CELINA	124.070	\$99,942.00	91.90	170
AVG	79.540	\$56,400.00	85.10	172

COOKE COUNTY

CITY	ACRES	\$ / ACRE	ASK/SELL RATIO	DOM
GAINESVILLE	11.940	\$17,500.00	100.00	159
GAINESVILLE	15.000	\$26,758.00	89.20	60
WHITESBORO	22.000	\$18,318.00	94.8	114
MUENSTER	23.140	\$19,447.00	84.9	632
LINDSAY	80.000	\$20,000.00	94.10	63
AVG	30.420	\$20,405.00	92.6	206



Hazards of Backyard Poultry

By Barry Whitworth, DVM

Having backyard poultry is a popular agriculture enterprise. According to the United States Department of Agriculture, 0.8 percent of all households in the United States have chickens. People keep chickens for a variety of reasons with table eggs being one of the more common reasons.

Unfortunately, some of these poultry producers are not aware of the hazards that come with keeping poultry because many times they carry pathogens but appear healthy.

Chickens are carriers of several zoonotic diseases. These are diseases that can be passed from animals to humans. According to a recent survey in Pennsylvania, a majority of backyard poultry producers were aware of the dangers of avian influenza. However, this study also revealed that far fewer producers were aware of the risk of possible exposure to *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*.

The lack of knowledge about the hazards of raising poultry likely contributes to the continued

issues of *Salmonella* outbreaks associated with backyard poultry. In 2023, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 1,072 illnesses of *Salmonella* linked to backyard poultry, and 272 of those patients required hospitalization. Oklahoma reported 43 individuals with the disease.

Direct contact with chickens is not the only way to be exposed to the pathogens they carry. The environment in which they live can be a danger due to air quality and waste in the soil. The air in a

poultry coop is composed of dust particles, ammonia, pathogens, poultry droppings, and other materials.

Breathing the dust while cleaning a poultry coop has been associated with respiratory issues in poultry workers. One study found that human infections are associated with contact with poultry waste and soil. Backyard poultry producers may be exposed to poultry droppings when cleaning equipment or pens.

Most zoonotic diseases can be


prevented. Proper hand hygiene is one of the best disease prevention tools available. According to the Pennsylvania study, most poultry producers wash their hands after having contact with their birds. However, that same study found most poultry producers do not wear gloves or cover their mouths when handling animals or animal manure. Backyard poultry producers should wear proper protective equipment when cleaning equipment and pens.

Poultry producers can protect themselves by following some simple rules.

- Wash hands with soap and water before and after having any contact with poultry or any area where poultry are located. If soap is not available, use hand sanitizer.
- Do not kiss or snuggle birds.
- Do not allow poultry to enter areas where food and drinks are prepared, served and stored.
- Do not eat or drink where poultry are located.
- Cook eggs thoroughly.
- Clean equipment associated with poultry outdoors.
- Older adults, pregnant women, children under five, and immunocompromised individuals should be extra careful around poultry.
- Wear protective clothing, shoes, gloves, and a face mask when cleaning poultry houses.

Having chickens in the backyard can be very rewarding experiences.

However, poultry owners should be aware of the potential hazards associated with backyard poultry production and protect themselves.

If poultry producers would like more information about hazards associated with backyard poultry, contact your local veterinarian and/or county extension educator. Also, the CDC has a website dedicated to backyard poultry producers' health. The website can be accessed at <https://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/pets/farm-animals/backyard-poultry.html>. 



Direct contact with chickens is not the only way to be exposed to the pathogens they carry. (Courtesy photos)



Every good grazing plan begins with a specific goal or goals.

Noble Learning:

Get Out of ‘Defense Mode’ With your Next Grazing Plan

By Laura Nelson

Most ranchers carry a good grazing plan in their heads, executing with a combination of intuition built on experience, an understanding of regional trends and an adaptivity to circumstances.

But if you need to solve a significant problem or are ready to take aim at a new ideal like regenerative or adaptive grazing, it’s time put a proactive grazing plan on paper, Noble Research Institute Regenerative Ranching Advisor Steve Swaffar says.

“There is a heavier commitment to reach a goal you’ve

written down,” he says. Writing a grazing plan on paper can feel uncomfortable, but “frankly, a good goal should make you nervous.”

For a more experienced rancher, building an ambitious grazing plan may be the slight push you need to make progress in the year ahead.

For a beginning rancher or someone grazing a new piece of land, it’s an offensive plan to help navigate the unknown.

Either way, Swaffar says, “When you start putting the plan to paper, it opens all these ‘ah-ha’ moments.”

1. Start with your goals in mind.

Every good grazing plan begins with a specific goal or goals.

If you worry every year about buying an unsustainable amount of hay, spend too much money on external inputs, or see an invasive species reducing your forage production, Swaffar says it’s time to meet the problem head-on by starting with a grazing goal and plan.

“These are the questions that have to stop us and make us ask, ‘How am I going to get through this?’” Swaffar says. “Well, I’ve got to sit down and make a plan,

set some goals to solve the problem.” Along the way, you may uncover new opportunities as well.

Are you prepared to take advantage of an exceptionally favorable year with additional forage? Can you diversify your income with a new class or species of livestock?

Could aligning your animals’ production cycle to match their environment reduce your labor requirements? What would your bottom line look like if you could sustainably produce X pounds of beef per acre?

Be realistic with these goals,

Swaffar says, but remember that many good opportunities are missed due to a lack of preparation.

Finally, consider goals that will help shift your focus to create the business and life you want, Swaffar says. “Part of these goals could be, ‘My family wants to take a vacation in July.’ So where do my animals need to be to make it possible for us to be away? Build a plan from there.”

2. Take stock of where you’ll start.

Once you set your goal(s), record a basic inventory of resources. You no doubt know your water sources and have a good idea of their quality and quantity, but writing it down may help address nagging, predictable problems (the well that comes up dry half the time, or the windmill that needs to be fixed every year).

“This inventory is where you can start to ask, ‘Where can I manage animals so that they’re most efficient, not walking over a mile to get to water? What opportunities do I have to create more paddocks and use this grass more efficiently?’” Swaffar says.

Next, evaluate your forage availability for the season ahead.

“If you’re a ‘trust your gut’ kind of guy, it’s still important to spot-check yourself from time to time,” Swaffar says. Use a forage stick or a clip-and-weigh method in multiple pasture locations to accurately assess your forage production.

Then, fill in dates critical to your business and the goal in mind.

Calculate nutritional needs for breeding season, facility needs for calving, strengths and weaknesses in the resource inventory you have, and any other infrastructure that needs attention.

3. Plan the work, then work the plan.

Once you have the critical information committed to black and white, you probably have some set dates and movements in



After you have planned out the work, it is time to work the plan. (Photos courtesy Noble Research Institute)

mind or a paddock configuration that’s worked in the past. Swaffar suggests challenging your own assumptions.

If you’ve grazed one pasture from May 1 to June 15 for the past decade, try moving it to July. If you always set your paddocks up in long, skinny rectangles, try one fat square or triangles this year.

Consider grazing a piece for a shorter or longer duration than you’ve ever grazed it before. Nature needs diversity to thrive, but without an intentional plan, human nature tends to fall back on ‘whatever I did last year.’

Swaffar advises making any major changes in a ‘safe-to-learn’ environment.

Start small enough that if it goes wrong, it won’t be a crisis or create critical damage to land, livestock or livelihood.

“Consider making these chang-

es in smaller, controlled areas, then observe, how did the animals and the plants react to that change? Did it get me closer to my goals?” Then, jot down some notes to establish a performance baseline.

“Some people are really numbers-driven, so they might want to see results in a soil test or see exactly how their stocking rates have changed in relation to weather patterns,” Swaffar says. “Other people monitor success by what they see – how many species of plants do I have here? How many species of invertebrates and vertebrates do I see? How are my animals behaving here? Others have 30 years of training their eye to their land, and they know from experience that they can make an accurate assessment of their land’s health.”

Whichever category you’re in, take a moment to write down those


markers and observations.

Even if you don’t think you need to write it down, future generations or land managers will be grateful to inherit the historic knowledge, and you’ll be able to compare season to season and find concrete reasons to celebrate your success.

Your grazing plan may be charted in bar graphs or handwritten in bullet points.

Others may use a map of proposed grazing paddocks with key dates and goals written in.

Tech-driven ranchers might have an app they use or simply store the plan in their phone’s ‘notes’ feature. What matters is what gets recorded, Swaffar says.

For more information and assistance with grazing management, consider attending a Noble Grazing Essentials course near you. 



Senior Horse Care

By Dr. Garrett Metcalf, DVM

We are seeing horses live to older ages than ever before due to greater management strategies, more specialty feeds made for senior horses and better knowledge and treatments for disease that affect horses of older age. Maintaining and caring for a senior horse can have its challenges, but it is very possible in today's world.

It is becoming more common to see horses live into their late 20s and early 30s rather easily, and many factors have a part in that, but because horses are living longer they are experiencing an increased amount of older age diseases such as Cushings or Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction, dentition issues, respiratory issues, digestive problems, and joint disease or arthritis. Managing and caring for older horses is becoming easier and more common in many circumstances. A big contributor to helping horses age well and live longer is in part due to better general wellness care and preventative medicine practices.

Dental and Digestive Care

Dentition is always a key component to prolonging the life of a horse. The teeth are the first part of the digestive system and require good maintenance to keep the mouth working properly. Routine dental floats and oral examinations can prolong the life of the teeth in horses and in turn prolong the horse's ability to masticate food properly.

When horses' teeth have outlived their expected life span, senior horses can be maintained with feed products tailored to them such as senior grains. Senior feeds are formulated with enough hay, grain, minerals, and vitamins to provide a proper amount of calories for a senior horse that may not be able to eat hay. Senior feeds are processed well enough that it practically melts in the mouth of



It is becoming more common to see horses live into their late 20s and early 30s rather easily, and many factors have a part in that, but because horses are living longer they are experiencing an increased amount of older age diseases such as Cushings or Pituitary Pars Intermedia Dysfunction, dentition issues, respiratory issues, digestive problems, and joint disease or arthritis. (Courtesy photo)

horses and requires little chewing when their teeth are worn out. Unfortunately, nothing can fully replace good roughage in a horse's diet so it is important to maintain good dentition as long as possible.

Poor dentition can lead to a higher risk for horses to choke or have esophageal obstructions from not being able to grind feedstuff down to a proper size to be swallowed. By feeding senior diets this can drastically reduce the risk of choke episodes and cost the owner to have veterinary emergency visits to help resolve these chokes.

Additionally, having good dentition to masticate feedstuff to

proper size can reduce the risk of a gastrointestinal issue called fecal water syndrome, which is partly linked to improper fiber length of roughage going through the gut. Lastly, dentition and a healthy gastrointestinal system are also vital to help older horses maintain a good weight and maintain musculoskeletal strength.

Another dental disease that is developed with age is called Equine Odontoclastic Tooth Resorption and Hypercementosis. The disease particularly affects the incisor teeth of horses and leads to tooth root deterioration, infection and serious pain associ-

ated with the disease. The only known treatment is removal of the affected teeth to eliminate the pain and discomfort. This disease can be detected during routine examinations and confirmed with dental X-rays.

Managing Weight

Frequently, older horses have trouble maintaining a healthy weight. It is good to get familiar with body condition scores and monitor weight closely in senior horses. A healthy BCS is a five or six out of nine. A weight tape is a simple tool owners can utilize on the farm to monitor weight

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fluctuations.

Establishing a good feeding program for seniors is important to maintain good weight and a healthy horse. When dentition allows, good quality hay is hard to beat compared to something that comes from a feed sack, but when bad teeth will not allow senior feeds, alfalfa pellets and calories added with vegetable oils can help maintain weight.

Many weight building supplements use fat or oils to help deliver large amounts of calories that are safe. Adding rice bran oil, corn oil or other vegetable oils to grain can help a horse put on some weight. Other ways to help older horses maintain weight is blanketing them in cold weather. It takes a lot of energy to make body heat and blanketing in colder months can help maintain weight and reduce their hay consumption.

Care needs to be taken when it comes to getting horses too heavy though. Horses that go from daily work to walking around the farm because they are retired, but are still getting the same amount of calories in a day, can lead to trouble.

These horses that are often referred to as “easy keepers” can be at risk of developing Equine Metabolic Syndrome. EMS is a common problem among overweight horses that are not exercising enough and start to have insulin resistance because of excessive weight. The worst sequelae of EMS are laminitis and foundering.

Endocrine and Immune System

A very similar decline in the equine immune system is seen in humans, and this can be compounded by other comorbidities such as Cushings disease. Cushings is caused by a dysfunction of the pituitary gland in the brain that regulates various hormones and leads to multiple clinical signs. Most notable signs for owners to notice are long hair coats in warmer months, muscle loss and



Care for older horses is essential to keep a horse ambulating well enough to have a good quality of life and to exercise to maintain skeletal fitness. (Courtesy photo)

poor feet leading to laminitis. Other complications with aging and Cushings are increased risk of infections and poor healing. Horses that have repeat infections or injuries that do not heal properly should be suspected of having Cushings. Cushings can be managed with daily medication to help regulate normal pituitary function and reverse some of the clinical signs of Cushings.

Immunity also wanes more quickly in older horses to diseases they are vaccinated for routinely. Senior horses do not have as robust immune responses as they did when they were younger, making them more at risk for common pathogens they may be exposed to by other horses while traveling

or brought back to the farm by other horses.

Recommendations for senior horses is to maintain regular vaccination even if not traveling because of the risk of vector borne diseases such as West Nile or other encephalitides that are transmitted mostly by mosquitoes.

When it comes to deworming older horses, a more targeted treatment method is recommended. Many older horses surprisingly can regulate parasite load better than younger horses and may require less frequent deworming. To monitor this worm burden, fecal egg counts are used to quantify the amount of parasite eggs in the manure and treat as needed based on parasite load.

Musculoskeletal Issues

Many horses that make it to retirement age will likely have old injuries or arthritis creeping up on them.

Care for these issues is essential to keep a horse ambulating well enough to have a good quality of life and to exercise to maintain skeletal fitness. Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs are still the mainstay treatment of musculoskeletal pain in horses. Daily NSAIDs have risk of gastrointestinal side effects that need to be avoided if possible but at lower dosages can be used safely.


There is a safer NSAID on the market called Equioxx that can be used for longer term pain control with minimal side effects because it more selectively blocks the Cox2 pathway responsible for inflammation.

Occasionally surgical management of pain can be utilized under certain circumstances to help with prolonged pain control utilizing neurectomy procedures or chemical facilitated ankylosis of damaged joints.

Alternatives to NSAIDs and surgery are using joint supplements like glucosamine and chondroitin sulfate products that can provide some joint pain relief and regain mobility back to older horses. These products come as injectable or in oral supplements that can be added to feed.

Ultimately, we all know the reality is horses do not live forever, and strong considerations need to be taken when prolonging a horse's life just because we can. Hopefully this information will help your senior horse live a happy and comfortable life in their senior years.

It is unfortunately necessary to perform humane treatment for senior horses that are experiencing poor quality of life.

These decisions are not always easy, and it is always helpful to discuss options with your veterinarian and family members before making that call. 



The Cowboy Culture

By Phillip Kitts

The mystique and imagined glory of the rodeo road call many young people's names. As they grow up, they watch the greats of the sport run from rodeo to rodeo and occasionally land on the television giving the perception of the rockstar lifestyle.

No, the glory of the rodeo road is not as grand as, say, the National Football League or the National Basketball Association, but being an athlete competing in front of the yellow chutes of Vegas is just as big a deal, and in every way, can be compared to competing in a Super Bowl.

However, things sure are different in the rodeo world. Let us take a minute and talk about what seem to be simple things in life that impact rodeo and rodeo athletes that in no way would make a difference to the big-money sports.

Imagine if you will, wintertime and the big winter run is on, with a couple of rodeos in the north country and a long list in the south. A rodeo athlete must find their way to Colorado, South Dakota, Texas, and most likely, Florida.

A lot of traveling has to be done, but in the modern day it should be simple. The obstacles start to mount, a snowstorm blows through the Midwest shutting down airports and highways, causing very limited travel. The window to make it to the next rodeo gets smaller, and the vision of the big check starts to dwindle. It is not often things like weather will affect big-money sports but it sure can have a quick impact on the sport of rodeo.

You never hear of athletes in big-money sports not making it to a competition because of a flat tire or blown motor. In fact, when was the last time you heard of a team

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Rodeo athletes are at risk of injury that can sideline them for weeks or even months. (Photos courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

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loading up and driving 200 miles to go to help their competitor get to the event? It simply does not happen, and it is proof of how different the sport of rodeo really is.

Now we have talked about the obvious obstacles that happen and what happens when life becomes an obstacle.

Taking the recent wildfires that have blazed their way across Texas, what happens when you are a rodeo cowboy but to feed your passion and provide for your family you run a cattle operation in the Texas Panhandle? The wildfires instantly take precedence over rodeo, and instead of loading the rig and heading out you don safety gear and protect your life.

Over the weeks you miss several rodeos, and your chance at making the big show dwindles away. Natural disasters are just one example of how quickly a rodeo cowboy's life can be impacted and affected. Illness in the heart and a long list of many other things can instantly slow a cowboy's year enough to impact how much success they see. Then, there is the biggest obstacle of all, the dreaded injury. Injury to an athlete happens at all levels of competition, but when it comes to rodeo, it can have a major impact.

First, you must investigate injuries an athlete can sustain with so many types and levels of severity. It is not uncommon for an injury to be minor enough that simple rest during time off can provide the healing process an opportunity. In rodeo, this equals playing with pain and not injured. Unfortunately, it is all too often that playing with pain really translates to playing with an injury and things escalate quickly.

There are the more severe injuries, the one that sidelines an athlete for a week or two or even a month off to heal up and get right. With the minor comes the more severe, where an athlete is six months or a year trying to get their body on the mend enough to



Rodeo watchers hope to never witness an injury of a rodeo athlete. (Photo courtesy Phillip Kitts, Avid Visual Imagery Rodeo Photography)

get back to competition.

Yes, there is the dreaded career-ending injury, but let us be real, in the rodeo world these injuries are so severe that a majority of the world would give up at this point.

How is the perspective on an injury different when it comes to rodeo versus big-money sports? Let us evaluate it this way, in big money sports the list of doctors is endless. Specialists and equipment are an easy resource.

In rodeo, many cowboys must drive several hours to get to a specialist and to the type of equipment they need to find, treat, and rehab their injury. Unlike big-money sports, rodeo does not have the big-money locker rooms and fa-

cilities to aid in recovery.

An athlete's income is also impacted. Big-money sports pay for an injured athlete. Not only do they cover the medical expenses and the needs of the athlete, but a great majority of big-money athletes continue to draw a paycheck while they go through the recovery process.

It sure looks different on the rodeo side of the house. A guy gets hurt, and he must make the trek home.

At home, there are no doctors so he must travel again hoping to find a doctor who can help him recover. There is not enough money to pay his medical bills, so the hope is he has set aside some

money from his winnings to cover his medical bills.

The big ouch of it all is now that same farm or ranch that he protected from fire, illness and the other list of things is now his sole source of income until he can get back on the rodeo road. Then, he hopes he can just get healed up soon enough to make the winter rodeos and face the challenges of travel.

So, that glorious dream the guy had as a kid is no longer a dream, more of a nightmare in fact, but like so many they all keep going. They keep the dream alive like so many before them. It is proof of just how tough and resilient the cowboy culture can be.



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American Dreams

By Krista Lucas Wynn

At the time of publication, the rodeo world was gearing up for the action-packed American Western Weekend. The field had been set for the 2024 event at Globe Life Field. Home to the American Rodeo, the weekend of March 8-9 was ready to be one of the biggest events of the year for cowboys and cowgirls alike.

With \$1,000,000 for contenders and \$100,000 for invitees on the line, the American continues to be a prestigious event that anyone should be proud of qualifying for. One such barrel racing qualifier, Mindy Holloway of Mineral Wells, Texas, is looking forward to the American Western Weekend, where she hopes to leave her mark on Globe Life Field in Arlington. Advancing to the American Rodeo is no easy feat. Holloway made five runs total all across the United States to punch her ticket to the American.

“I first attended an American qualifier back in December in Jackson, Miss.,” Holloway said. “At Jackson, I qualified my friend Tammy Rokus’ horse, Smuggling Doubles and advanced to the Regional Finals in Lexington, Ky. There, I ran Tammy’s horse again, two rounds, and advanced to the finals which were a clean slate. Once again, Smuggs got the call, and we qualified in the top five to move on to the semi-finals in Abilene. In Abilene, it was one round against the top five from each regional finals, so 15 total runners. With a lot of consideration on the setup and the ground, I gave my gelding, Heavens Got Credit, the call. We finished third to advance us to the American Rodeo.”

Holloway qualified for the semi-finals once before, back when it was at Cowtown Coliseum in Fort Worth, but this will be the first time she steps foot



Mindy Holloway on Smuggling Doubles, advancing at the Eastern Regional Finals. (Photo courtesy Mindy Holloway)

on Globe Life Field to compete for \$1,000,000. She will have both Cornbread and Smuggs to choose from, based on how the two geldings have shown they can handle the pressure. “At this point in time, I think Cornbread will get the call,” Holloway said. “He is a 2014 sorrel gelding that my husband and I have had a part of since he was two years old and was given the chance to own him by Edwin Cameron and Tiany Schuster when he was six years old. I also have Smuggs, owned

by Booper and Tammy Rokus. If it wasn’t for them, I would not be headed to Globe Life Field. They graciously let me haul Smuggs to some of the bigger events, and I am forever grateful that he is always an option for me.”

Holloway is looking forward to a weekend she will never forget and will be soaking the memories in alongside four other contender barrel racers, who will compete against the top five from the 2023 National Finals Rodeo.

“Qualifying for this event is

in so many rodeo contestants’ dreams,” Holloway said. “I am 100 percent going to take it all in, enjoy it, and just be thankful that it was my time to get a chance on such a big stage.”

After the American Western Weekend, Holloway hopes to walk away with a big check and memories that will last a lifetime. Read the May issue to find out how Holloway fared, along with the other cowboys and cowgirls competing during the American Western Weekend.

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Tony's Seed and Feed has two locations to serve its customers, in Muenster and Gainesville. (Photo courtesy Tony's Seed and Feed)



Seed & Feed: A Legacy of Customer Service

The roots of North Texas history can be traced back to its agricultural heritage, a rich mixture of cultivating crops and raising quality animals. Along the rural roads, small-town businesses are helping the hard-working farmers and ranchers who continue to keep that tradition alive, including Tony's Seed and Feed in Muenster and Gainesville, Texas.

Tony's Seed and Feed opened its doors in Muenster in 1966, and in Gainesville in 1973. It is currently under the direction of brothers Jeff Hellman and Damian Hellman, who kept the business as part of their family after taking over for their father, Joe Hellman, in 2011. Joe began working in the store when he was just 15 years old. He went on to spend 66 years providing feed for the farmers and ranchers of North Texas. The Hellmans proudly serve a distinctive corner of the Lone Star State, originally settled by German immigrants, with an emphasis on customer service passed on from father to sons.

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“This area is unique for its German heritage that is around Muenster, Lindsay, and a lot of Gainesville,” Damian said. “Most people living here grew up on farms, and generation after generation, have kept the farms going. I think the people who grew up on a farm, most of them want to stick on a farm. If they are going to stay here, as long as we have customers walking in, we are going to stay here, too.”

Jeff and Damian have fond memories of a childhood spent watching and following along with their dad and the truck drivers.

“I liked coming down here during wheat harvest. We didn’t have a lot of storage back then, so we had a local trucker who parked empty trucks and trailers uptown. I would ride up there with Dad in the pickup and I would get to ride in the semi coming back. We unloaded trucks through most of the night,” Damian said.

Jeff also recalled how much he enjoyed hauling wheat down to Fort Worth because he would get to ride back with a driver in one of the trucks.

Their love for those moments stuck with them as they headed to college. Jeff attended Southeastern Oklahoma State University, where he majored in business. Meanwhile, Damian went to Texas Tech University to major in ag business. Both returned to Muenster and in 2011, took over the store from their father.

“I loved getting to continue being a part of a thriving company that my own father worked so hard to build into a successful business to pass on to us,” Jeff said.

During the transition, they had to learn the day-to-day part of the business, but their father’s example of putting customers first left an impact.

“He was really good with customer relationships,” Damian said. “I think that is worth a lot

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Joe Hellman (middle), started working at Tony’s Seed and Feed when he was just 15 years old. Joe spent 66 years operating Tony’s Seed and Feed in Muenster and Gainesville. In 2011, his sons, Jeff (left) and Damian (right), continued the legacy of customer service started by their father. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)



Continued from page 37

to a customer if they can sit there and talk to you. We have benefitted from his knowledge and experience and I know that I can still go to him for advice.”

Another lesson instilled in Joe’s sons was maintaining solid relationships with vendors.

“We deal with so many different people, both customers and vendors, and things work both ways. If you buy something, you have to pay for it within so many days. Dad was good about having open relationships with the customer base about accounts receivable. He always worked with the customer base. We had farmers who would plant grain in the fall and harvest in the summer, and he would let them pay then. He would let people ride that long, but you can’t do that nowadays,”

Damian said.

The brothers will be the first to admit the customer base has changed quite a bit since the time they took over the store. Bigger ranches in the area have been broken up into smaller ranchettes, and even those who farm larger places often have a second job to help support their family.

“Now, we are dealing with people from the city, and they have different needs than the bigger rancher or farmer. It is a different clientele. We’re always adjusting,” Jeff explained.

No matter the customer’s needs, Tony’s Seed and Feed focuses on serving quality feed using quality ingredients with timely delivery of products. They deliver feed and spray for customers within a 100-mile radius of the stores. Their customers live as far

south as Aubrey, east to Nocona, Bowie, and Ringgold, and north to the Red River.

“We want to deliver in a timely matter, whether that is on the feed side or application side. We try to have feed orders done in two or three days. It is hard work, but customer service can make or break you,” Damian said.

The Hellmans have a unique process when it comes to the way their feed is made. Most cubes are made using steam, but Tony’s Seed and Feed uses a molasses-based binder.

“I’m not going to say the cattle eat them any better, but they seem to come to them a little better in my opinion,” Damian said. “The cubes are all-natural products. We are using milo, corn, and cottonseed meal. We aren’t using any fillers to cheapen them up.”

Damian tells all new employees that it can take a full year to understand this business. It is made up of four seasons and no two days are ever the same.

The planting of crops occurs in the fall for their customers. That means at the store, they are selling more seed and fertilizer. Feed orders pick up during the winter months and continue into early spring, when it’s time to roll into fertilizer, weed kill, and planting spring crops. March begins to slow down for the feed side. Summer means it is time to harvest, but feed also could pick up if it is a dry summer.

Jeff works seed and fertilizer at the Gainesville locations in the application part of the process, while Damian focuses on feed and fertilizer in Muenster.

Jeff stays busy changing with



the seasons. He operates a spray truck and drives a fertilizer truck, along with one other driver who does the same, in the spring through July. When that season wraps up, he schedules dry jobs, works wheat harvest for several weeks during the summer, and then runs corn harvest after that.

In the fall, Jeff gets ready to plant fall crops until winter hits when it is time to sell feed and manage deliveries out of the Gainesville location. Of all the seasons, spring is his favorite.

“It is the most hectic,” Jeff admits. “But I enjoy it.”

As for Damian, he typically arrives early morning and plans the feed day, including the type of feeding being made that day and deliveries. After, it is time to turn the machine on and begin making feed and getting the grain processed.

He decides what needs to be hauled and checks the bins twice a day to determine if any ingredients need to be ordered. After 9 a.m., at any given moment, the phone could ring with a customer asking a question or needing to talk, so from that time on it is back and forth from the feed mill to the front talking to customers. No matter the season or time of day, helping customers remains the top priority for Jeff and Damian.

“Every customer has a different problem or situation. We are here to help them figure out what that problem is and how we can fix it, whether it be a livestock issue or crop issue,” Damian said. “Sometimes customers are looking for a custom hay baler, and we are happy to provide names of people who offer those services. Helping customers out is the biggest thing we do year-round. We just get to meet so many different people.”

He also prefers the spring season, although he enjoys winter, but often, the brothers find themselves working 16-hour days and sometimes a Sunday.

“We don’t ask our employees to do it, but we typically take turns



Jeff Hellman and Damian Hellman look forward to many more years of serving the farmers and ranchers of North Texas. (Photo by Dani Blackburn)

if we’re behind or if the holidays fall on a Monday. You must work or you’re already behind for the week,” Damian said.

When they’re not busy with the store, Jeff and Damian spend time with their family.

Jeff is married to Toni, who works as a juvenile officer in Gainesville. They are the parents of three college students, Cade, Ryan, and Abbey Hellman, with one grandchild, Julia.

Damian is married to Deanna, who manages the front office of the Muenster location. Their children are Jordanne Wade, who works as a dietician, and Dr. Emily

Bouffard and Dr. Eric Hellman, who both practice in Muenster. They also are grandparents to Maggie, Walker, Haley, Barrett, Bristol, Collins, and Brady, with one on the way.

Together, they have several future goals for Tony’s Seed and Feed, and both appreciate the opportunity of working alongside their brother.

“It is great knowing that he is as invested as I am in making our business a success,” Jeff said.

Damian agreed, saying, “It is reassuring knowing that I have someone who helps in making day-to-day decisions.”

Some of those future plans include equipment upgrades and a brand-new storefront location in Muenster, for which the slab has already been poured. They hope to open the new storefront by the end of the year. Most importantly, they aim to continue with the same core value of customer service in everything they do as they look forward to many more years serving the farmers and ranchers of North Texas.

For more information, stop by their Muenster location, 119 S. Main St., or their Gainesville location, 1211 N. Dixon St., or email them at tonyssandf@ntin.net.

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WHEN A CITY GIRL goes country

By Annette Bridges

A Room with a View

Everyone needs a room with a view that makes their heart happy. My honest favorite panorama would be either the mountains or the ocean. I have yet to convince my hubby to make permanent moves to either, although he does enjoy the visits as much as I do.

The location of our house on our ranch does not provide the expansive field of vision of our land that I would enjoy. So, I have created a room decorated and furnished in a way that gives me smiles, giggles, and a wonderful peace-filled feeling when I am hanging out in it.

I am in that place right now writing this column. I am in a lounging position with my computer in my lap on the chaise that was once my sweet mama's. I had it reupholstered this year to give it a fresh look.

Beside the chaise is my mama's sofa table where framed photo memories of my husband and me stand along with a favorite lamp that was my mama's, photo books created from our travels, and a Ralph Waldo Emerson sign given to me from our daughter that I absolutely adore.

As I gaze around, I relish in walls filled with photo canvases from various trips, my art as well as my mama's art on canvas, more quote signs and photographs of sweet family members, as well as furry friends throughout my lifetime. There are also mementos from a variety of trips displayed on bookshelves, as well as on my desk.

Sometimes I write these col-



Annette Bridges created a room decorated and furnished in a way that makes her smile and gives her peace. (Photo courtesy Annette Bridges)

umns sitting at my beautiful writer's desk my husband built for me as a Valentine's Day gift some years ago. My chaise corner is on the southeast side of my room, and my desk is on the north wall in front of the window where I can see my hubby when he is working on tractors and other equipment.


It is a very magical place for me that brings back all the happy memories of my 65 years on earth. Any sad reminiscence is banished from my happy place which makes

this room my favorite spot in our house.

My special room has not always been used the way it is today. When we first married it was a den that included a sofa bed for guests.

It was also home to my sewing machine. It later became our daughter's nursery and was her room until she was three years old when we built a new master bedroom, and our daughter's bedroom was moved into our original master. It became a schoolroom

and library when we first started homeschooling. Of all the rooms in our house, it is the one that has changed the most through our many years together. I can feel its rich history as I lounge on my chaise now, and that brings me immense satisfaction and contentment.

Even if it is not possible to designate an entire room as your very own, I hope you can create a vista that brings you joy and calms any worries. 



A Mountain Out of a Molehill

By Nicholas Waters

As winter plods along - come Spring and gopher mounds - homeowners and farmers find themselves playing a familiar song - fiddling while Rome is burning.

Let's make a mountain out of a molehill. Those mounds on your lawn and pasture could be moles, but they're more than likely gophers; Plains Pocket Gophers to be pragmatic - *Geomys bursarius* to be scientific.

These rodents dig and chew, and the damage they can do goes beyond the mounds we mow over. Iowa State University cited a study in Nebraska showing a 35 percent loss in irrigated alfalfa fields due to the presence of pocket gophers; the number jumped to 46 percent in decreased production of non-irrigated alfalfa fields.

The internet is replete with academic research from coast-to-coast on how to curtail gopher populations, or at least control them. Kansas State University - then called Kansas State Agricultural College - also published a book [Bulletin 152] in February 1908 focused exclusively on the pocket gopher.

State and county governments throughout the Midwest even offered a monetary bounty for every gopher scalp submitted to a designated government official at the turn of the 20th century.

Needless to say, pocket gophers are not a new issue in this country, but they could be for personal property or an agricultural operation.

There is no shortage of opinion about what to do, if anything, and yet many choose to do nothing; this doesn't impede infestation though, it simply exacerbates it. Gophers do math, only they don't add—they multiply.

In a single breeding season, a mature-bred female can introduce



As spring approaches, it is time to be prepared for rodents, including Plains Pocket Gophers. (Courtesy photo)

three-to-six new gophers per litter on average; some ecosystems allow for as many as two breeding seasons per calendar year too.

While poisoning is an option, studies show that less-expensive, longer-term, more environmentally-compatible options can include crop rotation, flood irrigation, and trapping.


Of trapping, the 1908 Kansas State Bulletin reports, "Although somewhat slow, there is no surer

method of riding one's premises of pocket gophers than by trapping."

Whatever producers, operators, owners, and investors choose to do, education is key.

The answer could be doing nothing, but it could also be doing something that invests time-and-money in the short-term for a long-term payoff.

The Kansas State bulletin summarizes it well, "expending dimes saves dollars."

Nicholas A. Waters is a licensed nuisance wildlife control operator in Oklahoma, and a published author. In addition to earning a Bachelor's degree in Communications from the University of Oklahoma, he is also an Oklahoma FFA Association State Degree Recipient. He lives in Oklahoma with his wife and five children on a 139-year old homestead. Contact him at (405) 238-1717. 

Grab Time by LANG ©




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INVASIVE SPECIES."



JESSE'S JEWELZ

By Jesse Kader

I'm super excited for this month's article. I'm thrilled to share my first ever Jesses Jewelz exclusive piece with you. This blazer has been in the works and design for close to a year and I finally get to offer it to you. It is also available in two other colors. I hope you love it as much as I do. See them and the other colors at www.jessesjewelz.com 

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By Lacey Vilhauer

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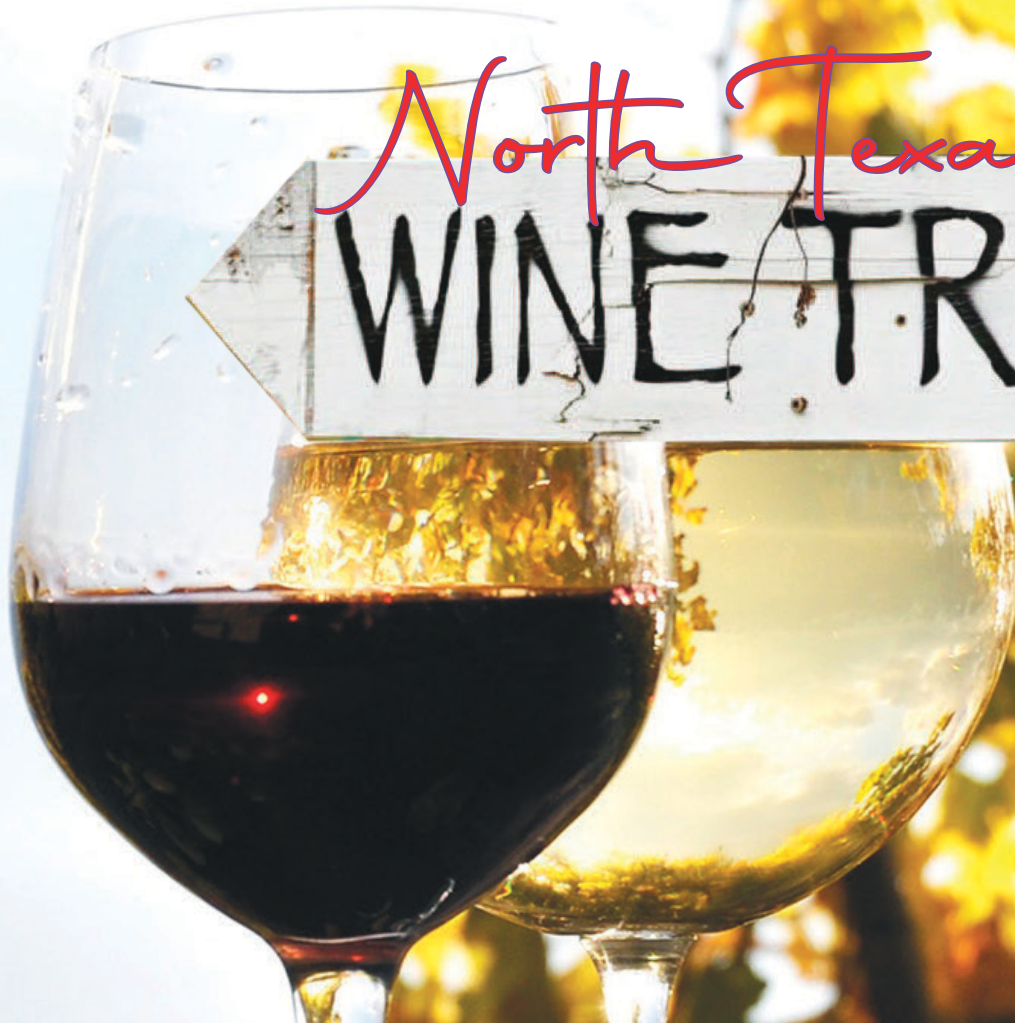
1 whole lemon, seeded and roughly chopped
2 cups sugar
2 pounds strawberries, hulled
Juice of 1 to 2 lemons
¼ cup water

Total Time: 2 Hours | Yields 1.5 Quarts**Directions:**

Place the chopped lemon and sugar in a food processor and pulse until combined. Transfer to a large bowl. Puree the strawberries in a food processor and add to the lemon mixture along with juice of one lemon and water. Taste and add more juice as desired. The lemon flavor should be intense, but not overpowering. Pour the mixture into an ice cream machine until frozen. Transfer to a bowl and freezer for at least an hour to reach a hardened consistency. Scoop and enjoy. 

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On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



Howdy Texas Music Fans and Friends: Dancing with Our Stars is a Hit



Local celebrity dancers brought the house down recently at the second annual “Dancing With Our Stars” contest in Lindsay. Rodolfo “Rudy” Martinez and Sherry Sherriden took home the Mirror Ball Trophy.



Kelly Corbett from First State Bank and Kristi Rigsby from North Texas Medical Center won a People’s Choice trophy for raising the most money. (Courtesy photos)

Local celebrity dancers of the greater Gainesville area brought the house down recently at the second annual “Dancing With Our Stars” contest in Lindsay.

The event raised more than \$200,000 as the sponsored dance teams did their best to take home the grand prize.

The money raised will go to the “Heart of NTMC” Campaign for the purchase of a cardiac capable CT machine for the Gainesville hospital.

Rodolfo “Rudy” Martinez and

Sherry Sherriden took home the Mirror Ball Trophy.

Kelly Corbett from First State Bank and Kristi Rigsby from North Texas Medical Center won a People’s Choice trophy for raising the most money. The duo brought in \$28,963 via pre-event voting.

Dick and Patty Haayen got the most votes from the crowd. The Haayens raised \$17,056 from votes during the event and were presented a People’s Choice trophy.

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Does John Wayne Have the Answer to our Discourse?

By Dal Houston

I am terribly saddened by all the argumentative discourse that seems to be going on in today's world. It seems as though it is no longer enough just to disagree on certain issues.

We are expected to classify someone as an enemy if they do not always agree with us on all issues, lest we be considered weak.

To make things even worse, because those who disagree with you are now considered enemies, the sentiment seems to be that it is only fair and proper to destroy them, because they are the enemy, again with the fear of ridicule for being weak if we do not fight.

With all that said, and seemingly unrelated, I am a big John Wayne fan. From watching him dive into his role as a cowboy, to marveling at his time portraying a soldier or appreciating his acting gig as a sailor, there is seldom a week that goes by without me watching at least one movie, either being aired or via my DVR.

My favorites, without question, are his "B" Westerns from the early 1930s. A lot of fans do not even know these exist.

If you have never seen them, the way they make the horses go faster is by speeding up the reel. Sadly, I do not think any of them were ever nominated for any type of award for this stroke of genius. Also, in contrast to his later movies, Wayne is a much more laid-back, easy-going guy, often giving a full-faced smile.

One of my favorites, for the sheer entertainment value and also to illustrate the point I want to make today, is called

"The Dawn Rider" from 1934. Without spoiling the plot, there is a scene in which Wayne is in a fight, and it is clear that he has won, but his opponent is not quite ready to give up.

The opponent asks if Wayne is going to fight, and he responds by saying, "You got me licked, but I know what we both need."

Wayne suggests they go to the saloon to settle their differences over a beer. Before the first beer is drunk, the two former adversaries become the best of friends.

Maybe it is me being cynical, but if someone said that in a movie today, I think they




If talking out his issues worked for John Wayne, maybe it could work for us. (Courtesy photo)

would be considered weak and criticized for not completely physically destroying their opponent.

Bear in mind, at the beginning of the fight, a gun was pulled, further giving a sense of justification to completely destroy the opponent.

I know it is a movie, and it can have any plot the screenwriter wants it to have, but would it

not be cool if we did not think we needed to destroy someone who does not agree with us?

It would be nice if we could just sit with someone with whom we do not see eye to eye, suggest we share a beer or some other beverage, and find out they are not such a bad person after all. If it worked for Wayne, maybe, just maybe, it could work for us. 

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While We Were Sleeping

By Martha Crump

That old adage, “What you don’t know won’t hurt you,” may have some basis in truth when applied to minor situations. However, when what you don’t know is presented in the form of a “Trojan Horse” and is what amounts to an incredible attempt to fleece American property rights, it becomes a different story altogether.

To put this unbelievable tale together, we need to step back to Joe Biden’s 2021 Executive Order which pledged commitment to help restore balance on public lands and waters, to create jobs, and to provide a path to align the management of America’s public lands and waters with our nation’s climate, conservation, and clean energy goals.

The Executive Order claimed to be necessary, in order to accomplish the following: pause new oil and natural gas leasing on public lands and offshore waters while reviewing the federal oil and gas program to ensure that the public interest was being served, as well as to restore balance on America’s public lands and waters to benefit current and future generations; to create millions of family-supporting and union jobs in clean energy generation, land restoration, abandoned mine cleanup, plugging of oil and gas wells, energy efficiency, clean transportation, advanced manufacturing and sustainable agriculture across America, all labeled as the “Build Back Better” plan; and finally, to conserve at least 30 percent each of our lands and waters by the year 2030, as recommended by scientists, to safeguard our health, food supplies, biodiversity, and to keep communities prosperous. Under the direction of the Interior Department and with the support of local, state, private, and



The American Stewards of Liberty, a Texas-based organization was already watching what was beginning to be known as the “30x30 Land Grab.” (Photo courtesy Metro Creative)

tribally-led nature conservation and restoration efforts, progress was to be toward the 30x30 goal of achieving more equitable access to nature and its benefits for all people in America.

Read that again if you need to, because it’s a lot to consider. If most Americans were like me, I heard bits and pieces of these discussions, passed it off as a “knee-jerk” reaction of the current administration toward the previous administration, paid a bit of attention to the possible establishment of more National Parks (how I seemed to understand the 30x30 push), groaned in sympathy with friends and family in the oil and gas industry, and personally didn’t think much of what the previous administration did needed to be demolished and built back. But at that point in time, what are you going to do? We were into an-

other four years of this, right? This sweeping Executive Order had all the right buzzwords, engaged so many of the conservation and special interest groups, and just sounded as though anybody who might disagree did not have the best interest of the country or the world at heart.

Fortunately for the majority of Americans, there are people and organizations that not only keep an eye on political maneuvering but also are very adept at connecting the related dots.

The American Stewards of Liberty, a Texas-based organization was already watching what was beginning to be known as the “30x30 Land Grab” and through their watchfulness discovered that a group known as the Intrinsic Exchange Group (IEG), backed by the Rockefeller Foundation, had partnered with the New York

Stock Exchange (NYSE) to create a new investment vehicle known as “Natural Asset Companies (NACs).”

They place a value on natural processes, and they do not use traditional accounting principles to do so. The very definition of NACs should scare the boots off of every landowner in America, be their holdings large or small. NACs are companies that are publicly tradable securities that hold rights to and manage the productivity and ecological benefits of natural assets such as natural forests, marine areas, and... farmland!

In 2021, after IEG was established, they proposed to quantify and as a first in history, monetize natural processes and ecosystem services. In September 2022, as the private investment vehicle was

Continued on page 55

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being created, the current administration also released their draft of a national strategy to create “Natural Capital Accounts (NCAs).” The Department of the Interior helped to further connect the dots with their 2022 Report on 30x30 (aka America the Beautiful).

By that point in time, it was clear that this legislative push would place the value of natural processes and ecosystem services on the federal balance sheet, thereby inflating the collateral base and distorting the GDP. In a more succinct description, they were so successful in quietly creating NACs that very few were even aware it was being done.

What is even more troubling according to American Stewards of Liberty, “Their concept is that the air we breathe, the water we drink, and products we use that are derived from nature all have value that is not being considered by financial markets. IEC claims this value can be converted to new public investment vehicles like NAC.” In short, by doing so, it would allow NCAs to be utilized to not only quantify nature’s value but to list those values as new assets of the federal government.

Margaret Byfield is the Executive Director of the American Stewards of Liberty based out of Georgetown, Texas, and is a national speaker, writer and commentator on natural resource issues. She has helped train, guide and advise elected leaders for the purpose of coordinating land use planning and management activities with federal and state agencies.

According to her in-depth analysis of these efforts, “This would provide a basis to increase the national debt and impose new fees and taxes on the American people. It will also establish the fixed and intrinsic value for the federally protected lands, positioning them to be enrolled in the private NAC accounts.” She goes on to explain that, “These efforts



combined are intended to create an entirely new economy, virtually out of thin air,” none of which should seem sensible to any serious investor. Investment products are based on tangible assets; land, homes, companies- things that can be secured and held by an owner exclusively. In other words, things that provide a benefit that consumers are willing to pay for.

According to Ms. Byfield, “This new economy requires valuing things that no one has a right to own exclusively, such as breathable air.” She goes on to say, “The actual purpose of this plan seems to be to transfer the natural resource wealth held by America’s landowners to a green cartel that now includes IEC, the government, and special-interest environmental and conservation groups.” When viewed through this lens, the plan is not a wise investment

for the majority of Americans, but rather a complex scheme to fund the growth of government while removing as much land as possible from private citizens.

For this system to work, a fundamental transformation needs to occur, and this is currently in play. First, people must believe there is a climate crisis and that our careless use of natural resources is the cause. We hear this constantly. There is too much man-made carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, therefore the cure is to set aside more forests to absorb CO2. Second, natural assets must be valued acre-by-acre.

This would require an inventory of all lands and natural resources, including private and governmental lands, easements, wetlands and water, grasslands and croplands, carbon sequestration areas and carbon sinks,

and mineral reserves and energy resources. The third step and this is already happening overseas, is that every citizen must have an emission and credit account that would track us and our personal impact on the climate.

Because I choose to drive an SUV, I would pay more than someone who drives an electric vehicle. Fourth, the people driving the climate crisis need to be in control of federal agencies. By careful placement within these agencies, voting citizens like you and me would no longer have a say in determining the direction of national environmental policy. It would then be easy to compel citizen participation in the natural assets’ economy.

Even as I write this article, there is an ongoing investigation into the safety of gas household appliances, and while the current administration has denied that they are planning on legislating against future production, they have stated that there needs to be an improvement in the safety of said appliances.

Funny that when my son and daughter-in-law were trying to find a gas stove for their new house last Fall, every source advised against it as, “They couldn’t be certain that gas appliances would be around for much longer.”

Lastly, the government must clear titles to the lands that will be conscripted into the program. There must be a willing partner in the NAC – be it a landowner, the government, an environmental land trust, or an investment backer such as the Rockefeller Foundation or Blackrock.

According to American Stewards of Liberty, American landowners are being pressured to voluntarily sign up for federal conservation programs that promise financial benefits while also creating a federal nexus or link to their property. Sadly, these programs, as well as conservation easements

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that constrain property owners in perpetuity, are promoted as helping them to do more with their land. The reality is these programs erode private property rights, transfer the new value assigned to their lands to the natural asset companies, and basically work to accelerate the natural assets agenda.

Again folks, these wheels have been steadily turning while you and I were taking care of our daily business. There were no press releases, no news stories, no notices. The ruling to approve NACs was quietly being rolled out, and upon release on Oct. 4, 2023, there was a 45-day clock for approval, with only 21 days allowed for public comment.

Thankfully, one of the astute “Stop 30x30 Summit” attendees became aware of what was being quietly pushed along and sent out an alert. The goal became to notify members of Congress of the IEG proposal and the NYSE request for a rule change at the SEC. Many organizations and individuals quickly took up the task of shedding light on what was being put into play. There was a push to hit national media outlets with details of this scheme and these efforts were successful.

Senators Ricketts (R-NE), Risch (R-ID), Crapo (R-ID), U.S. Representative Harriet Hageman (R-WY), Marlo Oaks, Utah State Treasurer and many others played a large role in bringing all of this to light. National groups like Eagle Forum, Sovereignty Coalition, American-Agri Women, R-Calf, Club for Growth, Allegheny Forest Alliance, American CattleWomen and many others took up the call for action.

Twenty-five states’ attorneys generals, including Texas, were prepared to sue the Biden administration if they did not withdraw the proposed rule to approve NACs. Even with so many key leaders voicing opposition to the NACs, the House Committee that failed to do so was Financial Services. Isn’t it interesting that this committee has direct oversight of the SEC? Opposing entities were told that the rule would be approved and there was nothing to be done to stop the development of NACs.

Fortunately, three key members of this committee broke ranks and signed Rep. Hageman’s letter; Ralph Norman (R-SC), Pete Sessions (R-TX), and Bill Posey (R-FL). It can be said, except for the three individuals named above, that the failed action of the House Financial Services Committee was detrimental to the national sovereignty of the nation, and to the individual property rights of the people. The NYSE, IEG, and SEC believed they had



NATURAL ASSET COMPANIES

Photo courtesy American Stewards of Liberty

secured passage of the rule without having to face congressional oversight.

I first received notice of this governmental travesty when notified by the American National Cattlewomen on Jan. 19 of this year. At that point in time, it was newsworthy that the SEC had withdrawn the proposed rule to approve the creation of “Natural Asset Companies” on Wall Street. In summation, this NAC development rule would have allowed investors such as Blackrock, Bill Gates, China, or even Russia to buy into and hold the ecosystem rights to the land, water, air, and natural processes of any properties enrolled in NACs, including private holdings.

According to those smarter than I, there will continue to be close scrutiny, as the prevailing thought is that while the NAC proposal was shut down, the players will continue the game. Only the names will be changed, and one could rightfully assume it won’t be to protect the innocent.

If you are in agriculture, and/or are a landowner, I strongly encourage you to get involved with your local Agriculture associations, and you owe it to yourself as a citizen to take a quick step into the American Stewards of Liberty website for a wealth of information. What I do know now scares me. And no, I’m not a conspiracy theorist...yet. Thank goodness that while I was sleeping, shepherds were guarding us sheep.

The year 2024 sees the Wichita Falls Area CattleWomen getting geared up to be busy. Many members will be attending the Spring meeting of the Texas CattleWomen held in conjunction with TSCRA in Fort Worth, March 22-23, and April follows with the WFACW’s Country Kitchen baked goods extravaganza

at the North Texas Rehab Auction and Dinner.

The next meeting of the WFACW will be on April 16, 2024, at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, Texas, at 11:30 a.m., if you wish to bring your lunch to eat and visit, with the business meeting starting at noon. Be sure to like and follow us on FaceBook page as well. All schedules, events, and news will be posted there.

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Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean, tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Rescuegrass

If moisture is adequate, there are several winter annual grasses that dominate the landscape during early spring in Texas.

One of the most common is Rescuegrass.

This winter annual is native to South America but grows over much of the United States and can be found in all ecoregions of Texas.

Rescuegrass is easily recognized by its flat seed head.

Numerous seed heads produce seed that is transported by animals and can quickly spread to other areas.

Rescuegrass can reach 18 inches to 36 inches in height and is considered a bunch grass.

Winter annuals like Rescuegrass germinate during winter months, and with a few warm days in early spring, Rescuegrass grows very fast along with other annuals.

Rescuegrass can be an aggressive invader of range and pasture land, especially if grazing land is in poor and/or overgrazed condition.

While the summer perennials are trying to get started in the spring, Rescuegrass is seeding out, using up most of the available moisture and sunlight and can delay spring development of the summer grasses.



Grazing Value of This Plant

Rescuegrass



(Above) Rescuegrass is a winter annual grass that can be easily recognized after it puts up this flat seed head.



Rescuegrass does provide good grazing for livestock for a short period of time.

It got the name because it provides grazing for a few weeks at the end of winter and can “rescue” ranchers who are out of grass.

Deer will consume the green growth during early spring, and turkey not only graze Rescuegrass, but also eat the seed heads.

Winter annuals like Rescuegrass can become more dominant in pastures that are grazed during summer months and then vacated during the winter.

This allows the annuals to germinate and grow without any grazing pressure.

Rescuegrass is adapted to most soil types.



Rescuegrass provides good grazing for a few weeks in early spring. (Photos courtesy Tony Dean)

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The Garden Guy

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

The Year of the Angelonia: Let the Celebration Commence

The National Garden Bureau has designated 2024 as the ‘Year of the Angelonia’ and I am in full celebration mode. As I was preparing for my contribution to the celebration, I was, however, sent into taxonomic trauma.

For the last 26 years of deep love for the Angelonia, or summer snapdragon, I have told everyone via newspaper, radio and television that they were in the Scrophulariaceae family. Since most gardeners don’t like those words, I modified or simplified the snapdragon family, but somebody has tinkered with green industry happiness and moved Angelonia to the Plantaginaceae or plantain family. I immediately reached out to my friend Dr. Allen Ownings, Horticulture Professor Emeritus with the Louisiana State University AgCenter. I said, “Did you know this, or better yet, did you do it?” He said, as I expected, that the Taxonomist group had done it. This reminded me that someone once said taxonomists have to eat, too.

I know what you are thinking, does this mean the Angelonia or summer snapdragon is now related to the hosta or plantain lily? The answer is no, as the hosta or plantain lily is in the Asparagaceae or Asparagus family. You see where I am going with this. So, then you are suspecting the Angelonia or summer snapdragon, who is in the plantain family, must be related



The National Garden Bureau has designated 2024 The Year of the Angelonia. Angelonia is also called summer snapdragon. You see why with this award-winning Angelface Super White growing at The Garden Guy’s house.

to plantain bananas. That would also be no, as bananas are in the Musaceae or banana family. At this point, I would warn bananas to not get too comfortable.

Supposedly DNA fingerprinting led to this family annulment and there were a lot more that fell prey, Penstemon, Linaria, Digitalis, Snapdragon, Veronica, and no doubt, more that, mere mortals wouldn’t understand. I have to add though, that somehow Nemesia and Diascia stayed in the Scrophulariaceae or Figwort family.

But back to our celebration the ‘Year of the Angelonia’ or Summer Snapdragon. Twenty-six years ago was the first time I wrote about Angelonia. Never did a new plant cause such excitement. This gave the South a summer plant that bloomed all summer and looked like a snapdragon or foxglove. It was so good the University of Florida recognized Hilo Princess as the Plant of the Year.

Now every company has its own series. Proven Winners has the Angelface series with three distinct types, Standard, Super and Cascade. They are tough as nails and will bloom all summer. The standard reaches 18 to 30 inches tall with an 18-inch spread. The super is indeed that, with the ability to reach 30 to 40 inches tall and a spread up to 16 inches. The cascade group can reach eight to 14 inches in height with a spread of up to 30 inches.



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If Top Performer, and Perfect Score awards are what you are looking for, then put Angelface at the top of your list for the summer. You too can celebrate The Year of the Angelonia. [®]



This recipe called Sprinkles looks perfect for a wedding. It features Angelface Cascade Snow angelonia, Laguna Sky Blue lobelia and Superbena Sparkling Amethyst verbena. (Photos courtesy Norman Winter)

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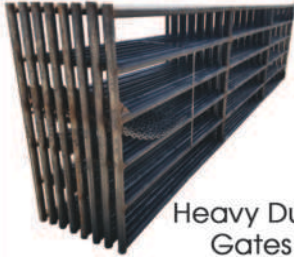
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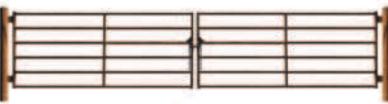
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Stacy Callahan 918.710.0239



### Lipan Ranch

PALO PINTO COUNTY, TX  
\$2,450,000 | 151 ACRES  
Bobby Bowden 817.694.6551



### Ponderosa Ranch

HARPER COUNTY, KS  
\$3,637,500 | 1,455 ACRES  
Stacy Callahan 918.710.0239



### Oak Crest Ranch

CHAUTAUQUA COUNTY, KS  
\$3,500,000 | 973 ACRES  
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# PARTING SHOT


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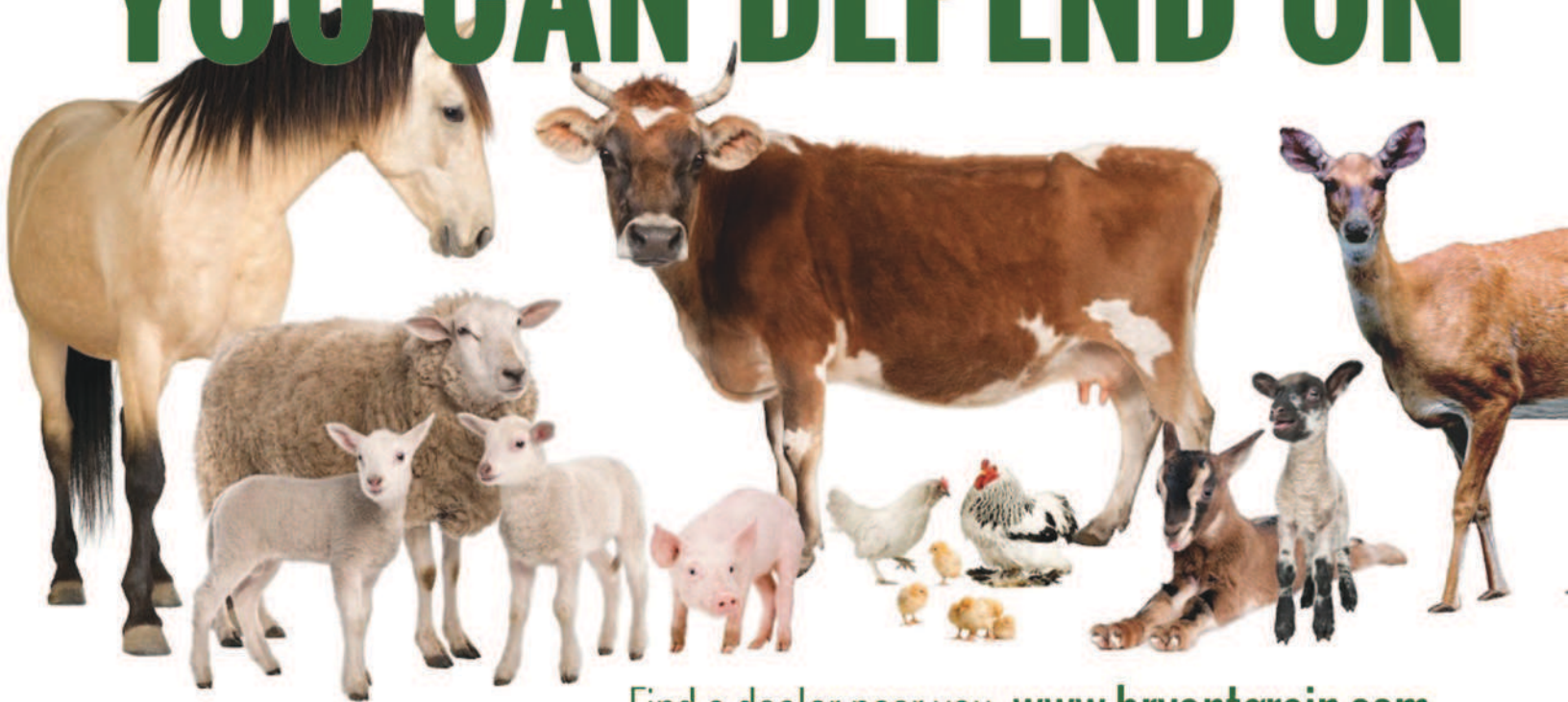
## Dogs, Pigs, Goats, Oh My!

By Jelly Cocanougher

What an extraordinary end to the Wise County Youth Fair - a fantastic opportunity for the Heart of a Champion participants to show. From rabbits to lambs, to pigs to dogs - we've seen it all. Through this unique event, the Heart of a Champion Livestock show aimed to promote confidence, friendship, and a sense of accomplishment within our amazing community. Everyone worked tirelessly to create an environment that fosters growth, camaraderie, and a shared passion for agriculture. Until next year! 



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**51.15 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY**



**OLD MAN PLACE \$9,700/Ac**

Excellent property with many improvements located just north of Dean on FM 2393, approximately 15 minutes east of Wichita Falls. The land is primarily wooded with a few scattered open areas, level to slightly sloping topography, great interior road system, brand new perimeter and cross fencing, pipe and sucker rod fence along the frontage, with double electric entry gate, two new stock ponds, two water wells, being 85' to 100' deep producing 5-10 gallons per minutes, Dean Dale Water and electricity available.

**245.30 ACRES | WILBARGER COUNTY**



**MILLER RANCH \$4,500/Ac**

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

**300.14 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY**



**EDSEL FARM \$3,950/Ac**

The Edsel Farm is located less than a half mile north of US HWY 287. Excellent access with frontage on Huntington, Kiel and Wellington Lane. The land consists of 300.139 total acres, 165 acres is tillable farmland, balance being moderate to heavily wooded native pasture. There are partial cross fences, boundary is fenced in average condition. Surface water consist of three ponds, seasonal creek and East Fork Pond Creek, partial floodplain. Electricity and water appear available along Hunting and Kiel.

**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.

**LAKE KEMP | BAYLOR COUNTY**



**MOONSHINE LAKE HOUSE \$425,000**

This is basically a brand new fully furnished house at Lake Kemp in the Moonshine Cove, which is the most sought after area of the lake. Its location in West Moonshine is isolated and allows for privacy. The house sits on a peninsula offering great views across the lake. It is a manufactured home installed in 2023 with 2,112/sf, 4 bedroom, 2 baths, large covered patio/deck, covered porch and boat dock. The Seller has a 2021 Axis A24 boat that can also be purchased in addition to the asking price.

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Thornberry Lots – 4.5 Acres – Wichita Co - \$45,000

Thornberry Homesite – 2.14 Acres – Clay Co - \$27,500

Maag Tract 3 – 19.45 Acres – Archer Co - \$8,483/Acre

L.A. Hill – 63.87 Acres – Archer Co - \$8,875/Acre

Decker Farms – 5.03 Acres – Archer Co - \$89,500

171 Homesite – 4.28 Acre – Clay Co - \$40,000

Highway 79 Homesite – 23.93 Acres – Archer County - \$9,750/Acre

Brixey Ranch – 119.39 Acres – Clay County - \$4,950/Acre

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