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WINTER

November 2024



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*Approximate Boundary
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NORTH TEXAS FARM & RANCH



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ON THE COVER

Goats serve as an important land clearing and fire prevention tool. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)



letter from the editor

Hello readers, and welcome to the November edition of North Texas Farm & Ranch Magazine. November is one of my favorite times of the year. From Thanksgiving holidays to being in the thick of futurity season all while wrapping up the fall calving season, there's excitement all around. I've gotten to take in some quiet moments on the farm with my animals, and I hope you've had the same pleasure.



I think you will enjoy this month's profile on land management, fire prevention, native pasture restoration, and the role of goats in all of it. I got to travel to a location where the goats are at work on the banks of Lake Texoma, and it is truly incredible how efficiently they can work.

As you celebrate Thanksgiving with your family and friends, I hope you remember how much we have to be grateful for. There are so many who have lost so much in recent days, and it serves to remind us how blessed we really are.

In this issue, we'll read about The Saddle Maker, explore Thanksgiving's impact on the agriculture industry, and learn more about Noble's partnership with Certified Angus Beef.

I am excited to share this edition of the magazine with each of you, and as always, do not forget to like our Facebook page, follow up on Instagram and X, and sign up for our weekly newsletter at ntfronline.com. Wishing you a happy November and a happy Thanksgiving!

Hannah Claxton
Hannah Claxton, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com

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It's a honor to introduce my self, my name is **Tyler Terry**, and I'm proud to be the owner of **Tri-Key Auto Ranch**, Bellevue TX. I was raised in Clay County, where I grew up on a dairy farm. Being raised in an agricultural setting instilled in me four core values that continue to guide both my personal and professional life! First in foremost my faith in God, the importance of family, honesty and character, and a strong work ethic.

These principles serve as the foundation for Tri-Key Auto Ranch. We strive to create an environment that reflects our commitment to integrity and service. Unlike typical car dealerships, we believe in challenging the status quo. Our mission is to make the car buying experience as stress-free and enjoyable as possible. We understand that purchasing a vehicle is a significant decision, and our goal is to ensure you feel confident and supported every step of the way.

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We invite you to visit us and experience the difference firsthand. Let us show you what it means to be part of the Tri-Key Auto Ranch family, where our commitment to excellence is reflected in everything we do. Thank you for considering us for your automotive needs! Find us on Facebook.

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North Texas Farm & Ranch
August 28 · 🌐

Head over to the North Texas Farm & Ranch Magazine to see each of the winners from the North Texas Fair & Rodeo! Congratulations to each and every one of you, we are proud to call you North Texans!




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North Texas Fair & Rodeo Recap

The North Texas Fair & Rodeo, in Denton, Texas, just wrapped up its 96th year, and th...




Top: Bayler Smith, high school junior from Nocona, Texas
Bottom: Brooklyn Drewry, Miss Rodeo Comanche Springs



North Texas Farm & Ranch
September 16 at 11:48 AM · 🌐

Yesterday was National Day of the Cowgirl, and we wanted to celebrate a few of our own! Drop a photo in the comments of your favorite cowgirl for a chance to be featured in our reader submission page!



JOIN IN THE CONVERSATION ONLINE!

NTFRonline.com

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



READER SUBMISSIONS

MEANWHILE BACK AT THE RANCH

By Rayford Pullen | rcpullen@yahoo.com



A cow that is not producing a calf is not making a rancher any profit. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)

Fall is here which means winter is closing in on us and before we officially get into winter, we need to make sure our factories are either producing or will be producing in a few months.

We have been pregnancy testing our cows this fall and if they are not bred or nursing a calf, we are bidding them adios. With annual costs somewhere between \$900.00 and \$1,000.00 per cow, those cows not producing a live weaned calf are costing us quite a bit.

For every open cow you run that does not wean a calf, you may well expect the profit from two calves is required to just to cover her annual expenses. If you are the average producer with 50 cows or so, weaning a 90 percent calf crop, you will only be pocketing the profits from 40 calves. Up that number to 100 cows and you will

only be pocketing the profits from 80 calves. Another way to look at this is to assume that you do indeed wean a 90 percent calf crop and have 100 cows, your profit loss is 20 percent or approximately \$9,000.00 which would go a long way towards winter feed expenses. If the factory is not producing, you don't have anything to sell and your cost per weaned calf is increased 20 percent.

While we were pregnancy testing our cows, we also dewormed those cows two years old or younger and gave them their annual vaccination for Lepto and Vibrio. On our cows 10 years old and older, we also checked teeth and found that same age cows differ on the condition of their teeth. While most were short and solid, others were basically smooth mouth.

The cows with the bad teeth

were identified to be sold the first part of winter after their calf was weaned. We normally expect our cows to be productive and have good teeth until age 11-12. Droughts and short grass may change these dynamics. We want to cull these cows while they still have a good salvage value. Other culling considerations include udder problems as well as temperament and body condition score. We expect our cows to lose 150-200 or so pounds during the winter, but if they aren't carrying the necessary weight, weight loss may become a health issue resulting in very little or no salvage value.


The area of the state, or for that matter, the area of the county you live in will dictate your need for certain vaccinations and deworming. Cows running on tighter acreage will normally be exposed

to more parasites and be more confined that those running on country requiring more acres per cow. The wild hog population has also increased exposure to more pathogens, especially leptospirosis. In our neck of the woods, this is especially true.

On the calf side while vaccinating their mommas, we will also give an injectable wormer in the fall, versus a white wormer in the spring, along with a blackleg vaccination and a modified live virus injection for the respiratory complex which includes IBR and others.

Don't lose 20 percent of your potential income during these good cattle market times. Take care of your cows and they will take care of you with the exception of the free loaders.


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



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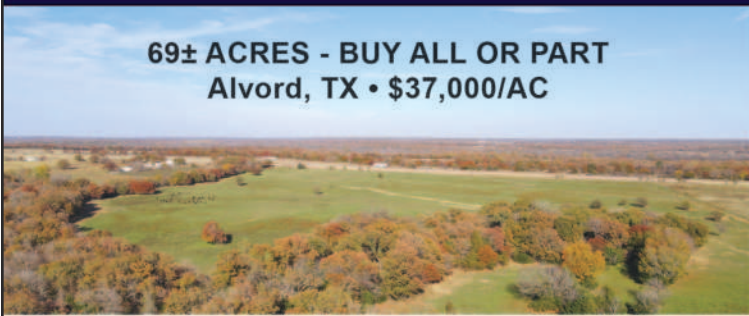
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Land Market Report

By Jared Groce

The days are getting shorter, the air is a little crisper, and a little rain all let us know that the changing of the seasons is upon us once again as autumn makes its entry into North Texas. Change is the one constant thing that life offers us, as we are reminded of this by not only the changing of the season, but by the non-stop ads and commercials for politicians begging for our votes. Changes such as those in our political world tend have an impact on the economy in general, and more especially the rural land market. Election years are always challenging for land brokers, typically because there are so many doubts, questions, and unknowns about the near future. Rumors cause fears of income tax disasters, changes in laws, and changes in our own peace of mind. These fears keep many investors on the side line until after the election is over, but chances are good that we will not know who our next president is even the day after the election this year, and those doubts could cause another rural land rush as city folk flee the urban centers once again for the peace and quiet of the rural lifestyle that we all love and cherish.

As you will see in the data here, the month of September was very quiet throughout the six county area that I monitor, and a few sales that were closed far below the original asking price. But regardless of how the election ends, we are certain that there are still an average of 1,300 people a day moving to Texas, and they all need a place to live. As the city creeps closer and closer to our homes, the value of our lands gets higher and higher. It is the simple rule of supply and demand.


Change is inevitable, but how we adjust to it is all up to us. Get outside and enjoy a sunrise and a sunset. Go fishing. Go hunting. Enjoy life while you can, and remember: the best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is today. The same holds true for buying land. 

COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
COLLIN	FARMERSVILLE	29.95	\$25,543.00	\$805,000.00	\$765,000.00	95.00%	531
COLLIN	CELINA	17.85	\$72,807.00	\$2,320,500.00	\$1,299,600.00	56.00%	37
COLLIN	ROYSE CITY	24.88	\$114,564.00	\$3,000,000.00	\$2,850,000.00	95.00%	193
COLLIN	CELINA	31.99	\$92,500.00	\$3,499,900.00	\$2,958,982.00	84.50%	312
COLLIN	CELINA	81.26	\$64,583.00	\$5,500,000.00	\$5,248,000.00	95.40%	4
	AVG	37.19	\$73,999.00	\$3,025,080.00	\$2,624,316.00	85.20%	215
COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
COOKE	GAINESVILLE	11	\$23,636.00	\$500,000.00	\$260,000.00	52.00%	63
COOKE	CALLISBURG	14.9	\$23,490.00	\$350,000.00	\$350,000.00	100.00%	5
COOKE	COLLINSVILLE	11	\$32,000.00	\$434,500.00	\$352,000.00	81.00%	122
COOKE	MUENSTER	42.81	\$11,446.00	\$599,340.00	\$490,000.00	81.80%	367
COOKE	COLLINSVILLE	16.5	\$32,000.00	\$627,000.00	\$528,000.00	84.20%	105
COOKE	GAINESVILLE	142	\$10,061.00	\$1,491,000.00	\$1,428,600.00	95.80%	91
COOKE	TIOGA	31.03	\$51,526.00	\$1,598,900.00	\$1,598,900.00	100.00%	190
COOKE	GAINESVILLE	217.83	\$12,625.00	\$2,900,000.00	\$2,750,000.00	94.80%	208
	AVG	60.88	\$24,598.00	\$1,062,593.00	\$969,688.00	86.20%	144
COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
DENTON	SANGER	15	\$38,333.00	\$599,000.00	\$575,000.00	96.00%	27
DENTON	SANGER	27.15	\$31,971.00	\$899,000.00	\$868,000.00	96.60%	8
DENTON	PONDER	99	\$18,239.00	\$1,805,661.00	\$1,805,661.00	100.00%	188
DENTON	CROSS ROADS	21.03	\$156,941.00	\$3,499,989.00	\$3,300,000.00	94.30%	360
DENTON	SANGER	138	\$24,457.00	\$4,000,000.00	\$3,375,000.00	84.40%	550
DENTON	OAK POINT	28	\$121,429.00	\$3,795,000.00	\$3,400,000.00	89.60%	101
	AVG	54.7	\$65,228.00	\$2,433,108.00	\$2,220,610.00	93.50%	206
COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
GRAYSON	TOM BEAN	20	\$17,500.00	\$395,000.00	\$350,000.00	88.60%	31
GRAYSON	TOM BEAN	16.4	\$25,919.00	\$425,075.00	\$425,075.00	100.00%	162
GRAYSON	COLLINSVILLE	44	\$34,501.00	\$1,650,000.00	\$1,518,045.00	92.00%	15
	AVG	26.8	\$25,973.00	\$823,358.00	\$764,373.00	93.50%	69
COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
MONTAGUE	BOWIE	11.01	\$11,807.00	\$132,000.00	\$130,000.00	98.50%	218
MONTAGUE	BOWIE	11	\$15,318.00	\$175,000.00	\$168,500.00	96.30%	305
MONTAGUE	BOWIE	11	\$15,318.00	\$175,000.00	\$168,500.00	96.30%	308
MONTAGUE	SAINT JO	10.02	\$18,563.00	\$193,500.00	\$186,000.00	96.10%	15
MONTAGUE	BOWIE	10.98	\$20,036.00	\$222,999.00	\$220,000.00	98.70%	156
MONTAGUE	SAINT JO	75	\$7,333.00	\$565,000.00	\$550,000.00	97.30%	10
	AVG	68.48	\$13,014.00	\$1,030,124.00	\$1,001,424.00	99.30%	137
COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
WISE	CHICO	10.05	\$16,169.00	\$165,000.00	\$162,500.00	98.50%	11
WISE	CHICO	10.01	\$24,975.00	\$255,000.00	\$250,000.00	98.00%	50
WISE	DECATUR	10.01	\$29,471.00	\$299,900.00	\$295,000.00	98.40%	364
WISE	SPRINGTOWN	20	\$20,700.00	\$450,000.00	\$414,000.00	92.00%	1
WISE	DECATUR	85.43	\$8,194.00	\$2,200,000.00	\$700,000.00	31.80%	45
	AVG	27.1	\$19,902.00	\$673,890.00	\$364,300.00	83.70%	94

AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK



October means we are gathering our own cattle, and the neighbors, and shipping them out. Our yearly payday is soon arriving! 

AG *elsewhere* ARKANSAS

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY KYLE ENGLAND



With cooler temperatures coming we're busy getting the last cutting of hay baled and put away. We're working hard to make sure our cows and calves have everything they need to get through the winter strong. 🍷

Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean, tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Silver Bluestems

There are a handful of grasses on North Texas grazing lands ranchers need to know, not because they are highly desirable, but rather because they are not of much value. I call them “decom” plants, which is an acronym for “Don’t Ever Count On Me.” Silver bluestem is a “decom” grass.

Silver bluestem is a perennial which grows in all areas of Texas. It can survive in almost all soil types, and in full sun conditions or in semi shade. It grows up to three feet tall and is easily recognized with the presence of the white fuzzy seed head. Also, one of the identifying characteristics of Silver bluestem is a bend in the stems at each node, causing plants to take on a rounded shape as they mature.

Silver bluestem, although a member of the bluestem family of grasses, is not as desirable for grazing as some of its bluestem cousins. It has the distinction of being a “pioneer” grass, in that it is one of the first species to appear on bare or disturbed areas. From the standpoint of protecting the soil, this is a good trait.


The issue is that Silver bluestem will stay in the pasture and will increase in abundance with

lack of proper grazing management. If Silver blue is present in a pasture, and rotation grazing and a correct stocking are applied, it will, over time, be replaced by better grasses.

Crude protein in May and June is eight to nine percent and Silver bluestem is considered fair grazing during spring and early summer. Later in the summer, protein begins to drop, and after seed heads develop, Silver blue is used very little by livestock.

Silver bluestem is present to some extent in almost all native grass pastures. Cattle will not want to graze it after frost, and if they are forced to do so, their body condition can suffer without heavy supplementation of protein.

Ranchers need to be able to recognize “decom” grasses like silver bluestem. For example, if a producer was considering leasing some grazing land dominated by Silver bluestem, he would need to be aware that and beneficial grazing from the Silver blue would be limited to a few months during the growing season and his winter supplementation expense would be high.

We will be discussing more decom grasses in the future. 



(Above) Grazing value. (Top Right) Silver bluestem is a prolific seed producer. (Bottom Right) Silver bluestem looks good, but is fair grazing at best. (Photos courtesy of Tony Dean)

Acorn Toxicity

Barry Whitworth, DVM, MPH, Senior Extension Specialist
Department of Animal & Food Sciences, Ferguson College of Agriculture



While acorns may look tasty to hungry livestock, over-ingestion can result in toxicity. (Courtesy Photo)

With the prolonged drought, most pastures in Oklahoma are in poor condition. With the lack of available forage, animals may go in search of alternative foods.

If oak trees are in the pastures, acorns may be a favorite meal for some livestock this fall. This may result in oak poisoning.

Oak leaves, twigs, buds, and acorns may be toxic to some animals when consumed.

Obviously, acorns can be a problem in the fall and green acorns can be more toxic than mature acorns. When acorns form only a small portion of the diet, there are usually no signs of problems.

However, consumption of large quantities may result in toxicity. Tannins in the acorns cause the toxicity.

The most common tissue damaged by the tannins are the digestive tract and kidneys.

Cattle and sheep appear to be more susceptible to toxicity

than goats. Other animals such as horses, rabbits, and chickens have succumbed to the toxicity of oak poisoning as well.

Interestingly, some individual animals are more tolerable of the toxins and show no ill effects when consuming acorns.

Clinical signs of oak toxicity usually appear a few days after consumption of acorns.

Initially, the animals are weak, listless, emaciated, and anorexic. This is followed by ventral edema (swelling of lower parts of the body such as legs, chest, ventral abdomen), urinating large amounts of urine, abdominal pain, and constipation.

The animal may pass hard mucus covered fecal material which may change to black tarry or bloody feces as the disease progresses. If the animal is not treated, kidney failure is likely.

A tentative diagnosis of acorn poisoning may be based on clinical signs and access to acorns.

Blood tests that indicate kidney disease is another clue to the condition. A necropsy with examination of tissues for characteristic lesions of the disease is the standard to confirm a diagnosis of oak toxicity.

Treatment of oak toxicity starts with removing the animals from the area where the acorns are located.

Those animals displaying signs of the disease should be given fluids to correct dehydration and electrolyte imbalances. Mineral oil and/or activated charcoal may be given to reduce toxin absorption.

If animals survive the initial toxicity, they may recover, but it may take several weeks for kidney function to return to normal.

As always, prevention is better than treatment. Producers should be very careful allowing livestock to graze in areas where acorns are present.


Livestock should be fed plenty

of hay and feed this fall to avoid over consumption of acorns. For those producers who cannot avoid grazing areas with large numbers of oak trees, feeding a grain mixture with 10 percent to 20 percent of calcium hydroxide has been successful in preventing problems with acorn poisoning.

Droughts produce poor pasture conditions as well as very little hay. On top of those problems, feed costs continue to increase.

The last problem a producer needs is a large number of sick cows. For those that graze an area with a large number of oak trees, prevention may be worth the cost this year.

At the very least keep a close watch of your animals this fall.

Producers wanting more information about oak toxicity, should consult with their local veterinarian or visit with their Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension County Agriculture Educator. 

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Noble Learning:

Press Release By Noble Research Institute



As the sun rises, Noble Research Institute ranch team member Jeremy Westfall observes a herd of Angus cattle ahead of a move on Oswalt Ranch in Marietta, Okla. (Photo courtesy of Rob Mattson/Noble Research Institute)

Noble Research Institute, a trusted resource for farmers and ranchers since 1945, and Certified Angus Beef, a brand known for its commitment to quality beef, have partnered to develop and deliver Land Stewardship, an educational course designed for livestock producers worldwide. Land Stewardship, set to launch in November 2024, is an extension of Noble's educational curriculum and offers an introduction to the six soil health principles and how they work with the ecosystem processes. Available fully online, and free, the program provides participants with accessibility and the ability to complete it at their own

pace. Producers of all sizes and locations will gain insights into improving their land management for healthy soil, better grazing animal performance and a more resilient and profitable operation. Noble provides U.S. farmers and ranchers with a research-backed suite of educational programming covering all aspects of farm and ranch management.


The organization's curriculum offers the tools needed to restore their land, improve their grazing, increase profits and gain long-term success for their operations.

"We are excited to partner with Certified Angus Beef, a company with a long history of

commitment to the beef industry and the establishment of a set of uncompromising standards for taste," said Steve Rhines, CEO and president of Noble Research Institute. "Producing the best beef starts with the animal and how it is raised, and that's where Noble's expertise comes in. Together, we have developed a program that supplies the tools to apply high standards to our land stewardship to build stronger and more sustainable operations." The partnership between Noble and CAB highlights the shared dedication of both organizations to support producers in caring for the land and grazing livestock in the best

way possible to ensure better production, improve the environment and provide a better future for their communities around the country.

"Farmers and ranchers are land stewards first, with healthy forages a necessity for cattle production," said Bruce Cobb, executive vice president of production at CAB. "Our team is excited to bring forward this resource, developed by subject-matter experts, that will help producers enhance soil health and profitability on their operations."

For more information about partnership opportunities with Noble Research Institute, visit www.noble.org/partner/. 

Masters of Beef Advocacy

By Hannah Claxton, editor | editor@ntfronline.com



Red angus cattle graze in a field as a part of the Masters of Beef Advocacy. (Photos Courtesy of MBA).

Since its establishment in 2009, more than 19,000 farmers, ranchers, and agricultural advocates have completed the Masters of Beef Advocacy (MBA) program.

The program was designed by the Beef Checkoff to equip advocates to engage in conversations with consumers about beef and how cattle are raised.

Open to everyone and at no cost to participate, the MBA program is easily accessible.

In 2021, the program updated its advocacy training modules to MBA NextGen, which made it easier than ever for a new generation of farmers and ranchers to share their stories.

“The MBA program is one of the most effective tools we have to teach a wide audience the core principles of the cattle industry, and has been a tremendous asset in our efforts to better inform consumers and thought leaders about our industry,” said Paul Dybedahl, Manager, Communications for the Masters of Beef Advocacy Program. “Whether you’re from a

family of ranchers or a consumer simply wanting to know more about how that delicious beef dinner got on your plate – MBA NextGen can arm you with the information you need to be a strong advocate for the beef community and communicate with interested consumers.”

While completing the course, one of the main themes is the integrity of the beef industry, and its dedication, our dedication, to providing a safe, good product to consumers.

The information provided was relevant, innovative, pro-agriculture, and beneficial in marketing our beef, specifically for our direct-to-consumer sales.

MBA NextGen consists of five self-guided modules:

- Lesson 1: The Beef Community - Context of raising beef from pasture to plate focusing on the community of people involved throughout the beef lifecycle.
- Lesson 2: Raising Cattle on Grass - An introduction to the first step in the beef lifecycle and the


many benefits of raising cattle on our country’s vast grass pasture resources.

- Lesson 3: Life in the Feedyard - A discussion on the role of feedyards, including animal care, nutrition and environmental stewardship, at this important step in the beef lifecycle.

- Lesson 4: From Cattle to Beef - An in-depth look at the slaughter process and the humane handling and safety measures in place at today’s beef processing facilities.

- Lesson 5: Beef. It’s What’s For Dinner. - A primer on choosing and cooking the right cuts of beef and the important role of beef in a healthful diet.

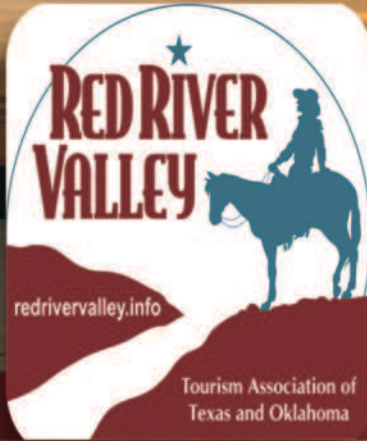
Once advocates have completed the program, they gain access to a variety of continuing education resources ranging from online courses on specific topics such as beef sustainability and nutrition to in-person advocacy training.

To apply for the course, access the modules, or learn more, visit beefitswhatsfordinner.com. 



The MBA Program is funded by the Beef Checkoff. (Courtesy photo)

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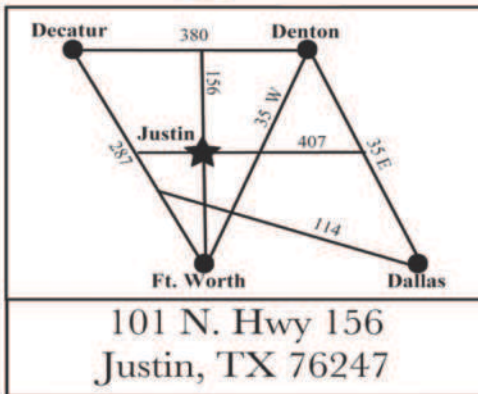
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Goats Get To Work

Innovative land management technologies include using goats

By Hannah Claxton, editor | editor@ntfronline.com



One of Open Spaces goats searches for his next bite at one of their job sites that sits on the side of a cliff. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)

One of my professors out at Texas Tech University always told us that we aren't just raising cattle, we're raising grass, because without grass there is no cattle business. The same applies to most livestock species and crops we seek to raise- without good land management, no good yield can grow.

The grasses and plants native to North Texas, such as Bluestems, Buffalo Grass, and Fescue, are hardy and designed to survive whatever our intense climate throws at them, but in recent years, concerns such as wildfires, chemical runoff, have made intensive

pasture management more important than ever before.

Goats have emerged as a versatile tool for land management, providing a sustainable alternative to traditional methods like mowing and herbicides. Their natural grazing behavior allows them to manage invasive plant species, control brush, and maintain healthy ecosystems.

In both a pasture management setting and with goals of land clearing in mind, Open Space Development has left their mark on North Texas.

After gaining fame when a video was shared of Open Spaces

goats escaping a land clearing project in Arlington, Texas, the company has taken on an increasing role in varying land management projects in Texas. I had the pleasure of visiting an Open Space project site and sitting down with the owner, Quincy Crow, to learn more about land management, and specifically- the work of the goats.

"Historically, bison played a key role in managing pastures as they grazed on grasses, fertilized the prairie and aerated the soil – imagine the impact a herd of several thousand bison would have had on the landscape," explained Crow. "Hunted to near extinction,

the absence of their movement and the introduction of non-native grasses have created an anemic and species poor environment. By reintroducing the presence of a ruminant, these important factors can be mimicked within the environment."

There are five main benefits to using goats for land management.

Targeted Grazing

Goats are browsers rather than grazers, meaning they prefer shrubs, bushes, and young trees over grass. This makes them particularly effective for clearing invasive species that threaten native

Continue on page 24



(Above) The Open Space goats had been grazing the right side of the field for a few days, which showed a stark contrast to the left and ungrazed side. (Below) The browse line is about six feet off the ground, and is clearly visible where the leaves are off the tree. (Photos by Hannah Claxton)





vegetation. The grazing habits of these goats becomes particularly beneficial in our prairie environment, when many of the shrubs, bushes, and young trees are invasive species. Goats can reach up to six feet to eat-- that level is known as the browse line.

Reduced Chemical Use

By using goats for land management, landowners can minimize or eliminate the need for chemical herbicides, promoting a healthier environment and reducing the risk of chemical runoff into waterways, reducing the risk of ingestion from other animals that may drink from said waterways.

Soil Health

Goat manure acts as a natural fertilizer, enriching the soil with nutrients as they graze. Their natural foraging behavior can also help aerate the soil, improving overall soil health. The natural hoof action of the animals tills the top layer of dirt which allows for further fertilization and germination of desirable seeds.

Cost-Effectiveness

While there are initial costs associated with acquiring and caring for goats, the long-term savings on equipment, fuel, and chemicals can make goat grazing a cost-effective solution. Goats also present as a more cost-effective option than doing a prescribed burn, as there is no need for additional safety personnel, permits, or water trucks.

Biodiversity Enhancement

By managing brush and invasive plants, goats help restore habitats for various wildlife species, contributing to greater biodiversity in the area.

While this ability is not directly tied to the effects on the land from the goats, an additional benefit is the ability of the goats to access areas that would be difficult otherwise.

"Clearing with ruminants is not more beneficial on a busy roadway where a commercial mower would limit risk and time or where a manicured ball field or beautified


landscape is the focus," explained Crow. "The benefits of ruminants are seen where access can be difficult or work can be dangerous. Slopes, terrain, and woody areas are where goats shine—undeterred by poison ivy, ticks, thick brush—they can clear more effectively and with minimal waste."

As with any project or technology, using goats for land management is not without risks. When Open Space takes on a job, a herder lives on site to tend to the needs of the goats. Just like any other species, the goats require shelter, water, and basic health management.

Since goats are not a species that receive deworming treatments regularly, but rather as needed when the parasite load becomes overbearing, through a method such as the Lamancha method, a primary concern when using goats to manage land that will eventually be used for cattle is the spread of parasites. The herder-in-charge for Open Space addressed this concern specifically, stating that, "rotating cattle and goats in the same pasture help break the parasite cycle with adequate rest."

Another major concern in keeping goats is their notoriety for escape. However, with a reliable water source, enough goats to make a true herd, and a continuous food source, the goats are far less likely to attempt to escape, especially in combination with solid fencing.

Lastly, a concern that must be considered is the presence of any desired plants and grasses. Goats are not discriminatory in what they will eat, so any forage that is within the area they are grazing is up for grabs. Protected species, endangered varieties, or plants that are desired within the area should be protected.

When wildfire prevention is key, less chemical use is desired, or prairie restoration is a priority, goats are a safe and cost-effective method for land management in North Texas. 



(Above) To reach the branches up to six feet, the goats grab the branches with their mouths and hold them down with their front hooves while they eat. (Below) The areas where the goats are kept to graze are large enough for the animals to be able to relax and participate in normal behaviors outside of grazing. (Photos by Hannah Claxton)



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RRR Deadwood R5462	01/04/23	20566505	Poss Deadwood	12	-0.7	68	127	69	1.53	1.20	73	64	132	105	236	379
RRR Showcase R0783	05/22/23	20761678	Hart Showcase 1082	13	-1.7	63	113	60	1.73	0.61	92	78	114	99	214	370
RRR Jordan R0823	05/29/23	20769886	Baldrige Jordan	8	0.9	88	156	92	1.17	1.36	65	80	147	83	229	362
RRR Papa R0933	06/14/23	20752592	HAYNES Papa 0100	8	0.9	70	143	80	0.72	1.39	85	70	146	65	211	359
RRR Ratified R6083	04/16/23	20725212	Poss Ratified	20	-2.7	72	121	64	1.72	0.75	80	84	115	100	214	358
RRR Headstart 2354	09/09/23	20889961	Baldrige Headstart	3	2.4	93	156	92	0.61	1.21	103	95	137	56	193	353
RRR Ratified R3212	12/26/22	20582557	Poss Ratified	21	-2.5	66	109	53	1.67	0.70	93	77	98	99	197	349
RRR BHA Sherman R6213	04/18/23	20737618	Baldrige Sherman	10	-0.9	80	140	70	1.26	1.00	84	83	115	84	199	342
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Updated Guidelines for Equine Deworming

By Hannah Claxton, editor | editor@ntfronline.com

In June of this year, the American Association of Equine Practitioners (AAEP), released updated guidelines concerning deworming procedures.

“We have seen dramatic development in the field of equine parasite control over the last 10 years, since we first launched these guidelines, and we work hard to keep our recommendations up to date,” said Martin Nielsen, DVM, PhD, DVSc, DAVCM, DEVCP, Schlaikjer Professor of Equine Infectious Diseases at the University of Kentucky.

The purpose of said guidelines, originally created in 2013 and last revised in 2019, is to inform both veterinary professionals and equine enthusiasts alike of the best way to prevent parasitic infections and reduce the likelihood of the parasites becoming drug-resistant.

Recommendations are offered for senior horses (over 15 years old), mature horses (between 5 and 15 years old), and young horses (under 5 years old).

Highlights from the new guidelines include:

- Perform fecal egg count reduction tests annually to ensure that you are using effective dewormers in every herd or barn.

- Recognize that no anthelmintic will eliminate all parasitic stages from a horse.

- Continue using fecal egg counts once or twice per year to stratify horses into low, medium, and high shedders to reduce pasture contamination.

- Deworm all horses at a baseline rate and target selected horses more often based on fecal egg counts.

- Not use fecal egg counts to diagnose disease in horses as there is no correlation between fecal egg counts and disease-causing parasite life stages.

- Discontinue deworming all horses with fixed intervals year-round and stop blindly rotating anthelmintic classes.

In practical application, these guidelines suggest that horse owners ought not to be deworming on a monthly basis with randomly selected or decidedly rotated dewormers.

It’s a common sight in any feedstore to see a paper hanging with what dewormer is recommended based on the time of year, and with recommendations that dewormer be given each month.

The new AAEP guidelines recommend using a fecal egg count

test to find out the parasitic load and what type of parasites are present, and then treating those specifically.

While a strong, established veterinary client relationship (VCR) is vital to animal health, a fecal egg count test is something that can be done at home.

The fecal egg count test is inexpensive, only about \$30, and it comes with step-by-step instructions that make it quite easy to use.

Once the sample is collected from fresh stool it can be sent to the lab in the sample bag with an ice pack, which are both provided with the kit.


Results are received within

about a week.

Proper administration of dewormers is important to prevent parasites from becoming resistant to available drugs, and to prevent the myriad of health issues that can result from a high parasitic load.

Regardless of what the results from the fecal egg count test show, equine owners should work with their veterinarian to determine which anthelmintic should be administered and when.

For more information, visit the American Association of Equine Practitioners website at

<https://aaep.org/post/aaep-publishes-updated-internal-parasite-control-guidelines/> 



One popular dewormer is Ivermectin, but Ivermectin is not effective against all types of parasites.



Blindly rotating anthelmintic classes can lead to drug resistance. (Photos by Hannah Claxton)

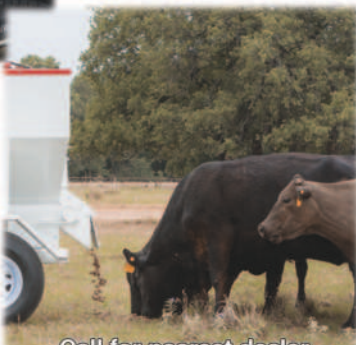


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Finale In Fort Worth

By: Krista Lucas Wynn



The Breeders Challenge was held in Fort Worth, Texas in September. (Photo courtesy of Shoop Shots Photography, official photographer of the Breeders Challenge Finale)

The incentive game is still going strong in the barrel racing world. New studs are added every year to incentive programs like Ruby Buckle, Breeders Challenge, Future Fortunes, Triple Crown 100, Colorado Classic, Select Stallion Stakes, Pink Buckle, and Tomorrow's Legends. Any breeder, owner or rider can pay their horse into these incentives if the offspring is by one of these select stallions.

The offspring also become eligible to compete at the big money races put on by these incentives, creating motivation to breed to the stallions paid into these programs. Owners pay a nomination fee to enroll the offspring of top stallions into the program, making them eligible for bonus money and prizes at certain events.

The Breeders Challenge, created in 2020, is an incentive that prides itself in promoting the stallion owners of the barrel racing industry. This incentive has paid out \$7.1 million since 2021. Each year, the Breeders Challenge culminates in Fort Worth, Texas with the grand finale. There are six qualifier races held throughout the year, where horses and riders can earn a chance to run at the \$1,000,000 championship finale.

There is something for everyone at the Breeders Challenge events including futurities, derbys, amateur races, and the open. The 2024 championship race was held Sept. 11-14, at Will Rogers Memorial Center and John Justin Arena.

The event drew contestants from all over the country, including world champions Jordan

Briggs and Sherry Cervi to name a few.

Cervi ended up walking away with the futurity championship on her home grown horse, MP Meter My Fame. The five year old mare is by Cervi's standout world champion mare, Stingray, and by the all-time leading barrel horse sire, Dash Ta Fame. The pair took home over \$78,000 for the win.

In the Derby, 10-year-old Dusky Lynn Hall rode KD Baby Driver to the victory, beating out her senior competitors. The seven-year-old gelding is by A Streak of Fling and out of Watch Me Go Guys. It comes as no surprise the pair also won the youth race, adding to their total winnings.

In the Open 4D Finale, Hall also won the 1D aboard Jets Letters Ta Abby. Hall won over

\$75,000 in just one week and recently became the youngest barrel racer to ever cross the \$1,000,000 mark in earnings.

The 2D went to Ryann Pedone on One Slick Czar. The 3D winner was Emma Abbott on LiarLiar Sox On Fire, who also won the drawing for a brand new Hart trailer, and the 4D champion was Jana Himes on RLC Gone Streakin.

Incentives such as the Breeders Challenge provides a unique opportunity to get a return on an investment that is essentially part of the family.

The Breeders Challenge pulls out all the stops for their contestants who put their hard earned money toward the future of barrel racing.

For more information visit www.breederschallenge.com.



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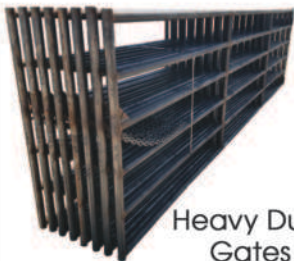
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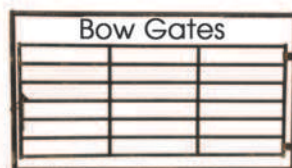
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# the Culinary Corner

## French Toast Casserole


### Ingredients:

- 1 loaf French bread (about 1 1/2 pounds), cut into 1-inch cubes
- 5 large eggs
- 1 1/2 cups unsweetened milk
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon sea salt
- maple syrup, for serving

### Topping:

- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter or coconut oil, melted
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1 cup frozen blueberries
- confectioners' sugar, for dusting

### Directions:

1. Grease 9-by-13-inch baking dish. Place bread cubes in baking dish. In large bowl, whisk eggs, milk, brown sugar, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg and salt. Pour mixture evenly over bread cubes.
2. If making casserole ahead, cover baking dish and refrigerate overnight. If baking immediately, let stand 30 minutes at room temperature to allow bread to soak up egg mixture.
3. Preheat oven to 350 F.
4. To make topping: Drizzle casserole with melted butter and sprinkle with brown sugar and pecans. Top with strawberries and blueberries.
5. Cover and bake 35 minutes, then uncover and bake 10-20 minutes, or until topping is browned and egg mixture has mostly set.
6. Remove from oven, cover loosely with foil and let stand 10 minutes. Dust with confectioners' sugar. Serve with maple syrup. 





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# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## Why Be Thankful In Tough Times?

Country western singer, Carrie Underwood, once sang about being “low on faith and gasoline.” These were words from her song, “Jesus take the wheel.” I remember asking Jesus to take my wheel when I lost control of my car in a snow storm several years ago. Thankfully, I believe he did as my car spun across the highway and came to rest safely against a snow bank undamaged with no one hurt. It’s easy to be thankful when there is plenty to be thankful for!

But what about all the times when our life doesn’t feel brimming over with blessings and faith in a brighter tomorrow is getting lower with each passing day? It may be hard to imagine that a good dose of thankfulness could be the answer to our dwindling faith as well as the guiding light to everything we seek.

Life in my 50s and 60s has been much different from what it was in my twenties. Back then, my anticipation for the future was filled only with enthusiasm, good expectations, dreams and hopes. But getting older doesn’t have the glamour it once did. Expectations have changed from longings to dread. Dreams have become fears. And hopes have become few.

Regardless of our age, our current life circumstances can be bleaker than we wish they were. As cattle ranchers, when we’re confronted with skyrocketing prices of fertilizer and chemicals, incessant repairs of old equipment, dire impacts from weather

extremes, it can be hard to see the light at the end of what feels like a very dark tunnel.

Lately, I just want to be happy. I want to feel happy -- today -- and not worry so much about what may or may not happen in the future. Or even if some say the future is inevitable, I don’t want to worry about it! I want to live my life today and make the most of each moment.

There’s one fact that I’ve become certain of over the years. The grateful are happy and the ungrateful are miserable. Yep, I’ve discovered it is impossible to feel thankful and unhappy at the same time.

Throughout my life, even in the most difficult of times, thankfulness changed my focus from what I didn’t have to an appreciation for what I did. And again and again, thankfulness enabled me to discover “good” that was previously unforeseen or unpredicted.

Gratitude has always brought my focus back to present possibilities rather than speculation about an uncertain or mysterious future. I’ve found that it’s having a grateful heart today that raises hope, boosts confidence, encourages ambition, lifts self-esteem, strengthens trust and provides peace of mind for tomorrow.

And gratitude is good for you! It seems many have concluded that the healthiest human emotion is indeed gratitude. The medical profession claims gratitude increases our immunities -- making




Helping herds survive extreme winter temperatures, often with freezing rain or sleet, is something every cattle rancher is grateful to accomplish. (Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

us less susceptible to illness. And that’s a good thing at any age and season of life!

The sign on my desk daily instructs me, “There is always, always, always something to be thankful for.” I often need that reminder. So, try a little thankful-

ness, my friends, and you just may find that dark tunnel you’re in is suddenly brighter!

Whatever the benefits, being thankful will make you feel better. And who doesn’t want to feel better -- especially when dealing with tough times. 





Are you a vest girl? I myself have found that I in fact am! One day when I went to organize my closet I decided to put all my vests together to find them easier and what I discovered was that I actually needed an entire section for my vests! With that being said, I feel like vests are a very functional option, for us in the south especially, as we often don't get cold enough for heavy jackets. I find that on many cool mornings in Texas, a vest will suffice until the sun warms up. Of course, though, I love including fashion with my function and a fun fashionable vest will get me every time! It's a great way to make a statement with your layers. See so many vest options over at [www.jessesjewelz.com](http://www.jessesjewelz.com)







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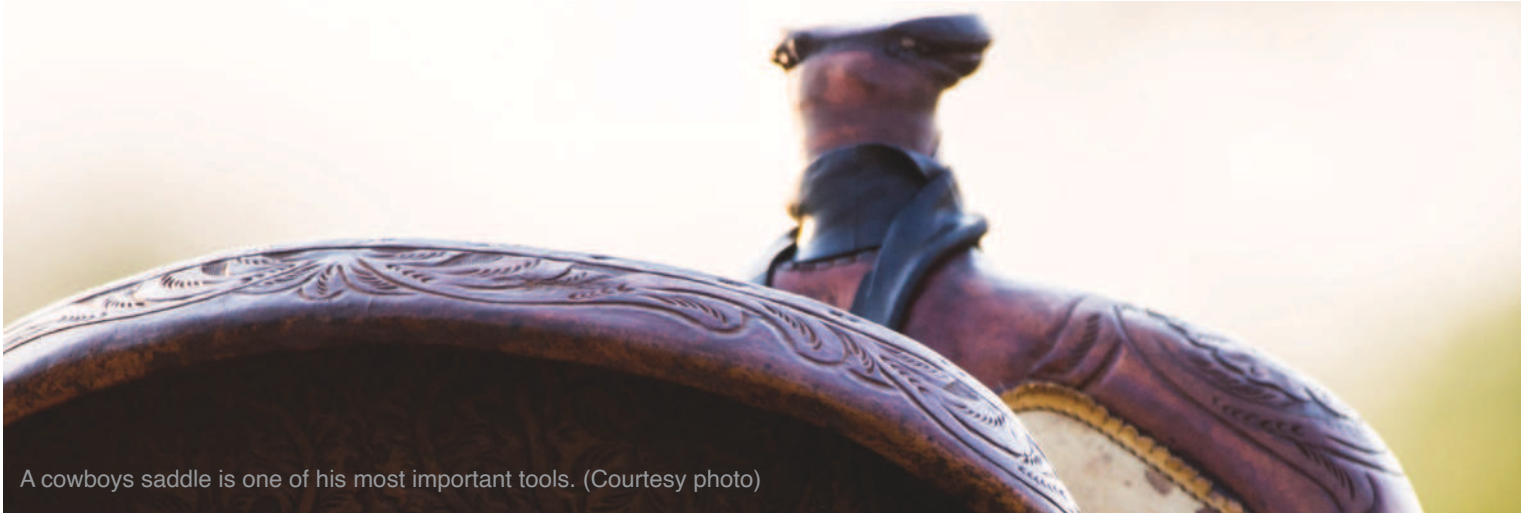






# The Saddle Maker

By: Eric Ricci



A cowboy's saddle is one of his most important tools. (Courtesy photo)

You often hear, and it is seemingly cliché, that at times in life you “luck into things” and/or “nothing happens by chance”. With no intent of dispelling anyone’s beliefs or truths either way, in the August Texas Co-Op Power Wise County Magazine as I scanned through blurbs under Services, with no particular need or want, I ‘lucked into’ an ad. The simply stated, non-verbose advertisement read, “SADDLES CLEANED, OILED, REPAIRED.” This was followed by a call to action; “Call Smith Saddlery at (940-XXX-XXXX). So, I did.

A gentleman answered and after he provided customary salutations in a gently smooth tone and cadenced delivery not unlike the actor Slim Pickins, I told him of my interest in his ad. At least what I thought my interest was. You see, back to that ‘lucking into things.’ I thought this was plainly a potentially perfect arrangement to have a recently acquired antique saddle re-fleeced and shined up. Truth be told, it was no ordinary, old saddle. It was a sentimental reminder of days gone by for my better half’s family. This saddle was a custom work from the early 1970s and belonged to their father, Henry

Earl Fagan, of Redwater, Texas. Henry owned two East Texas banks and had been the President of the Four States Fair and Rodeo from 1979 through 1981. This saddle, family memories recall, was the one he rode in those Fair parades and rodeo Grand Entries atop his yellow horse.

The palomino would rear up and Henry Earl would wave his hat from the seat of this very saddle. Conjures up iconic imagery of the Old West and of Texas, too perhaps. *\*Henry Earl Fagan has his own unique story. This one is about the Saddle Maker.*

Turns out the man who answered the phone was no ordinary, old saddle maker either, despite his very ordinary name of Bob Smith. We discussed the logistics of his shop and our location selecting the approaching Saturday to have him inspect and see if he wished to work on the saddle and quite honestly, if we thought he was the man for the job. Scope each other out if we are being honest. And why should we not be? Saddles are a personal sort of thing. Especially one with family history.

Selfishly, I was thinking I was getting something I wanted done

for my wife and her sisters and had hopefully found the fellow to do it. It turns out I got even more in the bargain as I met a man with a persona that could inspire any one willing to listen closely to his story. Bits and pieces delivered in a humble manner, matter of fact like, very unassuming. Lucked into things.

You see, Bob Smith, if you look it up on a Google search it promulgates the name as the commonest man’s name in America at 81,000 fellows with the moniker. Well, this Bob Smith was so much more unique than his name. The sort of guy you could call a friend on one meeting. The sort of guy who though he had no boast in him still put off a sense of quiet Texas pride you admired as you breathed it in slowly. As slow as the words coming from his movie-star like voice, where anecdotes and one-line quips not intended to sound like a script, still did if you envision yourself in a movie.

“Did Leroy give you any trouble coming in? He likes the ladies best.” Leroy is Bob’s buckskin horse who was glad to stand in the shade on an Alvord day hovering over at 109 degrees Fahrenheit. See what I mean, funny in a fun

way just making conversation.

Bob, at 73 years old, grabbed up the old saddle we had brought like it was a bag of chips. It was made heavier, laden with oversized tapaderos, but he showed no struggle as he opened the door of his shop and placed it on the bench. Referring to the tapaderos, “You don’t see these that often. Especially around here.” Almost like they were the Pox as he thumbed through a saddle maker’s registry unsuccessfully attempting to locate J.V. Wilson Leather Company from Bellefontaine, Mississippi that matched the maker’s tag.

The instantly familiar smell of leather new and old poured into every part of our senses and as Bob turned the window AC unit on, we asked what he thought about the recent and extended hot spell. As he took out a pad and pen, writing down our information, he said he had moved out to this piece of land in 1978 with his wife. Said just a couple years later in 1980 it was this hot then but not since. “Dried up the pond off the back of this shop, cleaned it then, so low now, if the heat holds, I’ll likely do it again.”

As we quizzed him on his





craftmanship displayed on various saddles in various states of doneness and his history in saddle making, for which he became licensed in 1993, we got so much more. Lucked into things.

Bob was more than a saddle maker. Remember, nothing ordinary about him despite outward appearances saying an old, skinny cowboy wearing ubiquitous Wrangler 13MWZ's was a dime a dozen in Texas.

This cowboy was no vagabond. He was retired from a job with Child Protective Services. He had lost his wife seven years prior to his retirement and then two years after retiring lost a son to Spina Bifida. Bob, like all cowboys, has seen loss. But like all cowboys still goes by the mantra, never weaken, and never quit. So, retirement for Bob just meant he did not go to the office each day. Instead, he took up work-hobbies to keep busy. "I retired but ended up with

a fellow stringing power lines for Wise Electric Co-Op for a few years." That had me envisioning Bob in a high bucket humming the Jimmy Webb penned masterpiece, Wichita Lineman.

I had no idea if he liked the old Glen Campbell version, but I just knew he had to know it. I took my liberties in his presence, my mind filling in the gaps his soft-spoken demeanor did not fill itself. "My retirement continued as I was driving truck for oilfield services. Kept me out of trouble" All the while running cattle with his brother on the old family ranch not far from where we were learning about this solid and true Texan.

Yes, as we stood outside the leather shop, door pulled closed behind us stepping into the August heat and sunshine he pointed out Petunia. That was his granddaughter's show heifer who was holed up in the shade, as smart as Leroy,

**continued on page 40**




The saddle in question. (Photo courtesy of Eric Ricci)





both bovine and equine knowing sunshine is only good in small doses when it is 109 outside. With a wave of his arm at the shop full of leather work he said, "It will be a while on the saddle repair as I am back logged a bit..." Backlogged with the ones dropped by others. Others with their own saddle's stories and their own chance to have heard some of Wise County life through reflections voiced by this uncommon Bob Smith. To myself, I hoped those others listened and absorbed and felt as fortunate as I did to meet him, taking the time to realize the extent of true Texas they witnessed.

You don't rush through 73 years of life and leave an firm impression. You gotta live them. Bob Smith the Saddle Maker has done just that. I firmly now believe that nothing happens by chance and on the Saturday that we met the Saddle Maker, we lucked into things. 



Saddle makers perform intricate work that makes up the many small details to complete a saddle. (Courtesy photo).



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# Thanksgiving and Agriculture

By Hannah Claxton, editor | [editor@ntfronline.com](mailto:editor@ntfronline.com)



Thanksgiving is a major American holiday with significant impacts on the agriculture industry. Farmers all over the nation contribute, including farmers in Texas, and North Texas specifically. (Courtesy photo)

Whether you're celebrating Thanksgiving to reflect on your harvest or just as a time of giving thanks, the meal prepared holds traditional and sentimental value.

It is important to remember the work of our farmers who supply every good thing we heap on our plates.

If you're serving a turkey, there is a good chance it came from Minnesota. Minnesota is the top turkey producing state in the US with about 49 million turkeys produced per year. Other key turkey producing states include Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, North Carolina, and Virginia. If you're interested in purchasing a turkey locally, reach out to local farmers markets to see who might have a whole bird available for purchase. In the North Texas area, some of the

larger farmers are in Sanger, Fort Worth, Keller, and Dallas. Consider also reaching out to local 4-H and FFA clubs to see if any youth have raised turkeys as a project and are looking to sell their birds.

Idaho's growing environment of rich volcanic soil, mountain fed irrigation, warm days, and cool nights provide a perfect growing condition for potatoes. Washington and Wisconsin are other states with massive contributions to potato crops in the United States.

Sweet potatoes are one my favorite Thanksgiving dish. I love the way my grandma adds fresh pecans from the tree in their yard. Sweet potatoes are also one of the most nutritious foods of Thanksgiving dinner until we add all those extras. North Carolina is to thank for providing many of the sweet potatoes that we will enjoy

this year.


Wisconsin seems to be carrying the meal- providing much of our dairy products, green beans, and cranberries. Cranberry plants are a low-growing, woody perennial native to swamps and bogs of northeastern North America. We often associate cranberries with flooded fields; however, fields are only flooded in late fall to protect plants from winter winds and freezing temperatures, to help control winter pests, and to harvest cranberries.

Lastly, there's the most famous thanksgiving dish of all- pumpkin pie. Illinois is ranked #1 for pumpkin production. Morton, Illinois is considered the pumpkin capital of the world producing 90 percent of the pumpkin in the US.

While Texas may not lead the game in these crops, many of these

crops are grown throughout the state. Texas farmers produce potatoes, wheat, corn, green beans, pecans, and pumpkins. Even if your family exclusively raises beef cattle, or is only involved in the equine industry, the contributions of all Texas farmers echo through the state, impacting each of us and our operations on some level.

As we get caught up in the bustle of preparing our homes for family to reunite and our tables for hearty meals, it's all too easy to forget to thank the men and women who work to put the food on our tables. As you reflect on what you're thankful for, don't forget to thank a farmer too.

Sources:  
*Illinois Extension Agency*  
*Texas Farm Bureau* 



A man and a woman are walking away from the camera across a grassy field. The man is wearing a cowboy hat and a dark jacket, and the woman is wearing a brown jacket. In the background, there are several cows grazing in the field and a large, leafy tree on the right. The sky is filled with many small, white clouds, and the sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden light.

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# Wichita Falls Cattlewomen

By: Martha Crump

Back in the late Spring, I shared information about the current administration's 30X30 plan, which would've had some very serious outcomes for landowners if it had been quietly moved into action as was the intended plan. Remember, the Biden administration's goal, known as the 30X30 initiative, is to place at least 30 percent of national lands and waters under federal control for "land protection" by 2030. With approximately 95 percent of the land in Texas held privately, we have a big target on our backs. Fortunately for us, some very aware folks sprang into action to blow the whistle on the plan to sell the very air that we breathe. As we near election elections, I thought it might be in every land-owners' interest to share another program being promoted under the banner of conservation and stewardship. This is another situation whereby it looks good on the surface, but as you dig deeper all is not as aboveboard as it might seem. At the onset of the conservation easement movement in the 1970s, the marketing push was to allow landowners to keep and use their property while permanently removing development rights. This was an option offered in exchange for tax benefits. By definition, a conservation easement is a legal agreement between the land owner and a qualified conservation organization or public agency. Under the auspices of this type of legal agreement, the owner voluntarily agrees to restrict the type and amount of development, and/or certain uses that may take place on their property to protect natural, productive or cultural features. Today, the verbiage has changed to read: "A conservation easement (CE) conveys to a third party, either a land trust or government entity, the right to control the

use of the private property being encumbered for a conservation purpose. It is marketed as a way for landowners to ensure their property will remain in a natural state, protected from future development forever. They are told their current use of the land will continue, such as agricultural use."<sup>1</sup> Also promoted with a CE, is the payment for enrolling, or an estate tax deduction in addition to other financial benefits. Many landowners see this as a way to continue their way of life started generations ago, as well as to ensure the use for generations to come. On the face of it, it sounds like a good way to protect the family ranch or farm. Conservancies also tout the benefits of protecting land from fragmentation and large-scale, intensive development.

To lead into the downside of conservation easements, I would like to make two of my own points here by sharing some thoughts from the men in my life. Pretty early on, my Dad explained to me the principle of looking twice at things that seemed too good to be true. He was, after all, a hard-working, practical man, and most likely that experience was hard won. As my husband was raised in pretty much the same way, we've tried to instill those same values in our son. So it came as no surprise to me when, after discussing politics with him, my son said "You know Mom, I love my country, but I really don't trust our government," and I really can't fault him for that opinion. So, keeping those two points in mind, look back at the definition of a conservation easement. First is the financial compensation for continuing to do what you are already doing (sweet deal), and the second is the conveyance of the right to control use to a third party or government entity. Federal tax



The Wichita Falls Area Cattlewomen exists to advocate for cattlemen and educate cattle enthusiasts in the region.

incentives for CEs require land to be encumbered in perpetuity. Once an owner places a CE in perpetuity on their land, "That property no longer retains the characteristics of private property because the control of that property now belongs to the easement holder."<sup>1</sup> "Under a voluntary, negotiated agreement, the owners retain the right to build houses, within reason, and conduct other activities, such as agriculture and hunting."<sup>2</sup> Now, here's some of the fine print: in the event that there is a conflict between the existing activities and the conservation purpose, it is the landowner's use that must be stopped. "The protected activities of the landowner must be specifically enumerated in the contract. If the landowner needs to make changes to those uses, it must be agreed to by the easement holder. And if you must get permission to use your land, you don't re-

ally own the property."<sup>1</sup> Most of you would agree with me that we aren't using all of the same management practices that our parents or grandparents utilized. Times have changed, and while a lot has stayed the same, much is different. Change happens and it isn't always bad. To be effective stewards of the land, change is a necessary thing. But if we lock our land into a CE for perpetuity, with the intention of securing it for generations to come, how could we possibly plan for the needs of generations we will never know, and for changes we cannot imagine? This becomes a major point as the CE stays with the land, regardless of transfer to the upcoming generations. Have we really helped them, or are we effectively tying their hands? "As numerous land trusts have grown in size and number, so have their

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association – and influence – with the government. This has been the case particularly with the large, national organizations that obtain enormous sums from federal funding. For many of these land trusts, what used to be a close working relationship with private landowners has been replaced by a closer relationship with government agencies. Increasingly...the mission has evolved from protecting open lands through private stewardship to aiding government agencies in acquiring private lands.” Many of these land trust agencies have begun to operate much like government agents, purchasing easements from private land owners, just to quietly sell them, occasionally for profit, to state or federal governments. In essence, easement, without reforms, are easily becoming a prevailing method for a governmental shift of lands from private to public control, all under the guise of continued private stewardship. While not all land trusts

operate in this way, these are NOT isolated events.

Most of you have probably heard at least some little bit of news about our neighbors in West Texas in the Muleshoe area and their pushback against the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge Land Protection Plan. U.S. Representative Jodey Arrington, Chairman of the House Budget Committee, filed an amendment to defund the Muleshoe National

Wildlife Refuge Land Protection Plan. This comes on the heels of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s plan to purchase private lands or acquire conservation easements in Texas and New Mexico. According to Arrington, “The federal government currently struggles to maintain and steward the land it already owns, but now the Biden administration is seeking to expand the Muleshoe National Wildlife Refuge from 6,440 to 700,000 acres – an unprecedented 1,000 percent expansion! When the federal government enacts

policies that could interfere with the day-to-day lives of the hard-working farmers, ranchers, and energy producers who depend on this land for their livelihoods and on whom we depend for our nation’s food security and energy independence, my first instinct will always be to defend their rights, their way of life, and the future of rural of rural America.” Fifteen counties in Texas and five counties in New Mexico and the people that live in these counties would find their privately held lands and their livelihoods negatively impacted by this acquisition if it is allowed. According to data discovered by American Stewards of Liberty, “The Muleshoe project was finalized June 15, 2023, but was not made available to the public or elected officials until April 16, 2024. Even though the Service has been working on this plan with their environmental land trust partners, they failed to involve or directly notice (notify) the counties and other local governments

that will be impacted. There has been no Congressional oversight. There was no public vote. The federal government is doing this by administrative fiat (an arbitrary order or decree). They listed the Lessor prairie chicken and Dune sagebrush lizard as endangered to restrict land uses, and now are attempting to physically acquire this resource-rich land.”

The American Stewards of Liberty have put together a comprehensive guide entitled 13 Key Points Landowners Should Know About Conservation Easements. While I am going to close with the highlights of this guide, I strongly suggest that you take the time to check out their website and read through the information they have compiled.

**Point 1:** Land under a conservation easement is no longer private property. Clarification: Control of the land is the essential element of a property right, but when a landowner signs a

**continued on page 47**



Understanding the purpose and intent behind conservation easements is a vital component in responsible land stewardship. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)



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conservation easement, they give this away.

**Point 2:** conservation easements are more accurately defined as conservation “servitudes.” Clarification: CEs create a “negative servitude” on the land by preventing the landowner from taking action on his property. The landowner’s rights become sub-servient to the conservation purpose. Seeing the term servitude instead of easement would certainly make me think twice, but marketing goes down better if we just say “easement”.

**Point 3:** Does the conservation value become the primary purpose of the land? Clarification: When in place, the conservation purpose for the land supersedes all other uses in perpetuity. This is determined by the land trust or the governmental entity, not the landowner.

**Point 4:** Can the landowner change the use of the land in the future? Clarification: No, with the exception being if the contract allows for this change. And it must be done so as to not infringe on the conservation purpose now or in the future, as decided by the easement holder, not the landowner.

**Point 5:** If the CE allows agricultural uses, will these uses continue in the future? Clarification: When the landowner’s activities and priorities are in conflict with the conservation purpose, the easement holder will decide, and will continue to promote conservation purpose over any other use.

**Point 6:** Does the conservation easement protect the land from development, forever? Clarification: No. The land can be condemned for a public purpose, such as for new power lines connecting things like wind farms, or carbon sequestration pipelines. Again, under the restrictions and oversight of the easement holder NOT the land owner.

**Point 7:** Can a land trust sell the conservation easement to a governmental entity? Clarification: Yes. The easement can be

sold to another land trust or governmental entity. This has become an easy way to convey property sought by governmental entities as it helps to avoid public scrutiny. The National Center for Public Policy (NCP) published findings in 2008 that found two-thirds of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) budget was spent on purchasing CEs from landowners and then reselling these to government entities. TNC is also recorded as reselling an easement purchased for \$1.2 million directly to the bureau of Land Management for \$1.4 million.

**Point 8:** Can the landowner dissolve the conservation easement if the IRS denies the tax-deduction? Clarification: No, it is a binding contract forever.

**Point 9:** Does a conservation easement devalue the land? Clarification: Yes. In most cases the CE reduces the taxable value of the land. This results in property taxes increasing for the surrounding landowners and the revenue to states and counties to go down for public services.

**Point 10:** What benefit does the inheriting generation receive? Clarification: None, except for the restrictions. There is no additional financial benefit once the initial benefits have been enacted.

**Point 11:** Should conservation easement have a sunset clause? Clarification: Yes. If the “in-perpetuity” provision was eliminated, the next generation would be able to decide if they want to continue with the conservation servitude.

**Point 12:** Would eliminating easement “in perpetuity” better protect individual liberties? Clarification: Yes.

**Point 13:** Are conservation easement being used to accomplish the 30X30 agenda and monetization of natural assets? Clarification: “Definitely. Conservation easements in perpetuity are part of the lands that make up the Department of Interior’s 12 percent figure they reported as being “permanently protected,” and therefore



The American Stewards of Liberty have a guide of 13 points that landowners should be aware of. (Photo by Hannah Claxton)


meeting the 30×30 requirement.

Numerous environmental documents and Biden Administration policy statements identify conservation easements as a primary tool to move private lands under the control of the 30×30 program. The recent proposed rule by the Securities and Exchange Commission to create “Natural Asset Companies,” would allow land trusts or the government to enroll the easements into the private investment product with or without the landowners’ consent. Additionally, the Biden Administration is looking to add the “ecosystem services” value of lands it controls to the federal balance sheet under “Natural Capital Accounts.” The federally owned conservation easements would be valued as a federal asset for these purposes. Proponents of 30×30 identified early on that they must convince landowners to “voluntarily” enroll their lands into conservation easements in perpetuity to make progress towards 30×30.

Sixty percent of America’s lands are still privately owned today. These are some of the most productive lands in the nation that environmental elitists, profiteers and the administrative state want to control. The motivations of

landowners to place conservation easements on their land are often well intended. They want to protect the land from future development, ensure the agriculture use continues, and receive a financial benefit. However, the conservation easement cannot guarantee that any of these intentions will be met, and in the case of agriculture, it works against this interest by preventing management flexibility. Additionally, “in perpetuity” becomes the most important consideration of a landowner when placing a conservation easement on their land. Their heirs or future owners of the land may not want to continue the “conservation purposes” of the easement and desire to change the use of the land to coincide with technological advancements, environmental changes, or a number of factors undeterminable at the time the conservation easement is implemented, but they will never have that option.”<sup>1</sup>

I would urge you all to do your own research and be informed voters this November, for the sake of all that we stand for.

“The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine. For you are strangers and sojourners with Me.” Leviticus 25:23 





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**89.05 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY**



**DENNEY RANCH**

**\$4,950/Ac**

Great combination ranch, scattered mesquite with native lush grasses, with some areas of dense mesquite, densely wooded along an unnamed creek with oaks, pecans, elm, cottonwood to name a few, both level and rolling terrain, 3 stock ponds, fenced boundary, great interior road system, electricity meter, no public water but well water appears available, additional land available.

**215.18 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY**



**SIMS FARM**

**\$2,495/Ac**

Located west of Burkburnett and north of Iowa Park on the south and east side of FM 368. The property consists of approximately 145 acres of farmland with the balance being native mesquite pasture. The topography is level to sloping southeast. Amenities includes a stock pond and barbed wire perimeter fence. No minerals are owned.

**150 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY**



**MATASKA RANCH**

**\$4,250/Ac**

Located 11 miles north of Henrietta, corner of N. Oliver and Mathews Rd. Good balance of open pasture and wooded land, 65 acre Klein grass field, 21 acre cultivated field, 64 acres of wooded native pasture, level to rolling topography, several high points offering impressive views or build sites, 2 stock ponds, one stocked with bass, livestock pens, water well, electricity meter, fenced, cross fenced, willing to divide with a 50 acre minimum. Great all around ranch offering endless uses.

**300.14 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY**



**EDSEL FARM**

**\$3,250/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 Huntington and Kiel.

**70.92 ACRES – CLAY COUNTY**



**KEEN RANCH**

**\$4,650/Ac**

Located 3.5 miles north of Petrolia. Moderate to densely wooded mesquite pasture, scattered open grassy areas, hardwoods along the road frontage, level to rolling with over 70 feet of elevation change, several high points offering impressive panoramic views, one stock pond encompassing about one acre when full, fenced boundary, electricity is available along FM 810, no public water available, well water appears to be available, additional land available.

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- Moonshine Lakehouse – Lake Kemp | Baylor County – \$399,000**
- Maag Tract 3 – 19.45 Acres – Archer Co – \$8,483/Acre**
- Old Man Place – 51.15 Acres – Clay Co – \$8,778/Acre**
- Thornberry Lots – 4.5 Acres – Wichita Co – \$45,000**
- Decker Farms – 5.03 Acres – Archer Co – \$75,000**

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# American Rabbit Breeders Association Convention

By: Landon Moore

Fall has come again and it is time for the annual American Rabbit Breeders Association National Convention and Show, the largest rabbit show in the world. This five-daylong event attracts breeders from across the country and from around the world to exhibit their stock. Last year's Convention was held at the Exposition Center in Louisville, Kentucky from Oct. 7 to 11. It brought in 2,433 exhibitors who showed over 22,000 rabbits between the Open and Youth divisions. It may be surprising to any who are familiar only with meat pens at their county youth fairs, but at this level the Open entries outnumber Youth three to one.

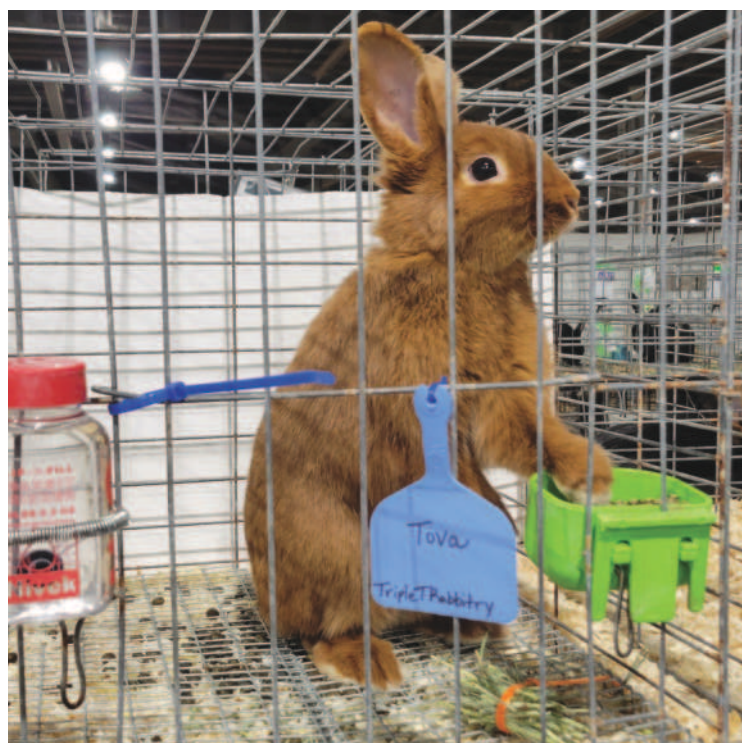
The vast number of rabbits were all housed in a seven acre showroom within two miles of individual coops arranged by breed, of which the ARBA recognized (as of 2023) 51. The rabbits are judged against two measurements; first, how the match up to the Standard of Perfection, which describes a perfect example of each breed, and then against each other. All of the rabbits compete together in individual classes based on age and sex, then the winners of each variety (color) are chosen and finally, from the pool of variety winners, the Best of Breed and the Best Opposite Sex are selected. The amount shown in each breed varied considerably from a high of 1,503 Open Netherland Dwarfs exhibited (a diminutive and very popular breed) down to only four Youth Giant Angoras (a wool breed).

Judges are selected by the breeders of each of the different breeds years, and sometimes over a decade, in advance. At Convention, each exhibitor is given a

ballot and voting decides which ten judges will have the distinct honor of selecting that year's top animals. Each of the 51 elite Best of Breeds in both divisions further compete against each other in four randomly selected groups. After four judges make their selections, these "Best of Group" winners are judged again and the Best in Show is selected. Youth Best in Show is selected first, followed by Open. The winners receive a cash award of a couple thousand dollars and have their name added to the ARBA's perpetual Best in Show cup. In 2023, Open Best in Show was judged by Glen Carr, the earliest judge licensed by the ARBA still practicing, being the 237th licensee in the rabbit organization's 124 years of existence (the most recent is the 1,059th). However, seniority is by no means the main factor in deciding who will select Best in Show and the Youth judge was Louis Potter, the 1,008th judge. A New Zealand was picked for Youth Best in Show and an American Fuzzy Lop was selected as Open Best in Show.

Aside from rabbits, about a thousand cavies (also known as guinea pigs) are shown as well, entirely separate from the rabbits. These are the remnant of the early twentieth century ARBA which originally included many other small mammals. There are also small numbers of commercial classes are shown, including fryers, roasters, stewers and meat pens. A few animals also compete in an agility competition.

Following Best in Show, the Open banquet takes place, during which many awards are given and the Youth Scholarships are announced. Very occasionally, an individual is selected for the



A thriantra rabbit stands up in its cage.

association's highest honor and is added to the ARBA Hall of Fame, a recognition that has been bestowed only 25 times.

Along with the show itself, numerous other events take place. Almost every breed (a handful have combined clubs) has a national association, all of which have a booth and hold a meeting at Convention. Along with these meetings, many clubs hold auctions where stock is often sold for hundreds, and occasionally, thousands of dollars.

There are dozens of vendors, selling everything from feed to equipment, pedigree software to embroidered show coats, hay to books. Many individuals sell and buy stock, some mate rabbits and all discuss their breeds with friends they may see only once a year.

Numerous raffles take place, including the Youth Scholarship raffle with over a hundred animals of almost every breed, always including stock from some of the top breeders in the country. The ARBA's national meeting takes place during Convention as well. Another area of interest is the "Exhibition Only" show. These several hundred animals compete only within their breeds and are ineligible to be considered for Best in Show. All of these breeds and varieties are in various stages of becoming officially recognized by the ARBA. This complicated and very intense multi-year process involves the Standards Committee analyzing a select group of the new variety down to the toenail. Two consecutive failures to meet their approval will result in the

**continued on page 51**



# Fantasy of Lights



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entire process starting over. Due to this, some varieties have been seeking recognition for close to 30 years. But despite these strict requirements, last year, five new varieties and one new breed passed their final examination, becoming officially accepted.

Probably the most important non-show events are the youth contests. There are many, from Quiz Bowl to Photography to Showmanship, but the big event is called the Royalty Contest. This contains eight divisions (King/Queen, Duke/Duchess, Prince/Princess, and Lord/Lady) based on age and separated by sex. Prior to Convention, the participants must complete an essay application with 16 questions on all aspects of their rabbit project. At Convention, they compete in three contests; the first is Breed Identification; during this event, the participants must identify 25 animals' (it may include cavies) breed, showroom variety, whether it is a 4-or-6 classtype and registration variety. Showroom variety refers to how the rabbit is shown, not always dependant on its color. For example, within a breed, Broken (which is white and another color) Blacks, Blues and Chocobates are all shown together; while their registration variety would be the specific color they are (Broken Black, etc.). Six class rabbits are the larger, slow-growing breeds, and have intermediate classes, in addition to junior and senior bucks and does.


The next contest depends on the age of the participant and is either Showmanship (for the younger contestants), or Judging, where four classes of four rabbits each are placed within a time limit. Next is an exam which may contain questions on rabbit standards, care, breeds, judging, diseases, history, etc. Finally, the contestants participate in an interview. The combined score of the five components determines the winner. All of the participants study vigorously and assist judges

at shows, often for years, to learn and better their odds of winning. But despite several runners-up being recognized, only eight individuals can win. In addition to individuals, state and district teams compete against each other in the Breed ID and Judging contests. While members study together and individually as much as possible both before Convention and (in the case of Judging teams) the short hours between the list of judging breeds being posted and the contest beginning, they cannot assist each other during the contest and work individually toward their common goal.

Texas was well represented, with dozens of participants and many winners, including third place Senior Breed ID and five Royalty runners-up, three being first runner-up. The results of all youth contest are announced at the Youth Banquet, held the night before the last day of Convention. On the last day of Convention, Wednesday, hurried business takes place, rabbits change hands, sales slips are filled out, money is exchanged, winnings are picked up and over twenty thousand rabbits have their ear tattoos carefully checked by the show committee, before finally being allowed out of the showroom, all of which is done before noon.

This year, Convention is once again in Louisville, Kentucky from Oct. 26 to 30. If you are able to attend, Convention is incredibly interesting, with something to offer everyone and this article can only give you a bird's eye view of everything going on.

Most of the North Texas counties have 4-h or FFA programs that offer breeding rabbits or meat pen rabbits as an option for youth interested in showing. For further information, contact your local extension office.

For additional rabbit information, visit the American Rabbit Breeders Association and the Texas Rabbit Breeders Association. 



Team Texas is the group of youths that represent the state.



A variety of other competitions, such as judging, are available.



Best In Show selection. (Photos courtesy of Landon Moore).



# On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



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**11/7 – Birthplace of Western Swing Festival,  
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**11/9 – Irving Symphony Orchestra, Irving,  
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**11/14 – Firelight Winery, Valley View, TX**

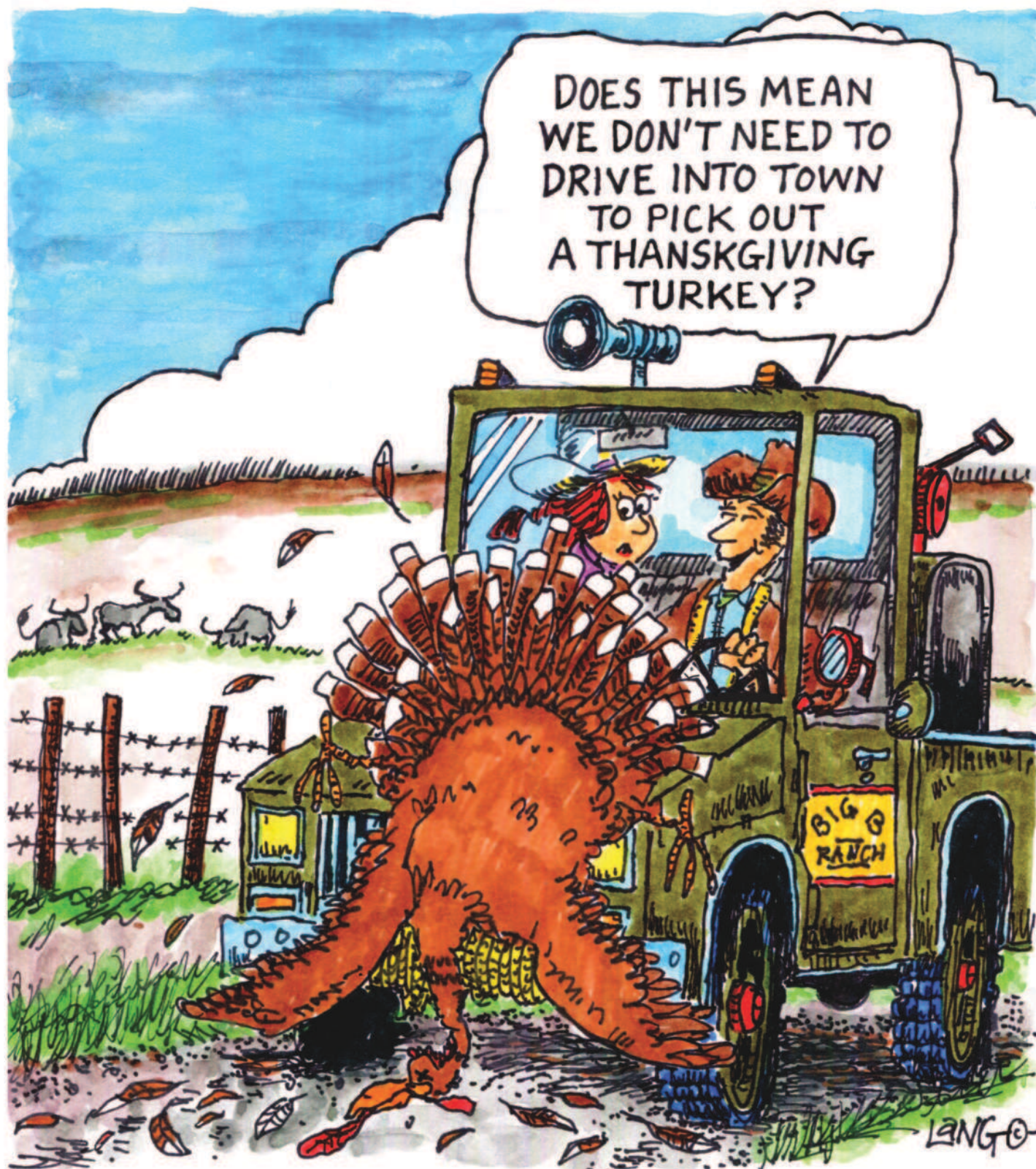


The Bob Wills Fiddle Festival hosts the real deal of Texas swing artists. (Photo courtesy of Dave Alexander)





# Grub Time by LANG©





# Two Steps Forward and One Back

By: Dal Houston

One of my go-to sayings when things aren't going well is, "Two steps forward and one back." Recently, I was in the unfortunate position of using this saying several times in one day, actually for about a week. We all have those days, or even weeks, from time to time. So, generally, this is a phrase I use when things aren't going like I want them to.

After a week or so of using this phrase way too much, and once things had gotten back to normal, I was rethinking this phrase, and I realized something. That is, if it is true that life is just "two steps forward and one back," because no matter how good things may go for a while, there will be roadblocks, breakdowns, and other setbacks you just have to deal with. That's just the way the world is.

Ironically, though, I had overlooked the fact that even if it is, in fact, two steps forward and one back, after doing the math, it still means we are moving forward. And not only are we still moving forward, but at these proportions, we are actually moving forward at a fairly brisk pace, because for every step we may move backwards, we have taken two forward. That is a pretty good rate of return on our investment of moving forward.

This phrase also does not take into consideration the points in our

lives when we are forced to take numerous steps backwards before we can move forward, such as when we start a new job or business, move to a new location, marry, or have children, or maybe even health issues. The steps backwards are just part of the learning curve that we have to experience before we have the opportunity to move forward, and life resumes moving forward in a positive direction.

So I realized that when I say, "two steps forward and one back," I need to be more positive and understand that, despite the steps back, I am still moving forward, and be thankful for that. Granted in the best of all worlds I would like to avoid the steps backwards altogether, and even move forward at a higher rate of speed, such as three, four, or even five steps forward and none back, but unfortunately, that is just not how the world works—at least with any kind of consistency.

So, as I find myself using this phrase, I try to calmly acknowledge that, despite the apparent setback, I am still moving forward.

Next month's article will further explore how when we find ourselves continually and objectively moving backwards, somehow strangely and inexplicably we actually continue to move forward. <sup>N</sup>



"Two steps forward, one step back" is a commonly used phrase that fails to acknowledge that progress is progress no matter how small. (Courtesy Photo).





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Dennis Smith

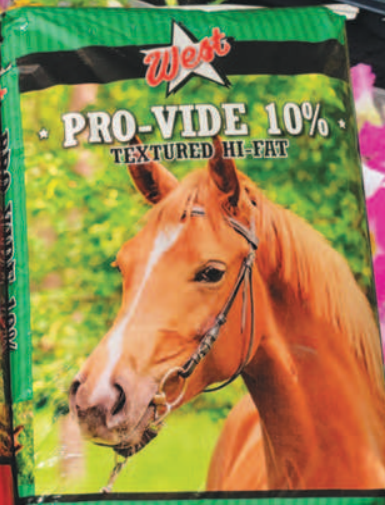
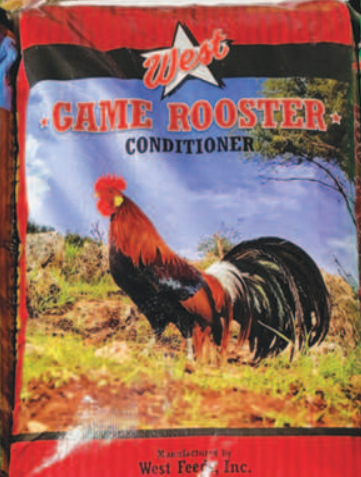
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# The GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## Pink Lightning

You have heard or perhaps even said something like, wow he caught lightning in a bottle. It may now be said, boy they caught lightning in that phlox. You will see what I mean if you try the new Luminary Pink Lightning phlox coming out in 2025.

The Luminary series already has Opalescence, a light pink tall garden phlox that is indeed the shade of a rare opal. Then this year Luminary Prismatic Pink made its debut with bubblegum pink blooms with dark pink eyes, a real stunner.

So when I heard that there was a new Luminary Pink Lightning, my first thought was we already have two pink, tall garden phlox, why do we need another? Now every day I go look as if I am in a mesmerizing trance. I find myself muttering something like how can it be this beautiful, plus I'm a flaming orange guy!

Proven Winners describe the blooms as a bright true pink with a central white starburst. All I can say is balderdash, it is way more beautiful than that! I'm just kidding, sort of. Believe me when I say this phlox does everything but glow in the dark. One thing that Proven Winner confirmed in my thoughts was that the individual blooms are the largest in the Luminary series. So just imagine panicles of large blooms borne on stems reaching 30-36 inches in height.

I am growing mine in various partnerships just to see how they

perform together from the aspect of color. I suppose in reality they were no brainers, and I should have pushed the envelope. The first combination I will give a shout out to, is Tuscan Sun heliopsis. Gold definitely creates a strong marriage, so you have a lot of choices from perennials to annuals.

The second shout out goes to Rockin Playin' The Blues salvia. All blue flowers will dazzle with the Luminary Pink Lightning phlox. So consider planting informal sweeps or drifts with Pink Lightning, Rockin Playin' The Blues salvia and Tuscan Sun heliopsis for a dreamy perennial display that will quickly turn into a pollinator habitat.

The last combo I want to tout, you may guess, is with chartreuse. In one area I used it with ColorBlaze Lime Time coleus and in the backyard, I used it with the new ColorBlaze Mini Me chartreuse coleus. Chartreuse lets the Pink Lightning be even more electrifying.

Luminary Pink Lightning is botanically speaking, a Phlox paniculata. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center states they are native to 36 states and found in rich open woods, thickets, meadows and moist roadsides. In other words, no magic to growing it, fertile moist soil and sun, but most importantly, willing gardeners. Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds will be additional rewards.

With a native range of 36 states




Luminary Pink Lightning is a new tall garden phlox reaching 30-36 inches tall. It will make its debut in 2025.

this means a wide hardiness zone range from 3a to 8b.

This includes Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina in the hot and humid south. We grew tall garden phlox beautifully in the cottage garden at the Coastal Georgia Botanical Garden in Savannah.

Fall is a great time to plant perennials, this allows them to

get established before the onset of winter. The problem is of course finding your supply. So if you don't get lucky then spring is coming in addition to the great new Luminary Pink Lightning tall garden phlox.

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





(Above) Pink Lightning boasts the largest individual flowers in the Luminary series that now has six colors.

(Below) Luminary Tall Garden Phlox also looks stunning with perennial blue phlox. The Blues salvia is perennial in zones 7-10.



(Above) Tall garden phlox makes a dazzling partnership with Tuscan Sun heliopsis. (Photos courtesy of Norman Winter)

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# Wild Game Processing

By Hannah Claxton, editor | [editor@ntfronline.com](mailto:editor@ntfronline.com)

With hunting season on the horizon, knowing how to field dress, fully process, and use harvested game is crucial to making sure a hunt is ethical and responsible. This time of year, hunters are most likely to be focusing on dove and whitetail deer.

When field dressing a deer, the goal is usually to get the deer broken down into quarters that can then be transported back to camp for further breakdown or to be sent off to a processor.

Field dressing also ensures rapid body heat loss which decreases bacteria growth on the surface of the carcass. A few tips and tricks to keep in mind when field dressing a deer include:

## DEER

1. Always cut from the inside of the deer outwards, rather than outside in, after the initial cut. This will prevent the hair from coming off the hide and contaminating the meat.

2. Either wear gloves with finger guards or non-stick pads, or use a knife with a non-slip handle. A trip to the emergency depart-

ment for stitches will put a damper on any hunting season.

3. When cutting into the deer, and gutting it, take extra precaution not to puncture any part of the digestive tract. While both the stomach and intestines are of concern, the small intestine and colon in particular can cover the carcass in dangerous bacteria if punctured.

4. Avoid contact with the neurological system, including the brain and spine, and fluids from the deer's head. These portions of the deer are the organs most likely to contain the prions (proteins) for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and other diseases.

## DOVE

Due to their much smaller size, doves do not need to be field dressed, and can instead just be placed on ice and broken down later in the day.

Before processing your dove, make sure to verify any relevant county or state regulations- some areas require leaving a wing for species identification when a bird is being transported from the

hunt site to the hunters primary residence.


Dove meat is known for its rich flavor and works well with marinades and bold seasonings.

There are three main portions of the dove that will be used:

1. Breast: The largest and most commonly used part of the dove, with tender, dark meat that is often

grilled, roasted, or pan-seared.

2. Legs/Thighs: These small but flavorful parts can be used in stews, soups, or fried for a crispy texture.

3. Wings: Although they have less meat, they can still be cooked for added flavor in broths or as a snack, but are often discarded due to their small size. 



A morning dove sits in the grass. (Courtesy photo)



From left to right: Whole dove, Plucked, Skinned, Breast bone in, Breast deboned, skin on breast, skinned and deboned. Plus the bonus: heart, liver and gizzard. (Photo courtesy of From Field To Plate)





# Hitched Over Turkey and Whiskey

By Bryce Angell

The widow O'Bryan had her eye on Hank, but Hank was a bachelor confessed. His job at the Double Halo A Ranch kept him busy, more than the rest.

Hank was not flirtatious. His life was the ranch and the cows. He promised to stay a lone cowboy. And never take the vows.

Marriage seemed like shackles, he couldn't imagine the thrill. But the widow O'Bryan would have her way. To her Hank fit the bill.

She really didn't know ole Hank. No matter, just the same. 'Cuz to her he was available. Someday she'd wear his name.

Thanksgiving Day was coming. She would need to make a plan.

What could she do to make this cowboy want to be her man?

She knew ole Hank wouldn't pass a meal of turkey and pumpkin pie. She would invite him over for dinner, then she'd snare this hunk of a guy.

Hank accepted her invite, reserved and cautious of course. Thanksgiving Day arrived, so he saddled up his horse.

Now Hank was a man of punctual time. Early he did arrive. He knew too well the widow's scheme yet couldn't pass pumpkin pie.

Hank attempted conversation, to the widow preoccupied. She was sending word to a preacher who'd be persuaded to take her side.

The widow O'Bryan pulled from the shelf her favorite whiskey blend. Then with confidence she asked, "Join me for a drink, my friend?"

She knew too well a festive drink with Hank would have no ebb.

The cowboy was about to be in a certain widow's web.

The widow wasn't gonna let Hank's whiskey glass run dry. To get him here took all her wits. There weren't bigger fish to fry.


Hank ate a bite of turkey. It was delicious to the taste. But the widow's booze caused him to lose and left him one big waste.

As Hank woke up and cleared his head the widow placed the band.

He was a might confused about the gold ring on his hand.

Hank's head was spinning when he heard a man's voice in the room. The clergy's voice spoke out so clearly, "You may kiss the groom."

That's when he glimpsed the preacher who had promptly been dismissed. He was sneaking out the back door with a fifty in his fist.

So if you're the only bachelor at this next Thanksgiving meal. And a preacher sits beside you, I'd stand up and turn to heel! 





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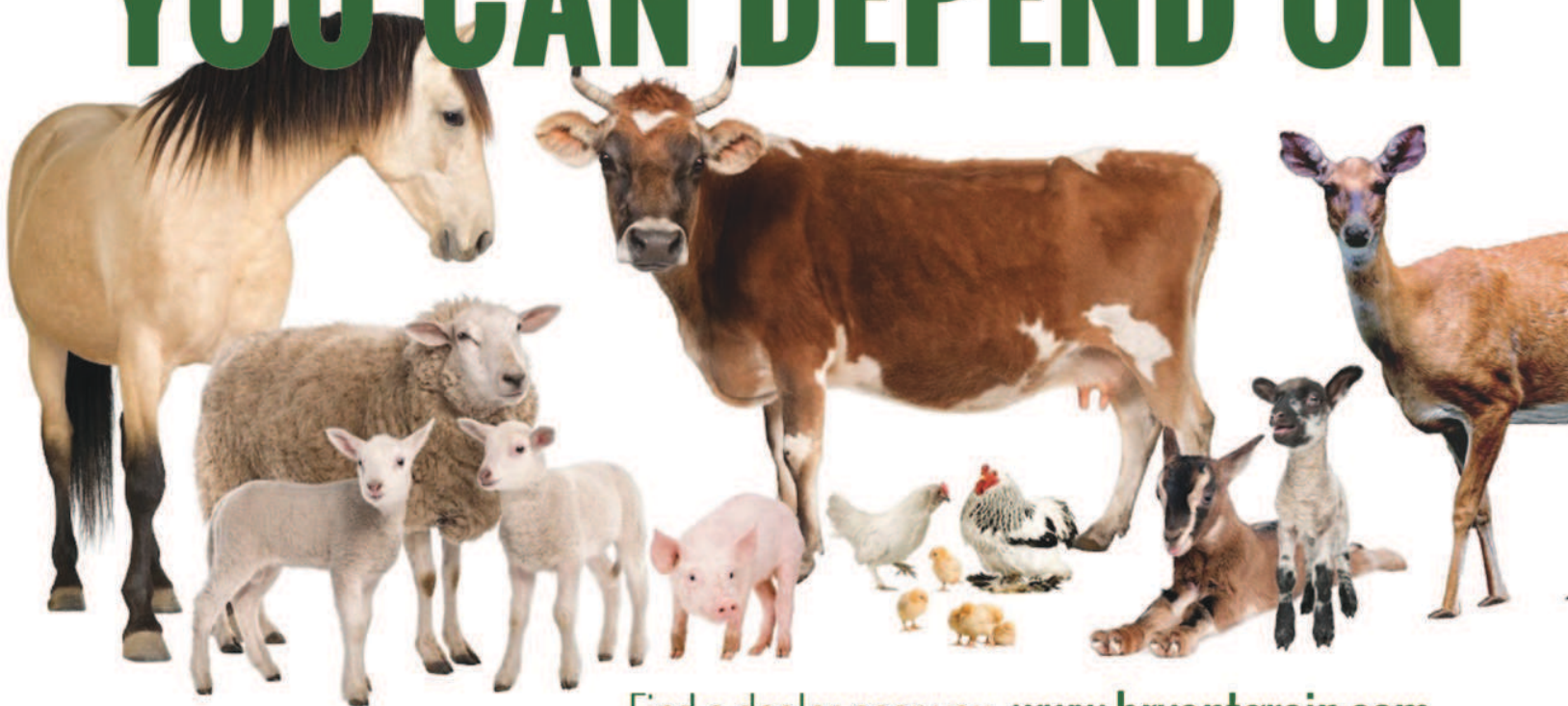
## Birds Eye View

By Jelly Cocanougher

One of the most memorable experiences documenting cowboys was hearing about a moment from this day as they gathered cattle and pushed them to a new pasture. A drone surfaced to capture a different perspective, illuminating the eyes of the horse and rider that were standing next to a coyote, also watching this modern technology in action. Modern day cowboys always come with a whirlwind of experiences that cowboys in the past would marvel over. We are lucky to experience both worlds of old and new. 



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