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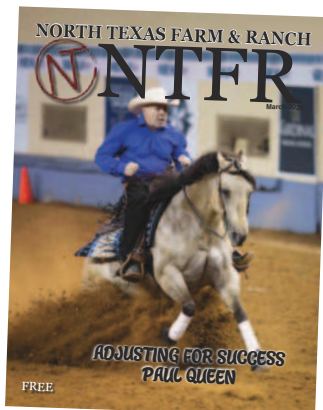
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ON THE COVER

Paul Queen, of Whitesboro, Texas, is an avid reiner who also owns and operates Straight Up Chiropractic. (Photo by Chelsea Schneider)



letter from the editor

If there's one thing you can count on in life, it's change. This month, North Texas Farm & Ranch is going through one of those changes as I step in as interim editor while Hannah Claxton moves on to further her education. On behalf of everyone here at NTFR, I thank Hannah for all the hard work she's put into this magazine. She's done a fantastic job bringing stories to life, and while we'll miss her, we're excited to see what the future holds for her.



Fittingly, Hannah wrote this month's feature story on Paul Queen, a chiropractor who didn't take the traditional path into his career. After years of working in the family business, he made the bold decision to go back to school in his 40s to become a doctor of chiropractic medicine. His journey is a great reminder that you never know where life will take you - or when the right opportunity might come along.

That's one of the things I love most about agriculture and rural life - there's always something new to learn, and the next big opportunity could be right around the corner. If you've got a story idea or something you'd like to see in NTFR, I'd love to hear from you! Shoot me an email at editor@ntfronline.com, and don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and X to stay in the loop.

One more thing! Last month, we asked you to submit photos from local stock shows to us to publish in the magazine, and we were overwhelmed by the response. We decided to extend the acceptance deadline and publish those in the next issue, so make sure to send them to us no later than March 5.

Here's to new beginnings and taking chances!

Savanah Magoteaux
Savanah Magoteaux, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com

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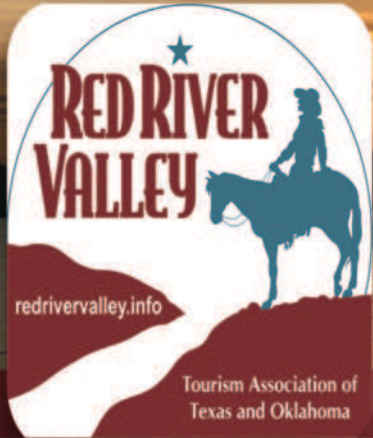
Dave Alexander introduces Maestro Hector Guzman, who is a guest conductor around the world.

45

Hunting Sheds

With deer season over, now is the time to begin preparing for the next season and to hunt sheds.

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A HAIRY QUESTION

By Bryce Angell

Should cowboys always have some hair? I'd really like to know. Does a cowboy's face without some hair leave too much mug to show?

If you're born a real good-looker like Eastwood and Redford are, you may not want to hide it, though you ain't no cowboy star.

But if your looks are somewhat plain, let's say like Gabby Hayes, just slap a beard right on your face. Sure helped his cowboy days.

Now if you're thinking "mustache," Sam Elliot is your man. He's got a really nice healthy one. Grow that kind, if you can.

Most cowboys that I know don't really fancy facial hair, but let me tell you 'bout one guy. And this is true, I swear.

A few years back, we hired a hand who wore a full red beard. It also had some streaks of brown, 'cuz he did something weird.

His mouth was always full of chew. I never saw him spit. When that juice drooled out into his beard, he rubbed it in a bit.

Now if he hadn't had that beard, where would his juice have gone? Good thing he had some facial hair for it to land upon.

My homely face grows hair just fine, but what about on top? I use a hat to cover up that gone-forever crop.

So I've tried to think about a way to get some hair up there. If others have it, I should, too. It's really only fair.

If I could take a chunk of hide and hair right off my chest and sew it where I need it most, I'd look my Sunday best.

My good friend said, "I think you're nuts. You've lost your brains somewhere." That's an easy thing for him to say. He's got a head of hair.

For some, there's lots of hair up there and others on their face. Don't worry if you're hair-deprived. It's really no disgrace.

Now about my question. Should a cowboy have some hair? I guess there's no one answer. Maybe shouldn't even care.

North Texas Farm & Ranch
January 3 · 🌐

Thank you for sharing your cattle story with us!

Never Saw That Coming
By Kyrane Crossen

Crossen Cattle
December 27, 2024 · 🌐

👉 Thank You North Texas Farm & Ranch For The January 2025 Write Up ❤️❤️❤️
Small Town Farm Girl With Big Ol' Dreams..... See more

North Texas Farm & Ranch
January 8 at 9:03 AM · 🌐

2025 Scholarship Application Available through June 1

North Texas Fair & Rodeo
January 3 · 🌐

It's never too early to be getting scholarships on your mind! In fact, you can go ahead and apply for the following scholarships online.

North Texas State Fair Association Scholarship... See more

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

Creating a Resilient Rangeland

By Reanna Santos

When managing for healthy, resilient rangelands, you start from the ground up - quite literally. The concept of “health” pertains to living and breathing things - like yourself, your livestock, and even your soil! Soil is a vital ecosystem. It serves as a medium for plant growth, a habitat for microorganisms, and plays a key factor in enhancing water retention.

The key to healthy soil in North Texas and all rangelands is to focus on principles before practices, such as ecological processes. These processes occur naturally in our rangelands and croplands but can be greatly affected by human interactions. Maximizing the benefits of these processes depends on landowner goals and land use.

Three main ecological processes are the water, energy, and nutrient cycles.

The objective of the water cycle is to maximize water capture in the soil while maintaining ground cover with plants to enhance drought resiliency and recharge groundwater sources. Ground cover and plant litter minimize surface run-off, allowing water to infiltrate the soil. This moderates soil temperature and reduces moisture loss due to evaporation (Girgis and Moseley, 2024).

The energy cycle is a group effort between producers, consumers, and decomposers. Year-round plant growth including cool and warm-season species and various functional groups (grasses, forbs, and woody plants), contribute to photosynthesis. Plants capture solar energy through photosynthesis, which is then consumed by livestock. Decomposers, such as microorganisms, break down plant and animal material, releasing energy into the ecosystem (Crane, 2019). If livestock are



The key to healthy soil in North Texas and all rangelands is to focus on principles before practices, such as ecological processes. (Courtesy photo)

foraging these rangelands, avoiding overgrazing and leaving ample plant surface area is important so the process can continue to work effectively.

The exchange of nutrients between biotic and abiotic materials is called nutrient cycling. Most nutrient cycling happens in the soil at the root level, where microorganisms exist (Girgis and Moseley, 2024). Nutrients such as carbon, phosphorous, and nitrogen are moved, exchanged, and made available for plants, animals, and other organisms to thrive (Conradin, 2019). This is another reason why maintaining continuous root and plant growth throughout the year promotes healthy soils. The rate of nutrient cycling can depend on factors such as plant

diversity, soil cover, and management practices.


Creating and managing a healthy, resilient rangeland begins with understanding and prioritizing the health of the soil. By focusing on ecological processes— water, energy, and nutrient cycles— landowners can ensure their rangelands are both productive and ecologically sustainable. Recognizing the benefits of these principles and implementing them on rangelands may seem like a small gesture, but it’s a mark of a good steward. It’s about leaving the land better than we found it, ensuring its vitality for future generations to enjoy.

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AG *elsewhere* MONTANA

PHOTO | DESCRIPTION BY LINDSEY MONK



Northerners are surviving the below zero temperatures. Several of our neighbors are calving. At least it comes with gorgeous views. Pictured here are the Big Horn Mountains. 



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WILDHORSE CREEK RANCH \$1,675/Ac

Reasonably priced combination ranch located 10 minutes west of Burkburnett, 2 miles south of the Red River. Asphalt road frontage on 3 sides, native pasture with moderate to heavy coverage of mesquite, scattered cleared areas, 61 acres of cultivation, Wildhorse Creek extends through the property, along with other seasonal creeks, rolling topography, 2 stock ponds, good hunting, electricity available. Oil production is on the property, the seller does not own any minerals. Owner Finance Available.

300.14 ACRES | WICHITA COUNTY



EDSEL FARM \$3,100/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.

63.09 ACRES | ARCHER COUNTY



BEAR DOG RANCH \$6,736/Ac

Located just east of Holliday, 10 minutes west of Wichita Falls. Turnkey hunting and recreational property with proven wildlife, or could be an ideal spot to build your dream home. The land is all wooded with mesquite, scattered cleared areas, level topography, one stock pond, fenced boundary, good interior road system, furnished cabin, deer blinds and feeders convey. Water available along frontage. One oil well along the west boundary, the seller does not own any minerals.

150 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



MATASKA RANCH \$3,950/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 bass, livestock pens, water well, electricity meter, fenced, cross fenced, willing to divide with a 50 acres minimum. great all around ranch offering endless uses.

78.88 ACRES | CLAY COUNTY



THREE WAY RANCH HOUSE \$989,000

Nice home on 56 acres located in Holliday ISD. Built in 2018, 3,025 square feet, 3 or 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, large open concept living, kitchen, breakfast area, breakfast bar, large utility room, mud room, walk in closets, tons of built-ins and storage, bonus room upstairs, 2 car garage, safe room, storm cellar and covered patio, outdoor built-in grill. Additional improvements consist of a 40' x 60' shop, 20' x 30' shop, loafing sheds, livestock corrals, and two hoop houses. The land is all cleared native pasture, one stock pond and fenced boundary.

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- Maag Tract 3 – 19.45 Acres – Archer Co - \$8,483/Acre**
- Maag Tract 4 – 19.32 Acres – Archer Co - \$8,540/Acre**
- Decker Farms – 5.03 Acres – Archer Co - \$75,000**
- Bailey Ranch – 4.3 Acres – Wichita Co - \$38,500**

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Land Market Report

By Jared Groce

January rural land sales were once again, abysmally slow. The few buyers that are in the market for land are being very selective in what they want, and are not settling for anything less. While higher interest rates are not helping the market, it seems that the increased cost of everything is simply taking its toll on would-be buyers. From groceries, to gasoline to insurance and taxes - it is all draining our pocketbooks, leaving little for buying land. In the data below, you will notice some sales that were significantly lower than the asking price, indicating that some sellers are tired of waiting. You will also see that there just was not many transactions during January, in fact, Cooke County didn't even have one sale close.

January and February is a great time for land management practices such as prescribed fires, planting and pruning trees, controlling brush and more. Many producers are calving out their cattle, and that alone can be a full time job. Get outside and enjoy the weather! 

County	Area	Acres	\$/Acre	List \$	Sold \$	Sale/List	DOM
Collin	Celina	15.87	\$94,530	\$1,699,000	\$1,500,000	88.3%	38
Collin	Celina	20.33	\$191,835	\$3,900,000	\$3,900,000	100%	17
	AVG	18.1	\$143,182	\$2,799,500	\$2,700,000	94.1%	28
Denton	Sanger	12.2	\$26,000	\$317,200	\$317,200	100%	243
Denton	Justin	10.08	\$44,408	\$465,000	\$447,500	96.2%	294
Denton	Krum	65.85	\$11,010	\$823,125	\$725,000	88.1%	45
Denton	Cross Roads	20	\$90,000	\$1,950,000	\$1,800,000	92.3%	540
Denton	Denton	292.43	\$10,000	\$5,274,000	\$2,924,320	55.4%	26
	AVG	80.11	\$36,284	\$1,765,865	\$1,242,804	86.4%	230
Grayson	Denison	10	\$34,000	\$395,000	\$340,000	86.1%	73
Grayson	Collinsville	11.25	\$32,089	\$336,375	\$361,000	107.3%	22
Grayson	Whitesboro	11.91	\$31,061	\$370,000	\$370,000	100%	3
Grayson	Whitewright	22.5	\$21,600	\$562,500	\$486,000	86.4%	462
Grayson	Sherman	13.36	\$40,042	\$549,000	\$535,000	97.4%	142
Grayson	Denison	27.28	\$22,912	\$750,000	\$625,050	83.3%	236
Grayson	Gunter	22	\$65,217	\$1,529,000	\$1,434,780	93.8%	132
Grayson	Van Alstyne	33.59	\$37,000	\$1,242,830	\$1,242,830	100%	13
	AVG	18.99	\$35,490	\$716,838	\$674,333	94.3%	103
Montague	Nocona	11.26	\$13,650	\$179,900	\$153,700	85.4%	151
Montague	Montague	32.15	\$14,370	\$495,000	\$462,000	93.3%	7
Montague	Bowie	70	\$11,000	\$770,000	\$770,000	100%	67
	AVG	58.92	\$11,083	\$564,975	\$508,738	89.5%	128
Wise	Springtown	11.83	\$15,000	\$210,000	\$177,450	84.5%	151
Wise	Decatur	10.54	\$33,000	\$347,754	\$347,754	100%	454
Wise	Decatur	18.99	\$29,016	\$659,000	\$551,014	83.6%	249
Wise	Chico	139.18	\$9,463	\$1,426,595	\$1,317,080	92.3%	189
Wise	Poolville	487	\$9,991	\$5,113,013	\$4,865,800	95.2%	89
	AVG	133.51	\$19,294	\$1,551,272	\$1,451,820	91.1%	226

*No sales for Cooke County.

Calving 101

By Martha Crump, Wichita Falls Area Cattlewomen

Every year that we calve out our first-calf heifers, we jokingly say things like “That’s it, no more first timers!” or “What were we thinking, we are too old for these hours!” And every subsequent year finds us with... You guessed it! An even larger heifer herd. This past month has been no exception. You can find small notebooks in all of the work trucks and gators, a go-bag full of supplies, full buckets of powdered milk, colostrum, bags of electrolytes and a row of bottles just waiting till they’re needed. They all sit patiently in the company of clean towels and heaters that can be activated quickly. And when calving season starts, they are needed; probably not nearly as often with mature cow herds, but definitely with the heifers. Combine calving and the North Texas weather pattern of freezing rain, sleet, snow and ice being more prone to come to us in January and February and the plot gets even more complex. Whether we are dealing with calves born to our new mamas, or to our mature herd, obviously the goal is the same: ensuring that the babies are not stressed from a complicated birth, able to get on their feet, and able to nurse quickly. Unfortunately, that is not always what happens. That is when the watchful producer needs to kick things into a higher gear to ensure calf survival.

Our first calf heifers are separated from our mature cows and will begin calving approximately a month prior, meaning we start having babies hit the ground from the very end of January through the month of February, with our cows starting to calve in March. There is nothing better than pulling up to a pasture to start checking (morning, noon, afternoon, evening, overnight or as needed depending on what you saw at

the last check) and seeing a baby already licked, dried, and up nursing. We don’t always witness the event, but boy is that a wonderful sight. By the same token, there are the ones that don’t make it, even when you are running regular checks. If you are watching here are some basics that you will see or need to watch for.

A good starting point is a reminder about Stage 2 of the calving process. Stage 2 is generally considered as the time from the first appearance of a water bag to when the calf is completely delivered. Obviously there will be differences between a first-calf 2-year-old heifer and a mature cow. For the heifer, research indicates that the average time is about an hour, while the average time for the mature cow is less than half an hour. Knowing these averages right up front can help with how you interpret the process as normal, or problematic.

The first and most obvious physical sign to assess is whether or not the calf is breathing. While that sounds pretty obvious, there is usually a lot going on, and not as easy to see as one might assume. As the birth process starts, the calf moves down the birth canal, the umbilical cord breaks and as the calf emerges the first reaction is for it to take a breath. However if the birth has been difficult (longer than normal), or there is less calf vigor this may not occur. Other problems preventing an inhale can be amniotic fluids in the respiratory tract, or part of the amniotic sac still covering the nostrils, or perhaps not broken at all. If non-breathing is observed, the most critical step is to assist the calf as quickly as possible. This may mean breaking or clearing the amniotic sac out of the way, clearing the throat and nostrils, or even trying to stimulate the



Whether we are dealing with calves born to our new mamas, or to our mature herd, obviously the goal is the same: ensuring that the babies are not stressed from a complicated birth, able to get on their feet, and able to nurse quickly. (Courtesy photo)

sneeze reflex in the young animal so that debris/fluid can be expelled naturally. Use your fingers or something resembling a basting bulb to gently clear or suck the fluids/debris out of the airway. A common mistake is to try to pick the calf up by the hind legs to “clear the passageways” with the help of gravity as you swing the calf with its head down. This maneuver actually dis-places the internal organs against the lungs, making it even harder for the lungs to make the movements necessary to inhale.

The second thing that is important is that the cow actually licks her calf clean and dry, and uses her muzzle to nudge the calf into standing. This is the start of the maternal bond. At this time of year, the calf is leaving a cozy temperature of around 101°-102°F and hitting the ground at temperatures anywhere from 60°-100° cooler than where they’ve been. A

good maternal instinct may save an offspring with the simple act of cleaning after birth. This process removes the fluid that is coating the calf and also works to stimulate blood flow and muscle contractions. Both help to conserve body heat and in turn let the calf retain energy to stand and begin the process of finding a teat and nursing. If the cow can’t perform this process, or the calf still lacks vigor afterwards then manually drying and warming may be called for, especially during extremely cold winter weather.

If things are progressing as nature intends, then the next step will be when the calf gets up and begins to nurse. Calves need to be able to ingest adequate amounts of colostrum in the first few hours of life. This is one of the single most important things for a calf’s immune system. This helps with developing passive immunity and also gives energy and other



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nutrients to help with maintaining body heat. To aid in survival, calves need adequate colostrum within two hours of being born.

The window on colostrum intake and benefits begins to close after approximately six hours follow-
continued on page 16

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Don't forget that the nutritional requirements of your cow or heifer will increase dramatically once lactation begins, with the general rule of at least 25% more. (Courtesy photo)

continued from page 15

ing birth, and by 24 hours after birth nearly all ability to absorb antibodies from it are gone. An important tool for the calving set-up is an esophageal tube feeder to aid in getting colostrum in a new-born that can't or won't nurse.

Another condition requiring administration of colostrum is acidosis, which is a common cause of the weakened or "dummy" calf. When calves are born under normal conditions, they will go through a change in how oxygen is supplied to them.

Oxygen supplied from the placenta stops during delivery, and that results in a temporary increase in carbon dioxide in the bloodstream. This is what triggers the calf to start breathing on its own, and in turn allows the calf to expel carbon dioxide from the blood and begin to restore normal oxygen levels. It is not unusual to see a healthy calf panting strongly

after birth. Panting actually helps the carbon dioxide/oxygen exchange occur more quickly. While every calf will have a certain degree of acidosis, when calving is prolonged or delayed due to difficulties, such as a lengthy Stage 2 of calving, normal breathing hasn't or won't start and that can result in carbon dioxide levels rising in the blood without the "blowing off" effect of normal breathing.

The resulting drop in blood oxygen and elevation of carbon dioxide create a severe drop in the blood pH, known as "respiratory acidosis."

A calf experiencing moderate respiratory acidosis may be slow to get to its feet and slow to nurse. If you are observing the delivery, it is important to note that a healthy calf will be able to roll onto their chest within the first few minutes after birth. Calves that may be experiencing acidosis will tend to

take more than 15 minutes to get into the sternal recumbent position. If this is witnessed, it is important to act in a timely manner to begin helping the calf. If total correction doesn't take place quickly then it may be too late to prevent some damage to key organs. Also this is when oxygen deprivation to the brain may result in organ damage there as well, sometime known as "dummy" calves.

According to research studies done in Canada by Dr. Homerosky and associates, it was found that there was a strong likelihood that if a calf had experienced stressful birth conditions it could also be checked for acidosis by pinching the calf's tongue.

If the calf couldn't retract or withdraw the tongue in reaction to a "pinch," then there was a good chance that the calf was acidotic and needed early colostrum intervention.


As an ending note, don't forget

that the nutritional requirements of your cow or heifer will increase dramatically once lactation begins, with the general rule of at least 25 percent more.

As producers, it is economically advantageous to prevent loss and save as many calves as possible. That means observing cows and especially first-calf heifers during your calving seasons.

After all, being there to provide timely assistance to a struggling cow or heifer increases our chances of getting the most possible calves to market when it comes time to sell.

The next meeting of the WFACW organization will be March 18, 2025 at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, Texas.

Members attending the meeting are encouraged to bring their lunch and enjoy eating and visiting starting at 11:30, followed by the business meeting at noon. 

Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean, tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Annual Broomweed

Annual broomweed can be a real nuisance to North Texas ranchers when we have a “broomweed year”. Broomweed, along with Western ragweed, are two of the most troublesome weeds that plague our grazing lands. Both of these forbs, however, can benefit wildlife.

Annual broomweed, sometimes called common broomweed or prairie broomweed, is a robust annual forb found in almost every part of Texas. It normally grows from a single stem, but if damaged when young, the plant can form multiple stems. As Annual broomweed matures the stem becomes very rigid and erect and the plants develop a rounded tree-shaped top. Under good growing conditions mature plants can reach three feet in height and two to three feet in diameter of the top. When found in heavy stands, it can form almost a complete canopy over the land. Broomweed seems to prefer clay soils, while ragweed is more dominant on sandy soils.

Annual broomweed is in the sunflower family. In late summer, tiny yellow flowers appear on the ends of the many branches at the top of the plant. Heavy stands can cause pastures to take on a yellow appearance over many acres during late summer months. At the time of flowering, many of the leaves have dropped from the plant, leaving the stalk and branches bare except for the yellow flowers.

Annual broomweed has a pungent odor and the herbage and pollen can cause an itchy dermatitis in livestock and humans. Although it may have been unpleasant to



Small yellow flowers develop at the ends of the many small branches on Annual broomweed. A heavy stand of Annual broomweed can form a sea of yellow across many acres during late summer. (Photo courtesy of


harvest, early settlers gathered multiple dried plants and bound them together to form a broom. Annual broomweed is sometimes used in floral decorations.

Cattle appear to make very little use of annual broomweed, but it is of value to some other species. It not only provides overhead cover for quail, but the tiny seeds are an important part of the quail diet. Dove and songbirds also feed on the seed. Sheep, goats and deer feed on the young tender plants in the spring.

Above average rainfall in the fall and early winter causes germination of broomweed. Tiny seedlings are formed that lay dormant until spring. With the ar-

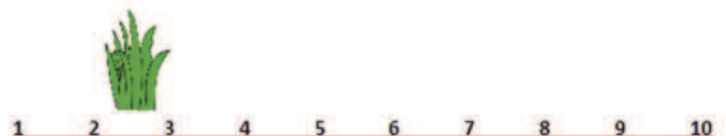
rival of spring moisture and warm temperatures, the seedlings grow into mature plants. North Texas received extensive rainfall in November, 2024, then received a wet snow in January, 2025. It will be interesting to see if 2025 is a heavy broomweed season.

In early spring, broomweed can be controlled by herbicides,

mowing, or cool season controlled burning. Annual broomweed is an invader that can take advantage of bare ground or week stands of grasses to germinate and grow. Better grass management which results in more plant cover, healthier stands of perennial grass, and less exposed soil, will reduce annual broomweed stands. 

Grazing Value of This Plant

Annual Broomweed



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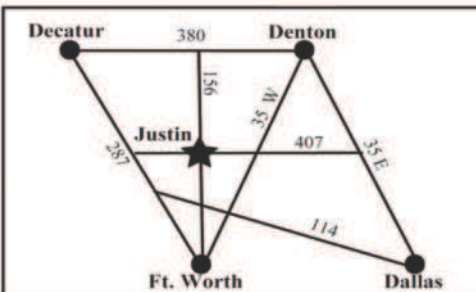
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Noble Learning:

Simple Ways to Measure Soil Health Improvements in Real Time

By Laura Nelson



Measuring soil health doesn't have to involve big, flashing 'ah-ha' moments; deep scientific analysis; time-consuming sampling or pricey tests. (Photo courtesy of Noble Research Institute)

The field was ablaze with thousands of their fluttering, flame-orange wings.

Once a solid bermudagrass monoculture, the rancher aimed to add diversity to restore the grazing land to its native prairie. That fall, the yellow blooms of the golden crownbeard (cowpen daisy) stood vibrant against the green growth.

Thousands of migrating monarch butterflies took note of one of their favorite nectar sources, and Noble Regenerative Ranching Advisor Will Moseley got to bear witness.

"Talk about an 'ah-ha' moment," Moseley says. "To get to walk amongst that pasture with that rancher and his family was truly unbelievable. I'll remember

that moment forever."

This moment offered a once-in-a-lifetime glimpse into the progress the rancher was making toward his goal to add more life to the land. Still, Moseley says, it's also important for ranchers to mark day-to-day improvement.

Measuring soil health doesn't have to involve big, flashing 'ah-

ha' moments; deep scientific analysis; time-consuming sampling or pricey tests. Instead, he suggests, when you're out in a pasture fixing fence, restocking salt and mineral or checking water, take a minute or two to tune into your senses of sight, sound, smell and touch.

Take note of ground cover, di-
continued on page 20

versity & erosion

The first step is to stop merely looking out across your pastures, Moseley says. Instead, look straight down. Whether you're in your side-by-side, on your horse or on foot, look down and imagine throwing a hula-hoop at your feet. Consider the ground cover that would land inside that circle.

The goal of keeping soil covered is to armor it and reduce the amount of exposed, bare ground. If you were at 70% cover last year, and this year you see 75% or 80%, you're making progress.

Next, take a look at species diversity. If you start with one dominant species – a Bermudagrass monoculture is a prevalent one in most of the Southern Great Plains – and the next year, you observe three species at your feet, "Well, that's a big increase from where you started," Moseley says.

Finally, look for signs of ero-
continued on page 22



Whether you're in your side-by-side, on your horse or on foot, look down and imagine throwing a hula-hoop at your feet. Consider the ground cover that would land inside that circle.

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sion. Do you see litter dams or plants that look like they're on a pedestal with the ground around them washed away? If yes, is what you're seeing active erosion, or is it healing?

"If you're looking at these three things, you're looking at some pretty solid indicators of your soil's health," Moseley says.

Listen for Sounds of Living, Vibrant Land

While you're at it, take a minute to turn off the engine and listen to the sounds of your land, Moseley suggests. Especially in the spring and summer months, it should not be silent.

"If you want your soil filled with life, you should be able to hear the life out there," he says. Do you hear the buzz of the pollinators, the flap of bird wings, the rustle of grass or branches moving as critters scurry nearby? When it comes to the tiny life that thrives in healthy systems, he says, look especially for spiders.

"They're the apex predator of the insect world, so if they're abundant, you have lots of life," Moseley says. Dung beetles burrowing holes in cow pats as they recycle nutrients into the soil, and pollinators like bees, butterflies, and moths, are two other important classes of soil health indicators.

Touch and Smell to Check Soil Health

Next, grab a shovel and feel how easily it slides into the soil. This alone can give you a feel for the amount of soil compaction or changes in that soil's makeup over time.

Turn a spadeful of soil over, then feel for its moisture content. You're aiming for a spongy texture, similar to cottage cheese or chocolate cake. Take note of how your soil smells. You know the rich, earthy, fresh aroma of healthy soil. A handful with no smell likely indicates a lack of biological life; a metallic or sulfur smell indicates a heavy bacterial load in the soil.

Note the color of your soil – the



more organic matter it contains, the darker it will be. Snap a photo and compare year-over-year images to look for a change in soil color.

Note how deep the darkest shades extend below the surface. Did that rich topsoil extend an inch last year, but now you can see it down an extra half inch? That's progress.

Consider the below-ground life you can observe – grubs, worms, invertebrates.

"These are all things we can access in a matter of a minute or two to tell us how we're doing in terms of our soil health," Moseley says.

Track and Compare Your Observations Over Time

"What's most important is that you compare yourself to yourself,"

Moseley says. "Every ranch's starting point is different."


Record these simple observations in a notebook that lives in the side-by-side or in your pocket, or on your phone in notes and photos. A spreadsheet tracking system designed by Noble regenerative ranching advisors to help measure progress over time is part of the Noble Land Essentials course, but Moseley says what matters most is finding a system you'll stick to and use to record your observations consistently.

"A lot of these are going to be small victories over time," Moseley says. "It might not be pretty in the process. You're not going to go from a monoculture to a native tallgrass prairie overnight."

So, while you may not get the

great 'ah-ha' of a monarch migration homing in on your efforts to increase diversity, you might taste equally sweeter, if smaller, victories.

"To me, it's almost just as amazing when a rancher begins to form this deeper appreciation for the things he sees every day on his ranch," Moseley says. He points to watching life-long ranchers suddenly take note of dung beetles, excitedly crawling on their hands and knees to track the tiny recyclers.

"Things like that might have been there all along, but now they're noticing it for the first time," he says. "Sometimes it's not necessarily an 'a-ha;' it's more of an awakening, which is pretty cool, too." 



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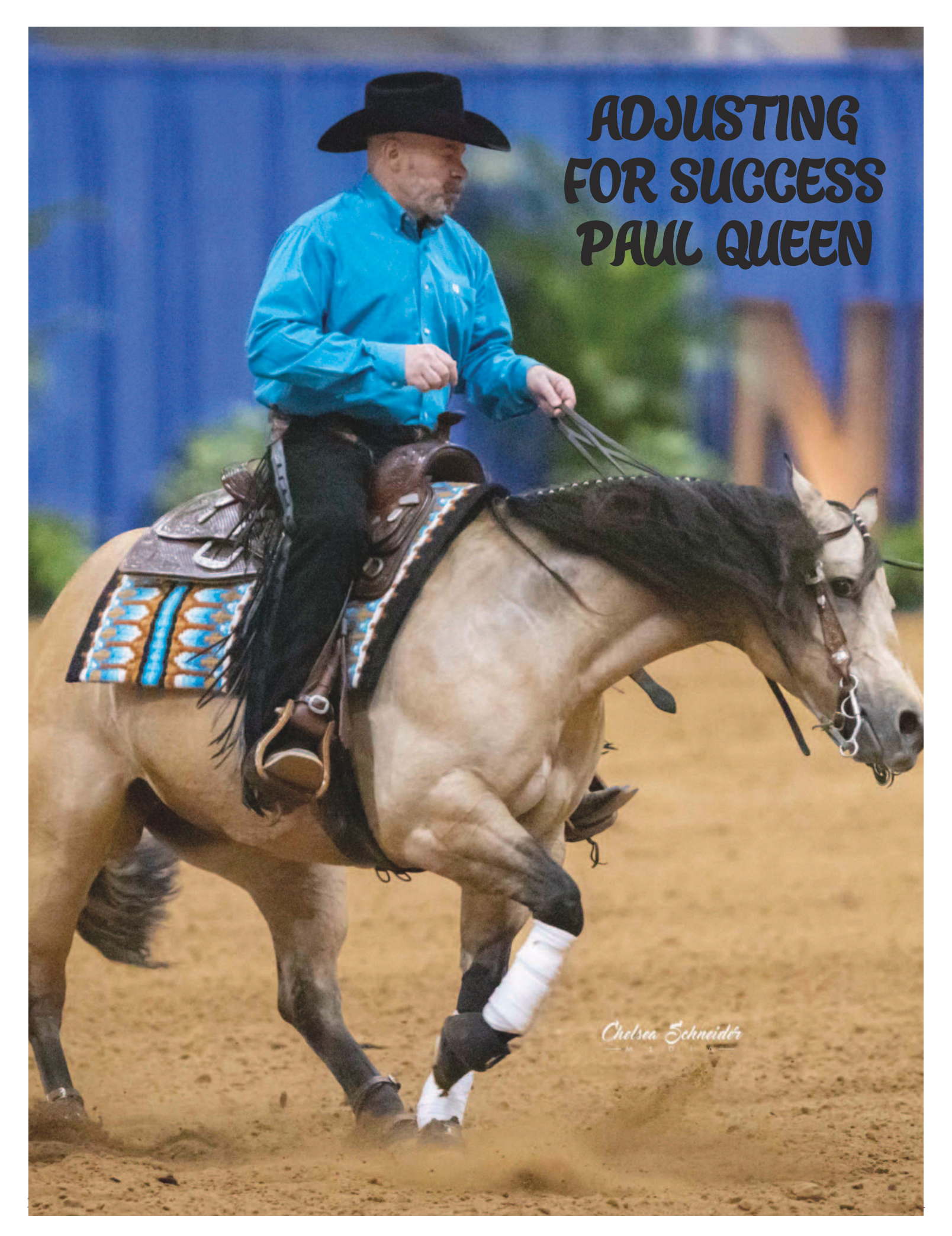


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A man wearing a black cowboy hat and a bright blue long-sleeved shirt is riding a light-colored horse in a dirt arena. The horse is in motion, with its front legs lifted. The rider is holding the reins. The background is a blue wall with some greenery visible. The text 'ADJUSTING FOR SUCCESS PAUL QUEEN' is overlaid in the top right corner.

**ADJUSTING
FOR SUCCESS
PAUL QUEEN**

Chelsea Schneider
— M O D E R N —



Left: Paul and Outta Dough after competing and winning at the 2023 National Reining Breeders Classic when the stallion was 18 years old. Right: Paul and Outta Dough competing at the 2011 NRBC. (Photos courtesy of Paul Queen)

Paul Queen's involvement in agriculture has not been typical, but his roots run deep. From a childhood spent in the heart of New Mexico's agricultural landscape, riding horses and showing animals through 4-H to his current career as a chiropractor and member of the National Reining Horse Association, Queen's dedication to serving his rural community has not wavered.

"Right after I graduated, we went to the National Reining Breeders Classic, and I had my portable adjustment table, so I set up at the stalls to work on people," Queen said.

Queen worked alongside his mother, Dorothy, helping to manage the family oil business in New Mexico, until he decided to return to school in his 40s to become a doctor of chiropractic.

"I just love what I do," Queen said. "Chiropractic school is the equivalent of medical school, and

it was tough, but I got through it because I love it."

Prior to the 2020 pandemic, Queen worked in pediatric practice in McKinney, Texas, but as the pandemic ramped up, he chose to close his practice there and start seeing patients out of his barn in Whitesboro, Texas.

With his table set-up in the tack room, and people waiting in the barn aisle, Queen saw as many patients as he could in a day, until he exceeded his barn's capacity in late 2024. That is when he decided to purchase and restore a 1940s service station just off the downtown square in Whitesboro.

"There were times when there would be a line out the alley way of my barn, so I knew it was time to move," Queen said. "We put a lot of work into the building, and it's a functional office for me now, but it's also one of the beauties of Whitesboro, and I love it."

Queen's barn has housed more

than just his chiropractic table. With NRHA lifetime earnings of over \$118,000, Queen has had his share of success in the reining pen. There are a couple of horses in Queen's barn aisle that stand out as having been crucial to that success, Outta Dough and Makendiamonds.

"I had been riding Ben [Outta Dough] for a while, just keeping him legged up for Mom," Queen said. "I don't remember why, but one day we decided I'd show him, so I borrowed some chaps and spurs, and I remember I walked out, thinking my score sounded weird, and I asked

what I'd done wrong, and Mom told me I'd won the whole thing so she guessed Ben was my horse now."

Outta Dough is a 2005 stallion with a lifetime earnings of nearly \$94,000 and quite a few wins under his belt at events like the National Reining Breeders Clas-

sic, the Cactus Reining Classic, and the American Quarter Horse Association World Championship Show.

The other horse, Makendiamonds, is one who is particularly special to the Queens. In 2024, the family's horse trainer and friend, Jared Leclair, qualified for the Run For A Million in Las Vegas, and the horse he chose to compete on was none other than Queen's Makendiamonds, who they call Josie.

"The deal was that Jared would show her for the first year, and then I would get her for the second year," Queen said, explaining the plan for Josie. "Jared ended up doing really well on her, and when it was my turn, we won pretty much every derby we entered."

It is this deep connection to the equestrian world that fuels Queen's passion for his chiropractic work.

"Chiropractic care ensures that
continued on page 28



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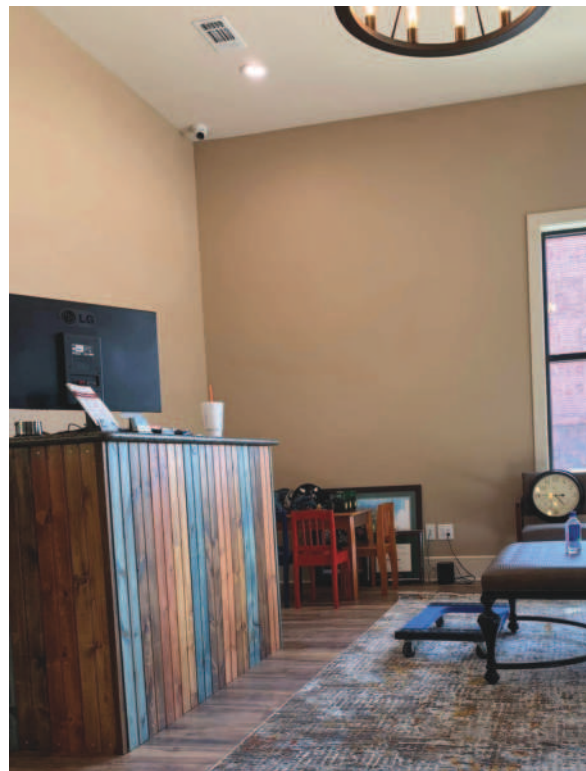
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Top Left: Paul, his mom Dorothy Queen, and Outta Dough in 2018 after earning another win in NRHA competition.

Top Right: Straight Up Chiropractic in downtown Whitesboro opened its doors in August 2024.

Right: NRHA Professional and Million Dollar Rider Jared Leclair piloted Makendiamonds to qualify for the 2024 The Run For A Million in Las Vegas, Nevada. They are pictured here qualifying for the event at the Cactus Classic. (Photos courtesy of Paul Queen)

you keep your range of motion,” Queen explained. “People in agriculture, whether that’s a farmer, a horse trainer, or a bull rider, rely on their bodies to be capable of doing what they do.”

In addition to his barn of successful horses and chiropractic business, Queen also hosts a podcast.

“I created the ‘What’s Up Whitesboro’ podcast to help our small, rural community and its businesses thrive,” Queen explained. “Supporting others in achieving their dreams and running their businesses has always been a deep passion of mine.”

On the ‘What’s Up Whitesboro’ podcast, Queen shines a spotlight on local businesses by visiting them, showcasing their products and inspiring others to support the community’s small enterprises. He does this at no cost to the busi-

nesses, just in an effort to support his community and urge others to do the same.

“Through this podcast, I aim to shine a light on the amazing people, stories, and ventures in Whitesboro,” Queen shared. “It’s not just about sharing information. It’s about fostering connection, collaboration and growth within our community.”

In all of these ventures, Queen’s dedication to his local agricultural community shines strong. Whether it is through his chiropractic care, his success in the reining world or his dedication to supporting local businesses, Queen has found a way to blend his passions with his community’s needs.

His story is a reminder that success does not have to follow a straight path, and there is nothing more valuable than a strong community.



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Preparation Eases Foaling for Mares and Managers

By Donald Stotts | OSU Agriculture Communications Services



A little advance effort will help ensure the delivery of a healthy foal. There are about 250,000 horses in Oklahoma, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics. (Courtesy photo)

Horse owners who take a few steps to prepare for foaling can promote a smoother birthing process for their broodmares, according to Oklahoma State University Extension recommendations.

“A foaling mare should be as relaxed as possible and settled into a routine – stalled at night and turned out during the day, weather permitting,” said Kris Hiney, OSU Extension equine specialist with the university’s Department of Animal and Food Sciences. “Nighttime observation should be unobtrusive. Many horse farms make use of cameras and apps. If somebody is going to be a nighttime attendant, make sure the mare is familiarized with the person well ahead of time.”

The foaling environment should be clean, have adequate space and be reasonably quiet. A stall with dimensions of 14 feet by

14 feet or larger is recommended. Fill the stall with straw rather than shavings. A 10-inch-thick bed of straw will cut down on dust, decrease chances of infection and is easier to clean off the mare and newborn foal.

Barn lights should be regulated and not turned on and off at various intervals. An alternative to constant nighttime observation is to use a dim light in the stall, just bright enough to see the mare. Another option is to use red lights that don’t throw off a mare’s circadian rhythms.

“In-person observation of the mare should be done outside the foaling stall,” said Dr. Rosslyn Biggs, OSU Extension veterinarian and director of continuing education for the university’s College of Veterinary Medicine. “It’s critical to remember that complications during the foaling

process are always an emergency. Horse managers should contact their attending veterinarian and develop a good working relationship well before foaling.”

Horse managers should not be overly concerned if a mare fails to deliver exactly on schedule. An average gestation is 330 days, and a foal born within 320 days is considered premature. Although normal gestation for a mare is 320 to 380 days, there are variations.


“Premature foals typically will require extra care and veterinary assistance,” Biggs said. “Mares that foal in less than 310 days are most likely aborting.”

The personality of the mare may change as parturition becomes imminent. The horse may appear restless and become irritable, laying her ears back at the slightest provocation. If running in a herd, the mare may distance

herself from other horses. Her tail should be wrapped at this time to keep it out of the way in case problems develop during foaling and assistance is required.

“Clean flannel or gauze can be used to wrap the tail,” Hiney said. “Tight elastic wraps should not be used because circulation to the tail may be restricted.”

Fact sheets detailing research-based information about best foaling management practices are available online and through OSU Extension county offices.

Hiney recently provided additional insights about mare management, gestation length and related equine technologies on the agricultural television show SUNUP. The video segment is available online. Research about gestation length in horses is available online through the National Library of Medicine. 



Gastric Ulcers in Horses

By Devon England, DVM

Does your horse have gastric ulcers? Gastric or stomach ulcers are frequently blamed for a variety of things including poor performance, acting ‘cinchy,’ weight loss, not eating, poor coat condition, diarrhea and colic. However, gastric ulcers are not always the culprit and the only way to know for sure if your horse has gastric ulcers is to look at the stomach on camera, using an endoscope. Poor appetite and poor body condition are the mostly widely observed clinical signs with gastric ulcers, however, these are non-specific. If you think your horse might have gastric ulcers, the best place to start is to talk to your veterinarian and consider scheduling a gastroscopy. Gastroscopy requires the horse be held off feed for at least 16-18 hours and held off water for at least six to eight hours. Fasting off feed and water is necessary to allow the veterinarian to see the whole stomach. If restricting feed or water is difficult in your management situation, many veterinarians will allow you to hospitalize your horse the night before gastroscopy for proper fasting.

Gastric ulcers are split into two types, classified by the location of the ulcer in the stomach. Squamous ulcers are ulcers that occur in the squamous or skin like portion of the stomach. This is the top part of the horse’s stomach, is closest to the esophagus, and has squamous tissue to protect this portion of the stomach from stomach acids. The other ulcer type are glandular ulcers. Glandular ulcers occur in the bottom portion of the stomach, which is closest to the small intestine. This portion of the stomach has glandular mucosa with cells responsible for producing stomach acids for digestion as well as cells that produce mucus and buffers to protect the lining from stomach acid. Gastroscopy



Gastric ulcers are split into two types, classified by the location of the ulcer in the stomach. (Courtesy photo)

is important not only for diagnosing whether ulcers are present but also determining the severity and the type of ulcer, because these two ulcer types require different treatments.

Squamous gastric ulcers are common in racehorses both in and out of training, with higher prevalence in racehorses under training. Prevalence in Thoroughbred racehorses in training has been reported to be up to 100 percent (Sykes 2015). Squamous ulcers are also prevalent in Western pleasure horses, Thoroughbred stallions on breeding farms, and Italian donkeys (Sykes 2015). Glandular gastric ulcer prevalence has not been as well described as squamous ulcers. Glandular ulcers are reported to be most common in Thoroughbred and Standardbred racehorses, Canadian showjumpers and polo ponies, and American Quarter Horses (Sykes 2015).

Risk factors for ulcers vary by ulcer type. Anti-inflammatories (Bute, Banamine) can increase the risk of glandular ulcers in some horses by affecting normal defense mechanisms but are not a high risk in most horses. Horses that display stereotypic behaviors, such as

cribbing, have an increased risk of squamous ulcers. Grain fed before hay in non-exercising horses, feeding larger amounts of grain, and increased time between meals increases the risk of squamous ulcers. Increased time with high intensity exercise and housing in single pens is associated with increased risk of glandular ulcers. A straw only diet, lack of water access and lack of direct contact with other horses increases the general risk of gastric ulcers.

If your horse is diagnosed with ulcers, the mainstay of treatment is a buffered formulation of omeprazole (Gastrogard, Ulcergard). Over the counter Omeprazole and compounded Omeprazole are not effective because without buffering, the acidic stomach quickly breaks down the drug before absorption. Most horses with squamous ulcers will have healing of these ulcers after a four-week course of Gastrogard or Ulcergard at treatment dose (whole tube for the average horse). Some horses may be healed by three weeks of treatment, but all horses should undergo a recheck gastroscopy before stopping treatment. Horses diagnosed with glandular ulcers

need combination therapy with Gastrogard/Ulcergard and Sucralfate for four weeks. About 2/3 of horses with glandular ulcers will heal in this time, but some horses may require longer treatment times so a recheck is always recommended before discontinuing treatment.

Horses at higher risk of gastric ulcers may benefit from preventative (low) doses of Ulcergard (1/4 tube in average sized horse) given for a few days before and during high stress situations like long distance travel and competitions. Sea buckthorn berry supplement may be protective against formation of glandular ulcers. Dietary management to decrease the risk of ulcers includes providing more frequent small hay meals if pasture access is not available, limiting high sugar grains as much as possible and adding vegetable oil to the feed.

References

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Ranching Heritage Weekend

By Krista Lucas | Copy Editor

The Fort Worth Stock Show and Rodeo kicked off Jan. 17. The first full weekend is the annual ranching heritage weekend, showcasing the top ranches, cowboys, cowgirls, and horses in the industry. The weekend includes a ranch horse show, the Best of the West Invitational Ranch Rodeo and three horse sales.

This was the first year to combine the three featured sales into one day. Saturday, Jan. 18, held the Invitational Ranch Horse Show and Sale, the American Quarter Horse Association Best of the Remuda Sale and the 68th Annual Select Quarter Horse Sale.

Each sale had some of the most sought after horses from the biggest ranches in Texas. The invitational sale's consignors included iconic ranches like Pitchfork Land & Cattle Co., Sandhill Cattle Co., Stuart Ranch, Tongue River Ranch, and XIT Ranch. With three sales in one day, buyers also saw horses from Haythorn Ranch, Muleshoe Ranch, Spade Ranch, and others in the Best of the Remuda Sale, followed by the Select Sale. There were over 50 horses offered to the public.

There were nine lots sold in the Invitational Sale, held after a ranch horse show where the top three were awarded cash and awards. The high seller, a seven year old red roan gelding named Lil Purple Rein, won first place in the show and brought \$150,000 for Sandhill Cattle Co. "LP" began his show career as a three-year-old, winning over \$61,000 in his career, and was bought by Bonnie Hammond from Corrales, NM. The average for the Invitational Sale was \$42,100.

The reserve champion in the Invitational Show was TCR Big-JohnsnCowtown. The six-year-old bay roan gelding, consigned by Tee Cross Ranches, sold for



Each sale had some of the most sought after horses from the biggest ranches in Texas. (Photos courtesy of Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo)

\$29,000. The third place finisher was Cowboys Boon A612, consigned by A Bar Ranch. The nine-year-old palomino gelding brought \$35,000.

The Best of the Remuda sale saw 27 horses go through the sale ring, with the average price being \$9,364. Lot 116, SS Smooth N Wicked, was the high seller going for \$37,000. "Otis," a seven-year-old palomino gelding, was sold as a seasoned ranch horse, gentle for anyone. He was consigned by Silver Spur Operating Co LLC and purchased by Rodney and Marcy Urbanczyk of Hobson, Texas.

Eighteen horses were sold in the last sale of the day. Although the average price was \$24,736, there were seven horses repurchased during the sale. A five year old sorrel gelding, named Pushinn



P, brought \$44,000. Slick Robison Rope Horses consigned the high seller for the Select Sale for the second year in a row. "Pete" was a solid ranch horse, had been started in the heeling and sold to 3 String Cattle Co. LLC from Poolville, Texas.

There was something for everybody offered at the three sales at the FWSSR, and over \$1.3 million worth of Quarter Horses was sold in one day. The FWSSR ran through Feb. 8. For full results, visit <https://www.fwssr.com/p/horse-shows/sale-catalogs>.

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WHEN A CITY GIRL goes country

By Annette Bridges

Don't Miss a Thing

I have read that some scientists believe human beings have a curious capacity to take things for granted. It is suggested that repetition and time are the culprits that dull our sense of wonder. For example, they say even the most exquisite diamond loses its luster with familiarity or the sunrise fails to astonish because it is commonplace.

Certainly, there are many things that have become routine and expected in my life.

Have you ever been in the shower washing your hair, as I have, when suddenly the water stops coming out because city crews have shut down the system for repairs? How about when storm damage causes the loss of electricity, or your car is in the shop and you have no other mode of transportation?

Can you remember what life was like before the internet and cell phones? What about when the brother you were always able to count on has passed away, or when your good health is not so good anymore?

Oh yes, there are many things, experiences and people I have taken for granted.

An email landed in my box that inspired more thought on this subject. It told about a group of students who were asked to name what they thought were the Seven Wonders of the World. The wonders which received the most votes included Egypt's Great Pyramids, Taj Mahal, Grand Canyon, Panama Canal, Empire State



(Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

Building, St. Peter's Basilica, and China's Great Wall.

Apparently, one student had trouble finishing her list, stating she could not make up her mind because there were so many to choose from. The teacher encouraged her to share her list aloud with the other students to see if they could help.

"I think the Seven Wonders of the World are to see, to hear, to touch, to taste, to feel, to laugh, and to love," she read.

This unexpected list shared in the email was followed by a poignant reminder.

"The most precious things in life cannot be built by hand or

bought by man."

This student listed "wonders" that I never thought much about until one day a few years ago when my husband and I gave a terminally ill friend a jeep ride around our ranch.

Riding in the jeep was not a big deal to me, perhaps because it was "old hat" as some might say, but my friend noticed details I never had, and she relished every moment of her ride. I found myself being captivated by her adoration and reverence of what she was seeing and by every breath of fresh country air she gratefully took in. That was my friend's last jeep ride. She passed away a few

months later.

My one jeep ride with her taught me lessons I have never forgotten. I discovered colors in the sunset I did not know were there. I learned each of our cows has its own distinct bellow and some have really long eyelashes. I noticed the deeper the hole you drive over, the louder your laugh will be. I found that looking out over big Texas pastures reminds you of the broad expanse of love. Gazing at the horizon when the sun is setting fills you with a peaceful sense of the infinity of life.

So, how do we keep our sense of wonder? How do we maintain our appreciation of all the everyday miracles that compose our day? How do we never overlook the blessings that make up each life moment?

I am learning to even ask such questions is a good beginning. Pausing to ask these questions also requires pausing to explore for the answers.

As I learned in my jeep ride, the more acutely aware we are of what makes up and who shares our days, life will be more meaningful and satisfying. Savoring and mindfully using any of the wonders of sight, hearing, taste, touch, feeling, laughter, and love, will guide you to even more wonder.

Start right now, this very moment, and keep yourself in a constant state of awe, admiration and respect for every ordinary and extraordinary wonder in your day.

You do not want to miss anything, and I sure hope I don't.



Endless Possibilities

By Kara Dougherty

Hello North Texas, it is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. My name is Kara Dougherty and I am happy to be contributing to the fashion column. Residing in Decatur, we run a small bucking bull and horse operation when my husband is not on the road for the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. Whether it is in the bright lights of a rodeo arena, or in the early morning feed truck, I have got you covered for every occasion.


Being raised on our family cattle operation, it is always been apparent that ranchers are model recyclers. A fond value that relies heavily on lacing everything that is used, said and done with one thing, quality. Knowing something can be relied upon more than just a couple of times not only saves time and money, but peace of mind.

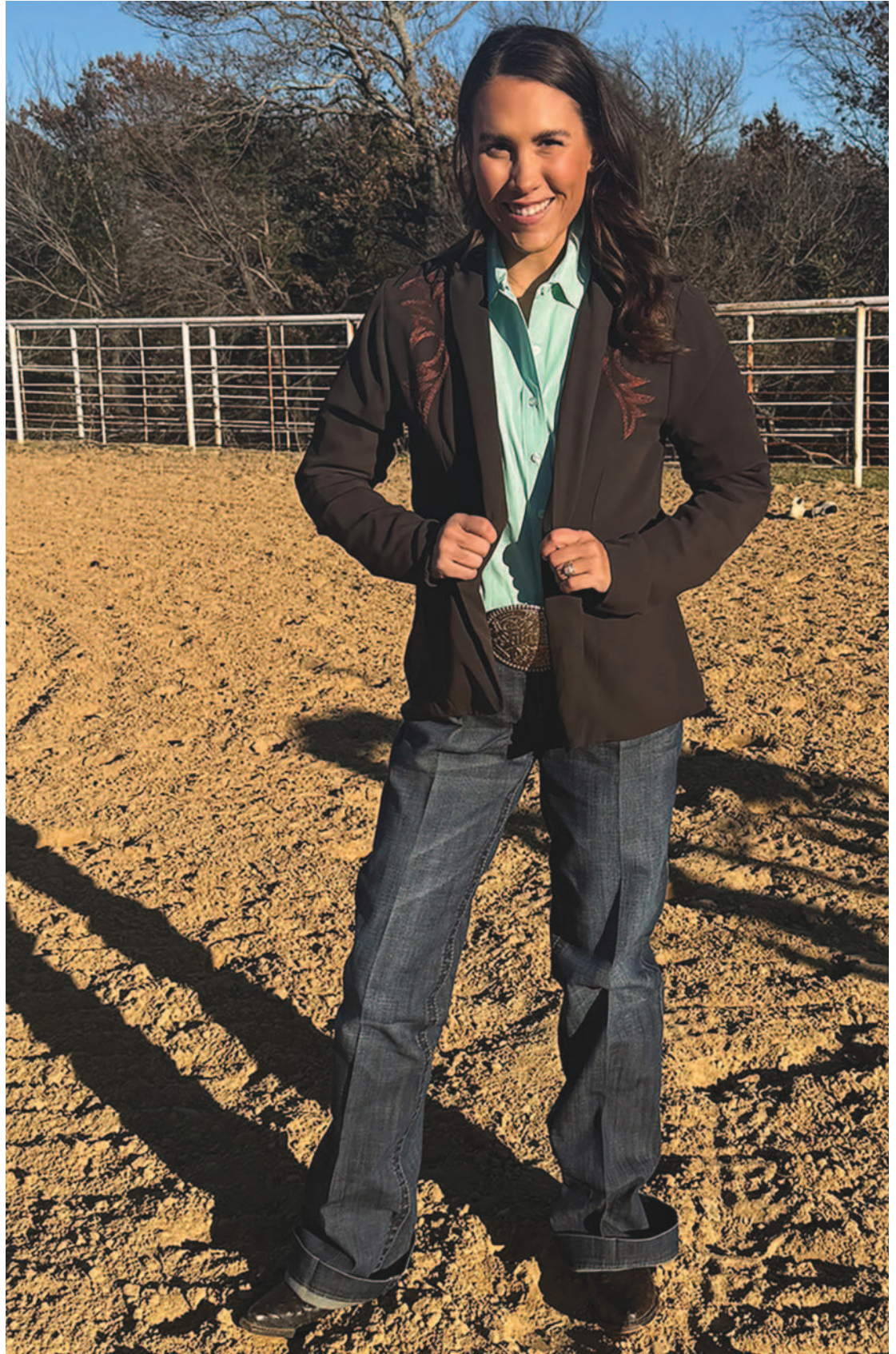
With fast fashion being synonymous with one-time-use, it is good to have staple pieces that can be worn time and time again, not just for one occasion. A quality button up and trousers are a foundation for most Texas closets, but how many looks can you get out of two main pieces? Just like the use of baling twine, the possibilities are endless.

Have a business meeting or interview? Throw on a blazer and give a firm handshake. Special occasion? Unbutton your cuffs and give them a flip to pair with some jewelry. Cuffing your jeans to show off your favorite footwear is also an easy way to elevate a look.

Tired of your family calling you a bum while working cows? Pair with a hat, vest and boots to kick the comments down to just your sorting abilities.

Looking fashion forward does not have to mean new clothes for every occasion. Feeling fresh as your yearlings in the spring just takes a few staples pieces and a good rotation of accessories.

Happy spring! 





A quality button up shirt and trousers are a foundation for most Texas closets. You can throw on a blazer (opposite page), cuff your jeans (top left), or throw on a vest a boots (top right). (Photos courtesy of Kara Dougherty)

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Are You Sabotaging Your Dreams

By Dal Houston



For about nine years, Bode lived as an outside dog, but Dal would catch him looking longingly at the others who made their home inside. (Courtesy photos)

If you're like most people, you have dreams that may never come true, no matter how hard you try. However, it might be good from time to time to step back, look at ourselves, and ask the question, "Could I be sabotaging my dreams?"

Over the holiday break, I was watching our dog, Bode, and realized his behavior presents a poignant example of someone sabotaging their own dreams.

Bode was a stray dog that someone dumped near our place about 10 years ago. At the time, we already had three dogs - one inside dog and two outside dogs.

Initially, we agreed that we didn't need any more, but after Bode hung around the house for a week or so, my wife finally relented and said he could join the pack as long as he remained an outside dog.

I had no problem with that, as he was a fairly large Labrador mix and certainly didn't fit the mold of an inside dog.

So, for about nine years, Bode lived as an outside dog. During that time, we had several turnovers in our dog herd, including changes in our inside dogs. Each time we brought in a new indoor dog, you could see the look of disappointment in Bode's soulful eyes - he

knew he was being overlooked and longed to be an inside dog. I'll be honest: I don't know if I have ever seen a creature, man or beast, want something as much as Bode wanted to live inside.

About a year ago, we were down to only two dogs, and my wife and I finally relented. We started letting Bode into the house along with our other dog, Winifred.

For the most part, he's been a great addition, though he does sneak onto the couch - which is supposedly off-limits.

It's really amazing and heart-warming to look into his eyes and

see his joy, as if he truly believes he has finally fulfilled his dream of becoming an inside dog.

It would seem Bode's dreams have come true - except for one major thing. As you may know, we live in the country, which means we often get visits from all kinds of creatures: armadillos, raccoons, opossums, porcupines, and, most recently, skunks.

For some reason, this past fall, our house seems to have become a popular destination for skunks.

So while, on the surface, it appears that Bode's hopes and dreams have been realized, they have not. At least once a week, he



just can't help himself - he seeks out an unpleasant encounter with our skunk visitors. And, of course, this gets him banned from the house for a week or so. During his time of banishment, Bode looks at me with such sadness, hopelessness, and obvious confusion, as if to ask, "Don't you love me anymore?"

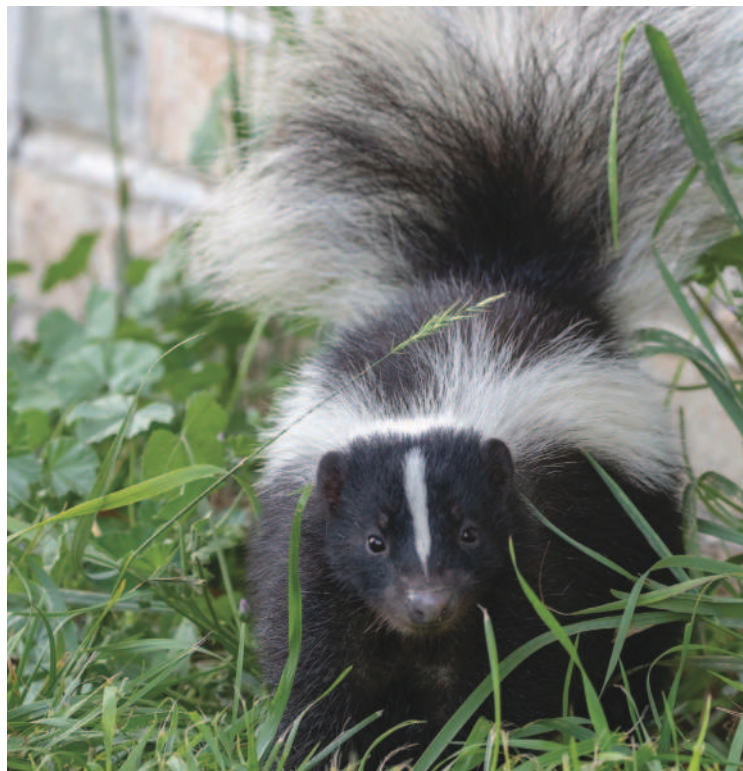
Now, please understand - Bode is only a dog. And while I acknowledge that most dogs are smart, they are still dogs. They probably can't reason through problems the way humans can. So I'm not saying Bode is stupid or just needs to think through his choices - I'm simply acknowledging his limitations as a dog. That said, it only took Winifred one time to figure out that messing with a skunk would get her in trouble and banned from the house.

So as I sat at home over the holidays, watching Bode meet

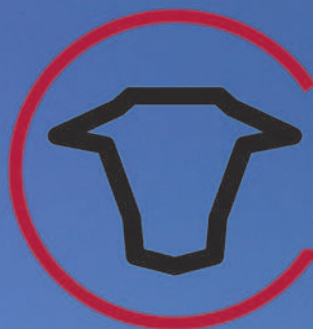
me at the back door, desperately wanting in, it hit me—what a great example of intentionally sabotaging one's dreams. It's really amazing when you think about it: Bode wants nothing more than to be a house dog, yet his own behavior - his intentional encounters with skunks—is what prevents him from living the dream life he so badly wants.

Here's the lesson: While this is just an example of a dog sabotaging his dream, we as humans often do the very same thing. We take actions - sometimes foolish ones - that do nothing but sabotage the dreams we so badly want to fulfill. So take a lesson from Bode and ask yourself: Are you doing something that's keeping you from achieving your hopes and dreams?

Please Note: Check out a video on this article on Instagram: @DalHouston, YouTube: @theeccentriccowboy, Facebook: Dal Houston, www.dalhouston.com



Unfortunately, Bode couldn't help himself, regularly seeking out smelly encounters with skunks.



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Pre-Check Improves the Odds

By Alec Haigood

Most travelers today are familiar with the TSA check or pre-check. This is a process an airline passenger must go through for their protection and safety. I have a precheck list I go through before I ever get into my friend Harold's truck. This list is for my protection and safety. Whenever he calls for some help, there are some requirements that must be met. This list makes it obvious what I have experienced in the past with my buddy. The list goes as follows:

1. Is there gas in the tank? How much gas is in the tank? Does the fuel gauge work?

3. Are there jumper cables in the truck?

4. Is there a spare tire for the truck? Is there a spare tire for the trailer?

6. Is there air in the spares?

With these minimal requirements met, I am now up to a 50/50 chance of completing the task at hand with Harold. The unknown factor now comes into play. For example, Harold needed some bred heifers. My uncle had some for sale in Post Oak, Texas. We made our way down there and he picked out enough to fill his trailer and we headed home. We enjoyed his 240 air conditioning all the way.


Both of our windows were down, and we almost hit 40MPH a time or two. Harold just can't bring himself to fix his AC. Home for Harold is now across the Red River. I told him when he left Texas and moved to Oklahoma that he raised the IQ of both states (just kidding to all my Oklahoma friends). By now it is pitch dark. As he is turning off the state highway onto his property, he turns a little too sharp and drops the trailers tires into the bar ditch. It is dark and the entry way is narrow, but still.... So, there we sat,



The moral of the story? Plan ahead, take precautions, but always expect the unexpected. (Courtesy photo)

couldn't pull forward or go back. We began to ponder the possible solutions. We could unload the heifers right there and get some weight off the trailer. That didn't sound so good. We were on a state highway, in the dark, with heifers that had never seen a trailer. The likelihood of getting them off and herded through a gate didn't seem very high. We continued to sit and contemplate the situation. There

wasn't a breeze coming through the windows. It was muggy and hot. The mosquitoes were swarming. I have now added OFF, water and snacks to the check list. We finally called a friend of Harold's that was in the towing business. Several hours later and way after midnight he got us out of our bind. That was many years ago and most of those heifers turned into good cows. As the years went by the

last of them were culled except for one. She just came over the hill with a baby calf trailing her. She has a 7 on her hip and that is a 2007 not a 2017. She has probably made Harold enough to cover that towing bill 10x over by herself. The moral of the story is plan ahead, take precautions, but always expect the unexpected with Harold. It will always be a roll of the dice. 

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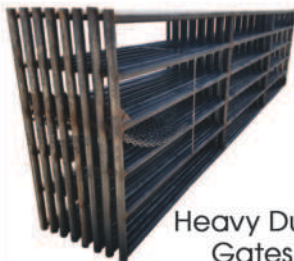
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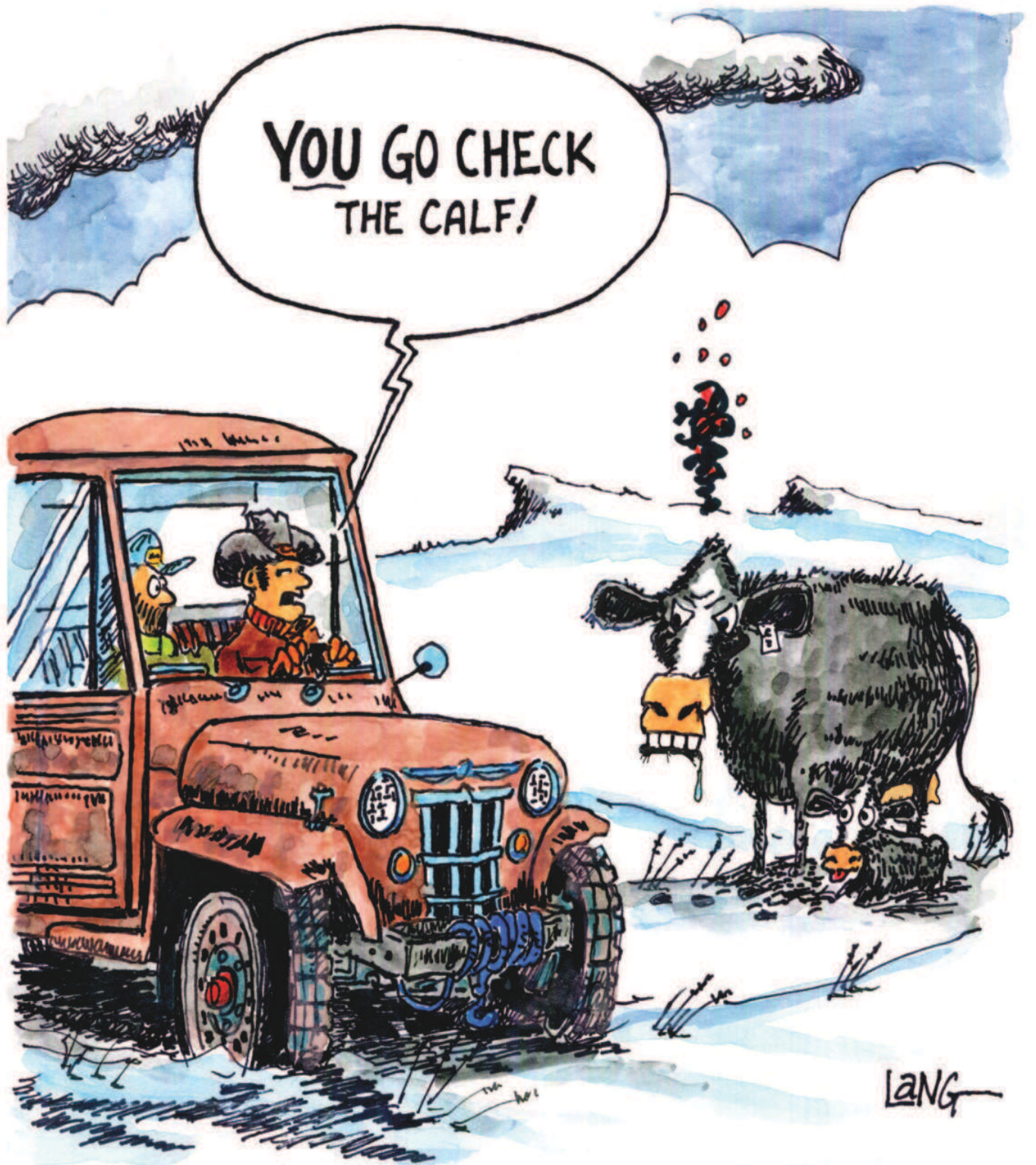
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# Grub Time





# Rabbit Showmanship

By Landon Moore

Showmanship demonstrates an exhibitor's confidence, knowledge of their breed, involvement in their project and experience handling their animal. When done properly, the contestant demonstrates the best qualities of both an exhibitor and a judge. There are two types of this contest, but the basics are used in both. There are three components to showmanship, skill, control and knowledge. There are also three keys to success in the competition, proper conduct, good communication and confidence.

The first basic part of showmanship is skill. You must learn the mechanics of showmanship. It starts before you even get to the table. Learn to hold your rabbit properly. Pick a rabbit that allow you to hold it for many minutes at a time. At the end of a long, stressful day, any rabbit can be impatient, but pick one that is still willing to be held, even if it's a slightly different position. Ideally, the rabbit's head will be tucked into the curve of your left arm, its body supported by your forearm. When you get to the table, place the rabbit in its breed's pose, which you need to learn. Make sure to adjust the rabbit's leg on the other side, as that is the side that the judge sees. When the rabbit is correctly placed, say your name and shake the judge's hand. They will then tell you to begin. First, say what the rabbit's breed, variety and class are. While you look at the animal, say the terms listed in the ARBA Showmanship judging card. Do the following steps, always in this order:

1. Look at both ears carefully and thoroughly. Read the tattoo.

2. Turn the rabbit over. This is often the most difficult skill for a new rabbit breeder to learn. Practice this over and over until you have it memorized. Move the rabbit so it faces you. Place the



Be confident. If you practice this contest, you will know exactly what to do. If you participate in the contest, you will become confident. Don't panic if you make a mistake. Just keep going. (Photo courtesy of Landon Moore)

first finger of your dominant hand through the ears and pinch them firmly at the base. With your other hand securely on the animal's rump, simultaneously pull up with your right hand and push toward yourself with the left. Grip the rabbit carefully with both hands, and it will be unable to move. When you do this for showmanship, lay the rabbit on the table so the judge can see. Don't hold the rabbit up to your chest. Carefully let go with your left hand, once the rabbit is on its back.

3. Look at each eye thoroughly and only gently open the eyelids, if necessary.

4. Look deeply in the nostrils, pushing the skin up firmly (but not roughly) and looking between the upper lips.

5. Carefully look at the teeth, pulling back the upper lips.

6. Feel of the rabbit's front legs and push your thumb into the palm to look at the claws. Do not forget the dewclaw.

7. Run your fingers down the abdomen, making sure not to forget the chest above the front legs.

8. Feel of the rabbit's back legs, run your thumb down each foot pad and look at the claws.

9. Turn the rabbit sideways and push down on the vent correctly. Look at testicles if it is a buck.

10. Pinch the tail slightly and feel along it, moving it slightly. Turn the rabbit back over. Return to proper pose and look at the top side of the tail.

11. Feel of the fur, stroking with and against the grain. Blow in to the fur.

12. Give judging comments. Do not use the word "nice." Say "Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor." Be completely impartial, the rabbit can be of very poor quality, it is unrelated to your placement. Remember you are being judged, not the rabbit.

Run through the entire contest at home. If you have time, practice at the show before you get in line,

too. Once you have it mastered, you won't forget and should always do well.

The next basic aspect is control. If the rabbit flips itself back over once, that's fine. But if you can't maintain control, unskilled at handling rabbits or the animal will not pose, you will not do well. Stay calm above all else, even if your rabbit isn't. Cover its head only if it won't stay still, but never have more than one hand on the rabbit.

The last basic part of showmanship is knowledge. Once you have selected your rabbit, learn as much as possible about the breed. Make sure to memorize all the showroom varieties of your breed. I used to always do Showmanship with a Blue Dutch buck. Whenever I was asked what the other colors were, I would immediately list all nine varieties. Learn the breed's history, study its standard and try to memorize the breed's

**Continue on page 44**



points breakdown. You need to know your breed inside and out. The judge may ask a basic rabbit question, like “what is a meat pen?” Some judges will ask specific questions about your project. You need to know what you feed, when you feed it and how much they get. If they ask what feed you use and you don’t know, they will assume you aren’t the one taking care of the animals. They’re trying to figure out who is really involved with their project. Lastly, when they ask you a question, answer thoroughly.

For example, if they ask what conjunctivitis is, say “it is a disease of the eye also known as weepy eye or pink eye. It is most common in breeds with ‘bulldog’ type heads. It appears as matted fur at the corner of the eye with discharge, along with irritated tissue surrounding the eye. It may be treated with Neomycin and can be prevented by quarantining new

stock before it enters the rabbitry.” Answer their question and add as much detail as you can on the subject without going off topic. So for example, don’t talk about other eye disease, but try to be as thorough as you can.

Now we’re at the three principles that will get you to victory. First, is proper conduct. If you have a show coat, wear it. If you don’t, wear a plain apron over a shirt, ideally long sleeve. At minimum, wear a long sleeved shirt, ideally white. Don’t wear rings or dangling jewelry. You are meant to embody practicality. Your attire should protect you from the animal and be professional, not showy. Your hair should be neat, simple and out of the way. Make sure to smile. Handle the animal firmly, but gently. Never be rough with the rabbit, but be in control and never hold them loosely. The rabbit wants to be stable and secure. If it feels a loose hold, it will

try to get away.


The next key is good communication. Maintain eye contact when you aren’t looking at the rabbit. Don’t look over the judge’s shoulder, at the ceiling or at the floor. Don’t talk while looking down, except while examining the rabbit. Face the judge as much as possible. Be polite and thorough. Talk audibly. Don’t say “uh” or “um.” Stick to the subject. List the terms quickly and but with emphasis. Be sure the judge can see you while you go through the examination.

Finally, be confident. If you practice this contest, you will know exactly what to do. If you participate in the contest, you will become confident. Don’t panic if you make a mistake. Just keep going.

If you don’t know something, answer as best you can, but don’t be afraid to say that you cannot remember. You still have to par-

ticipate in the contest to get good at it. If you get everything else mastered, confidence will come naturally.

The last thing to mention is the other variant of showmanship. What I have described is one-on-one showmanship, where you will compete individually at a small table by the judge. Sometimes you may participate in simultaneous showmanship. You will be at a long table with all the other participants. The main difference is that you will not say the terms out loud.

Examine your rabbit a little more slowly, so that the judge sees what you are doing. But don’t be afraid to finish first. The people who can’t control their animals will always be slower than those who know what they are doing. Once again, showmanship measures your abilities. Once you know what to do, you should always do well. 




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# On the Road WITH DAVE ALEXANDER



## Cowboy Culture Meet Maestro Hector Guzman

As I travel throughout the great state of Texas, I occasionally cross paths with people who not only represent the culture and the history of our unique state but also continue to perpetuate the many talents of our people.

Recently I had the honor of performing with the Irving Symphony Orchestra in Irving, Texas, under the direction of Maestro Hector Guzman. A fellow UNT grad, Hector has mastered the art of musicianship and continues to

raise the bar for local Symphonic Orchestra's under his command. The performance of our "From The Saddle to Symphony Hall" program was a smashing success.

Hector is also conductor of the Plano, San Angelo and Corpus Christi Symphony Orchestra.

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Top Left: Hector Guzman. Often sought after as a guest conductor, appearances have taken him worldwide.

Top Right: Maestro Hector Guzman, pianist Brian Piper, and Dave Alexander.

Left: Dave performing with the Irving Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Maestro Hector Guzman. (Photos courtesy of Dave Alexander)



# Empowering Change - Lyndee Yoder

By Layten Graham

Lyndee Yoder, a prominent advocate for women in agriculture, is making significant strides in amplifying the voices of women in agriculture through her engaging presence on social media. With a growing following on multiple social media platforms, Yoder is not only sharing her own journey in the agricultural sector but also encouraging others from all walks of life.

Yoder's background in agriculture derived from the idea that one day Yoder and her two brothers would be able to become fifth generation ranchers. This developed into competing in the National FFA Organization in high school, where she bought and inseminated Red Angus cows and heifers.

Currently, Yoder works for the Texas Farm Bureau, educating the youth and public about farms and ranchers through legislation.

Yoder's social media journey began in the spring of 2023 while riding pens at the feedyard she worked at during that time. With just a few simple videos of her day-to-day tasks, she evolved into a voice of agriculture.

"Feedyards have a bad reputation to the public eye, and I wanted to show that they aren't these big scary places," Yoder said. "They are simply a tool we use to create the best and most efficient product for consumers."

Yoder currently has a following of 43,800 users on TikTok. She can shed new light on the cattle production aspect of agriculture, which could bring about positive change in our ever-evolving world.

Voices in agriculture, like Yoder's, have the power to positively influence public perception and provide those outside the industry with a balanced view, allowing them to form their own informed



Currently Yoder works for the Texas Farm Bureau, educating the youth and public about farms and ranchers through legislation. (Photo courtesy of Lyndee Yoder)

conclusions.

There are also perspectives from other women in agriculture who share their thoughts on how women are represented in fields traditionally seen as male-dominated.

"It is great that there are women advocating for agriculture through social media, whether it is good or bad," Chloe Rourke, a student at West Texas A&M, said. "At the end of the day though it just equals out to men posting the same things as women for agriculture."

Certain organizations frame agriculture as animal cruelty, damaging the public image of farmers and ranchers. As agricultural content gains more traction on social

media, these organizations' platforms continue to grow as well.

"I feel that agriculture has spent a lot of time getting attacked," Yoder said. "Just the other day I saw a post where a lady who is from the same town as I got so much snow, they couldn't even get tractors to their cattle, and they walked across the pasture to go break ice and tend to their livestock. This is what we need to be posting on social media."

While women have long played a significant role in agriculture, their presence and influence look very different today. As we move forward, it will become increasingly important for women to advocate for their voices to be heard.


"Most people who I see sharing on social media platforms about agriculture are women," Yoder stated. "For example, western fashion has brought a lot of attention to the industry, good and bad, but regardless it is still sharing the life of who we are."

According to a University of Maine study, approximately 410,000 new users join social media every day. This growing digital landscape presents an even bigger challenge for future generations of women to advocate for themselves and for the agriculture industry.

"Social media allowed me to connect with so many other women who are also in male dominated fields and industries. I was also able to showcase the fact that even though we were in a male dominated area that didn't mean we had to stop being women," Yoder said. "Wearing jewelry and having my nails done was a trademark for me among my co-workers, and I always felt so empowered that even though I was working just like them right alongside them I was still able to show that I was a woman."

Social media use will continue to grow for generations to come. It is up to voices within agriculture to educate the public about where our food, clothing, and everyday products originate. Voices like Yoder's not only support women in agriculture but also promote the industry.

With women like Yoder leading the charge for women's advocacy on social media, it is crucial for other women to come together and uplift one another.

By proving women can thrive in male-dominated fields, we can inspire future generations to follow suit and continue pushing for greater representation in agriculture. 

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# Hunting Sheds

By Andy Anderson



(Courtesy photo)

With deer season over, now is the time to begin preparing for the next season. It's also the time of year when deer start shedding the beloved trophies so highly sought after.

March is about when things begin happening—hormone changes, warming weather, and several other factors kick off the process of bucks shedding their antlers.

Without diving into the biological reasons why bucks shed their antlers, I'll provide some insight into the value of spending time in the woods searching for these hardened clues.

While shed hunting is fun and physically beneficial, it also provides valuable information for wildlife managers.

Walking trails, fence lines, and areas near feeders or watering holes are great places to search for sheds, but don't overlook the less

obvious spots—deep in the hardwoods or around a creek. Finding sheds in these locations can give deeper insight into movement, feeding, and bedding habits.

Each shed also provides information about the deer on your property.

A fresh shed offers clues about a buck's age and health. The color and density can suggest the level of nutrition, while the shape and size provide evidence of age and genetics.

Throughout the year, seeing deer and various bucks on your property only gives you a rough guess at their age and antler size. Unless you harvest the buck, finding a shed is the only way to truly determine how old and big he is.

Measuring the shed helps track growth from year to year and may even help you identify bucks you've never seen before. The

number of sheds found is a good indication of how many bucks are traveling through or residing on your land.

While hunting for sheds, you may come across a deceased deer or carcass. This is an excellent opportunity to investigate the cause of death—broken ribs could indicate a gunshot wound, or there may be signs of disease.

If the jawbone is present, examining tooth wear can help estimate the deer's age. A fully intact skull with good antlers is a true trophy find and can fetch a fair price.


Shed hunting has grown in popularity, with some outfitters even offering shed-hunting excursions that include lodging and meals. It's a fantastic way to get the family involved in an outdoor activity that's fun without the risks of handling firearms. Depending

on where you live, snake boots and a good walking stick may come in handy. Some people are so passionate about shed hunting that they train dogs to sniff out and retrieve them.

Sheds also have monetary value. Craftsmen make everything from chairs to chandeliers out of high-quality sheds, paying anywhere from \$20 to \$100 per shed.

Of course, piling them up or hanging them around the bunkhouse makes for great free décor. There are numerous resources and websites to help you locate sheds or sell your finds.

Bottom line—shed hunting offers countless benefits and a great excuse to get outdoors with little investment.

Introduce a kid to shed hunting, and you might just keep them outdoors for life. That's the best reward of all. 





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# The GARDEN GUY

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

## Serendipity Ornamental Onion

During my years as Executive Director of the Columbus Botanical Garden in Georgia, I fell madly in love with the garlic chives in our herb garden. I am not an herbalist or a culinary artist in the kitchen, but I am a butterfly lover and had just completed a stint as Executive Director of the National Butterfly Center in Mission, Texas.

Who would have ever thought garlic chives would act as a butterfly champion while being a kitchen delicacy? My question though is could an ornamental onion or allium hybrid with landscape beauty do the same for pollinators? Serendipity has performed up to the task in every way.

Two years ago I grew Serendipity simply as a trial. Sadly, I did not give it much thought from the standpoint of landscape partners. It was shocking from the standpoint of bees and butterflies.

When the opportunity presented itself the second year, I gave it partners like Luminary Ultraviolet and Prismatic Pink phlox, Meant to Bee Royal Raspberry agastache, Truffula Pink gomphrena, and even a colorful dash of chartreuse foliage courtesy of ColorBlaze Lime Time coleus.

Serendipity allium came roaring back from the winter, and I even planted more. I love the photos of gardens where they are clustered together and did something similar grouping mine around a blue glazed ceramic bird bath. I also like these randomly



Serendipity ornamental onion is partnered in this perennial garden with Prairie Winds Lemon Squeeze pennistem grass and Rainbow Rhythm King of the Ages daylily. (Photos courtesy of Norman Winter)

planted among other perennials.

Year two brought more landscape excitement from the standpoint of combinations but also because a new group of butterflies found the nectar rich blooms. Georgia's state butterfly, the East-

ern Tiger Swallowtail, not only placed it on the menu but seemed to put on a special artistic flight performance going from cluster to cluster.

So in two short years I have had a lot of butterfly observa-

tions including Gray Hairstreak, Red-banded Hairstreak, White M hairstreak, Juniper hairstreak, Gulf Fritillary, Eastern Tiger swallowtail, and Eastern Black swallowtail. This clearly demonstrates the ability of the Serendip-



Serendipity ornamental onion is not only beautiful in bloom but is a pollinator magnet. On this top cluster is a Red-banded hairstreak butterfly and if you look closely, you'll see at least two tiny bees.

ity ornamental onion to be an all star when it comes to butterflies.

Serendipity ornamental onion is recommended for zones 4-8. It gets 15 to 20 inches tall with an equal spread. Fertile well drained soil with plenty of sun will give you the green thumb. Space your plants 15 to 20 inches apart.

The flowers are called rose purple, but depending on the time of day I see lavender pink in my garden. The blooms are globe-like but held sturdily atop blue green foliage. While it is a favorite with pollinators, it is thankfully not on Bambi's or Thumper's menu.

This spring looks to be exciting with the addition of new ornamental onions by the name of Bobblehead. It will be 30 to 32 inches

in height with a two foot spread. The pale lilac globes will size up reaching three to 3.5 inches.

Now, to put on my Debbie Downer hat at least for the South. If you think you are going to simply hop in the car this spring and go buy a flat of Serendipity or Bobblehead ornamental onions, it will be sheer luck.

If you see some, buy them immediately. If you are like me and have never seen one for sale, start sourcing your plants now. You can have them for spring planting and be in a state of euphoria with blooms, bees and butterflies for summer. Meanwhile follow me on Facebook @NormanWinterTheGardenGuy for more photos and garden inspiration.



Serendipity ornamental onion is seen here next to a blue glazed ceramic bird bath and located at the front of the border with Luminary Ultraviolet phlox, ColorBlaze Lime Time coleus and Truffula Pink gomphrena in the distance.



Serendipity ornamental onion is seen here next to a blue glazed ceramic bird bath and located at the front of the border with Luminary Ultraviolet phlox, ColorBlaze Lime Time coleus and Truffula Pink gomphrena in the distance.



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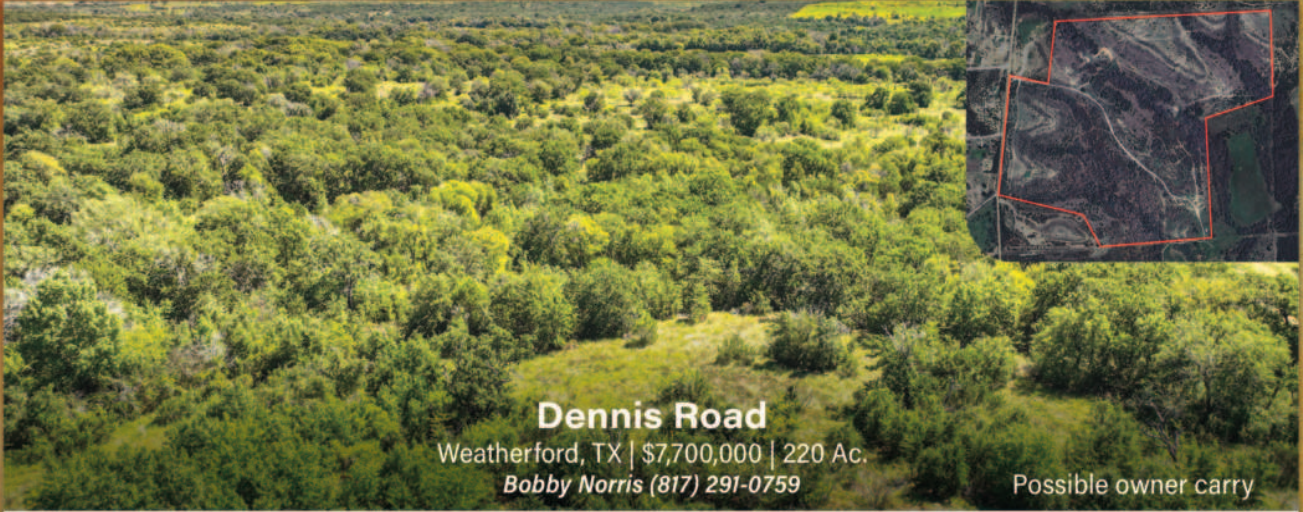
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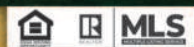
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