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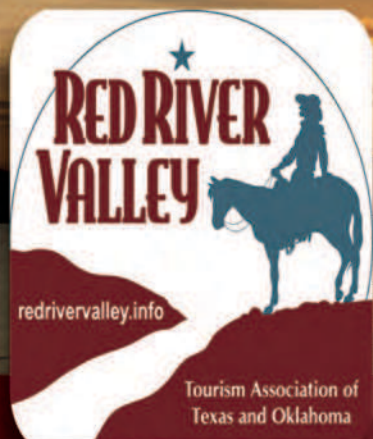
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PUBLISHER

JM Winter

EDITOR

Savannah Magoteaux
editor@ntfronline.com

production

ART DIRECTOR

Rosie Cole
rosie@postoakmedia.net

advertising executives

Kathy Miller
kathy@postoakmedia.net

Rosemary Stephens
rosemary@postoakmedia.net

distribution

MANAGER

Brenda Bingham
accounting@postoakmedia.net

DISTRIBUTORS

Pat Blackburn
Paul Evans

contribution

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Norman Winter
Krista Lucas Wynn
Robert Lang
Maddy Bezner
Annette Bridges
Dave Alexander
Tony Dean
Jelly McClellan
Jared Groce
Dal Houston
Lindsey Monk
Bryce Angell
Reanna Santos
Laura Nelson
Alec Haigood
Andy Anderson
Ann Asher
Brandon Baumgarten
Blanche Schaefer
JoAnne Moore

COPY EDITORS

Krista Lucas Wynn

administration

Brenda Bingham
accounting@postoakmedia.net

CONTACT US

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

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ON THE COVER



Isabelle Parkey may be just 17 years old, but the sixth-generation rancher is firmly focused on building a future for the next generation. (Photo by Lori Edwards Dunkerley, provided by Isabelle Parkey)

letter from the editor

In Texas, we know how quickly the ground can turn from dust to flood-water. As we put together this issue, parts of our state are still reeling from the devastating floods that claimed the lives of more than 50 people, with dozens more still missing. Many of the victims were children. It is heart-breaking. There is no easy way to write about something like that. We may not know the full scope of loss for weeks to come, but what we do know is that these families

need our prayers, our support, and our willingness to show up.

This month's cover story features 17-year-old Isabelle Parkey, a young woman whose humility and clarity of purpose are beyond her years. A sixth-generation cattle rancher from Archer and Clay Counties, Isabelle has already stepped into leadership roles with 4-H and the Brangus breed, while keeping her focus firmly on what matters most: building a future for the next generation.

She said it best: "If we don't train the next generation, we're going to be left with nothing." Her story is a reminder that the work we do today matters, not just for our own families or operations, but for the kids who are coming behind us. The future of agriculture depends on those who are willing to step up and speak out.

In moments of hardship and in seasons of hope, we are called to keep working. As Galatians 6:9 reminds us, "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

We are proud to share Isabelle's voice in this issue, and we are always grateful to the talented writers and contributors who help us tell the stories of North Texas with honesty and heart.

As always, please reach out to me with any story ideas at Editor@NTFROnline.com.

Savannah Magoteaux
Savannah Magoteaux, Editor
editor@ntfronline.com



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A photograph of three men fishing in a field at sunset. The men are silhouetted against the bright orange and yellow sky. They are standing in a grassy field, and a wooden fence is visible in the background on the left. The overall mood is peaceful and nostalgic.

Even adults enjoy *going outside* to play.

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My Senior Moment

By Bryce Angelle

Getting old is not so bad. I just turned seventy. And hopefully, with any luck, I've got a few left in me.

But one thing that I've noticed is my mind forgets to think. I heard one older fellow say his brain was on the blink.

It's called a "Senior Moment." Guess that's what most folks might say. Or a mental aberration could be what I had that day.

My good mare, Sandi Peppy, turned up favoring her right hip. So she stayed home in the pasture and I borrowed for this trip.

And my brand new sleeping bag was big enough to be a bed. Yet I didn't sleep a wink all night. I tossed and turned instead.

Daylight showed its face and we ate french toast by the fire. I don't remember any day I started out so tired.

We finished up our breakfast and poured water on the fire. Then we pulled our boots and hats on with the rest of our attire.

First we had to saddle up before our ride began. I'd put a saddle on a horse as much as any man.

But my borrowed horse was agitated. She would not hold still. I finally got the saddle on against that horse's will.

I tied her to a cedar tree and took a look around. Two cowboys



(Courtesy photo)

had been watching me but hadn't made a sound.

I thought they both looked mystified. Was something on their mind? Then one of them spoke up and said, "I think you might be blind.

"My Arab mare was missing, and you seem to be the source. I


don't know if you realize you've saddled up my horse."

Sure enough that cowboy's mare was wearing my old saddle. No wonder she was acting strange and putting up a battle.

I must have turned bright crimson red. There was no use denying. I should have made a joke of

it, but only stood there sighing.

Both cowboys helped me saddle up, but no one said a word. And were those cowboys wondering if my mind was also blurred?

I guess it doesn't matter that my seeing isn't clearer. As long as I still recognize that fellow in the mirror. 

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see your name in the next issue!



Noble Learning:

Why You Need a Grazing Plan and How to Start One

By Maddy Bezner



Taking time to make and follow a grazing management plan pays many dividends..(Photos courtesy of Noble Research Institute)

A grazing plan is more than just a list of pasture moves. It is a tool to manage your land, livestock and time with intention and efficiency, guiding decisions that affect ranch profitability.

“A grazing management plan is sort of a roadmap to improv-

ing the grazing performance of your ranch,” says Josh Gaskamp, a facilitator for Noble Research Institute’s grazing courses. “It allows producers to take advantage of every acre and be most efficient and effective with forage allocation.”

Developing and using such a roadmap helps you plan for the expected and prepare for the unexpected. Gaskamp explains that a good grazing plan is more than just a record of daily moves.

“It’s a business management plan as well,” he says. “It allows

producers to see risks like drought coming down the road and take advantage of markets when they are in a better state.”

Start with the Basics

Begin by mapping out your pastures. Record the name of



each pasture, the forage base and the number of grazeable acres. To compute grazeable acres, use aerial maps or online tools to measure total acres, then subtract the areas taken up by brush, water or roads.

Next, document your herd information. For example, one of Noble's demonstration ranches includes 150 cow-calf pairs averaging 1,200 pounds along with 1,000 stocker goats averaging 100 pounds. Knowing your stocking rates for a grazing area helps you determine the number of days you have to graze before you run out of forage.

Mark important dates on your plan as well. These include family vacations, calving, weaning and any infrastructure projects.

"You don't want the cattle grazing in the pasture with the weakest fence while you're on vacation," Gaskamp says. Highlighting these dates helps avoid headaches later.

Think Strategically

Gaskamp recommends identifying "decision points" throughout your season. These are times when you may need to adjust based on

rainfall, forage availability or market prices.

For example:

If rainfall is below normal in spring, measure forage availability and implement the destocking plan.

If goat prices exceed \$3.30 per pound, sell the culls immediately.

These decision points help you respond with purpose instead of scrambling in the moment.

Sketch out the Season

Once the details are in place, begin penciling in your livestock movements. Gaskamp suggests color-coding to keep things clear. For example, cows – color coded in blue – graze the house pasture for six days in April, followed by goats – color coded in orange – using what the cows left behind. This leader-follower strategy helps optimize forage use, maximizing the opportunities your ranch's forage base can provide.


By planning the sequence and timing of moves, you make better use of each pasture and can avoid problems before they happen.

"If you hadn't done this on a plan, you wouldn't be taking ad-



vantage of every acre," Gaskamp says.

A grazing plan helps you manage land and livestock with purpose. It brings clarity to your season and flexibility to your operation. If you're ready to go

deeper, consider attending Noble's Business of Grazing course. You'll learn how to build your plan, make economic decisions and evaluate infrastructure investments. Visit noble.org to find a course near you. 

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Land Market Report

By Jared Groce

Land buyers showed a bit more confidence last month, with an increase in both property showings and offers across the area. Smaller tracts continue to draw the most attention, as many buyers are looking for a place to build a rural residence.

Larger parcels are also beginning to catch the eye of investors and developers, as more people grow comfortable with the current geopolitical climate.

Over the past month, prop-erties have been selling faster than in previous months, and the gap between asking and selling prices has narrowed.

The hope is for continued, steady growth in the land market—without the kind of sudden spike that could fuel further inflation. Summer is here, and it'll be interesting to see what it brings. 

COUNTY	AREA	ACRES	\$ ACRE	LIST \$	SOLD \$	SALE / LIST	DOM
CLAY	NONE						
COLLIN	FARMERSVILLE	20.87	\$31,145	\$699,000	\$650,000	93.00%	33
COLLIN	WYLIE	19.82	\$234,588	\$4,850,000	\$4,650,000	95.90%	1
	AVG	20.35	\$132,867	\$2,774,500	\$2,650,000	94.40%	17
COOKE	LINDSAY	11	\$20,455	\$247,500	\$225,000	90.90%	626
COOKE	MUENSTER	12.5	\$18,331	\$225,000	\$229,140	101.80%	659
COOKE	GAINESVILLE	30.39	\$21,389	\$689,000	\$650,000	94.30%	46
COOKE	ERA	37.84	\$26,295	\$1,060,000	\$995,000	93.90%	38
COOKE	VALLEY VIEW	95.14	\$17,563	\$2,140,650	\$1,670,965	78.10%	3
COOKE	GAINESVILLE	385.06	\$11,686	\$4,970,000	\$4,500,000	90.50%	131
	AVG	95.32	\$19,286	\$1,555,358	\$1,378,351	91.60%	251
DENTON	PILOT POINT	17.23	\$62,320	\$1,450,000	\$1,073,649	74.00%	91
DENTON	KRUM	121.16	\$18,070	\$2,420,000	\$2,189,341	90.50%	10
DENTON	PILOT POINT	16.7	\$143,713	\$2,449,000	\$2,400,000	98.00%	19
DENTON	PILOT POINT	46.13	\$113,916	\$5,460,000	\$5,254,720	96.20%	30
	AVG	50.3	\$84,505	\$2,944,750	\$2,729,428	96.20%	38
GRAYSON	DENISON	14.23	\$26,001	\$370,000	\$370,000	100.00%	197
GRAYSON	WHITESBORO	12.21	\$32,771	\$399,900	\$400,000	100.00%	106
GRAYSON	TIOGA	17.62	\$35,181	\$750,000	\$620,000	82.70%	503
GRAYSON	WHITESBORO	15	\$48,333	\$900,000	\$725,000	80.60%	25
GRAYSON	HOWE	21.5	\$44,651	\$995,000	\$960,000	96.50%	32
GRAYSON	PILOT POINT	30	\$49,167	\$1,800,000	\$1,475,000	81.90%	9
GRAYSON	SHERMAN	82.57	\$27,995	\$2,640,000	\$2,311,428	87.60%	513
GRAYSON	PILOT POINT	43.49	\$82,000	\$4,131,360	\$3,566,000	86.30%	299
	AVG	29.58	\$43,262	\$1,498,283	\$1,303,429	89.40%	211
JACK	PERRIN	20	\$15,000	\$309,000	\$300,000	97.10%	624
JACK	PERRIN	31	\$14,839	\$466,500	\$460,000	98.60%	104
JACK	JACKSBORO	29.9	\$20,401	\$675,000	\$610,000	90.40%	9
JACK	CHICO	58	\$11,128	\$710,000	\$645,445	90.90%	9
JACK	JACKSBORO	31.27	\$25,744	\$322,000	\$310,000	96.27%	276
JACK	JACKSBORO	111.1	\$7,651	\$877,690	\$850,000	96.80%	76
JACK	JERMYN	530	\$5,849	\$3,286,000	\$3,100,000	94.30%	335
	AVG	115.9	\$14,373	\$949,456	\$896,492	94.91%	205
MONTAGUE	BOWIE	31.68	\$11,932	\$395,000	\$378,000	95.70%	88
MONTAGUE	FORESTBURG	61	\$12,049	\$783,000	\$735,000	93.90%	60
	AVG	46.34	\$11,991	\$589,000	\$556,500	94.80%	74
WISE	CHICO	15	\$10,467	\$169,000	\$157,000	92.90%	202
WISE	CHICO	11.01	\$18,983	\$212,000	\$209,000	98.60%	1
WISE	DECATUR	12.51	\$24,380	\$338,000	\$305,000	90.20%	927
WISE	PARADISE	11.46	\$27,042	\$309,900	\$309,900	100.00%	47
WISE	BOYD	12	\$32,000	\$384,000	\$384,000	100.00%	99
WISE	DECATUR	11.91	\$50,302	\$599,000	\$599,000	100.00%	4
	AVG	12.31	\$27,196	\$335,317	\$327,317	97.00%	213

Laughter is the Best Medicine

By Martha Crump



In the author's humble opinion, life gets even tougher when you can't look at some of the tough situations with a bit of amusement. (Courtesy photo)

According to various sources, the late, great John Wayne once said, “Life is hard. It’s even harder when you’re stupid.” In my humble opinion, life gets even tougher when you can’t look at some of the tough, real-life situations and reflect on them with a bit of amusement.

Or, at the very least, laugh at yourself for how you tried to handle them. I get it; I really do. In some cases, it takes a year or more before we can find humor in these events. But when you can eventually laugh at those situations and/or life circumstances, you’re in a good place.

My maternal grandfather shared a story from his time working on a ranch as a young married man. The ranch owner’s wife had imported a registered Persian female cat. Apparently, the cat didn’t adapt well to ranch life and decided to take off—well, sort of. As they were pretty remote, the cat must’ve thought discretion was the better part of valor, relocating only to the barn area. The owner’s wife was so upset that she told my grandfather if he could catch the runaway cat, he could have her.

Granddad, being the enterprising fellow he was, saw an opportunity. He figured raising

registered Persian cats and selling them would make a nice sideline to his wages. So, off he went with a tow sack in hand, ready to catch the Persian princess.

The cat enticement process took a while, but eventually, he cornered her in a granary using a baited trap. After the dust settled, he said there wasn’t an inch on him that wasn’t bleeding—and he still hadn’t gotten the “fluffy little kitty” (my words, not his) into the sack.

Being the consummate storyteller, he’d set the hook, and we, his rapt audience, were eager to ask, “What happened then?”

He grinned and replied, “Well, I wiped the blood out of my eyes and got the hell out of that grain bin with that devil cat!”

After we stopped laughing, he left us with some wisdom. First, easy money is never really easy. Second, he didn’t figure there was a male cat in the country, short of a bobcat, that would consider mating with the Persian princess. And given his luck, he wasn’t about to risk trapping a bobcat to see if he was tough enough. As far as he knew, that cat was still living the high life in her barn kingdom—and that was fine with him.

This story has stuck with me all these years because it was told with humor, and the lessons came wrapped in that same humor. That seems to be my family's trademark, and we've been known to raise a few eyebrows with what we find funny. Just the other day, I was scrolling through some feeds when something caught my eye.

It was a short piece by Julie Carter, a writer, photographer, and self-described "has-been of many trades," including ranching, rodeo, and go-fer specialist. If the title of her short piece hadn't already hooked me, her bio definitely did.

Sometimes, other folks put together such sound information in such a humorous way that it immediately tells you they've "been there and done that." And that they've reflected on it, probably laughed about it, and gained some valuable insight. With just a pinch of humor, they're sharing a wealth of knowledge.

I've personally heard variations of most of these comments from ranch wives who work alongside their spouses, and I've heard similar sentiments from women outside of Agribusiness as well. So, in the words of Julie Carter, here's some advice for the ranchwife

Ranchwife 101 **By Julie Carter**

1. Always load your horse last in the trailer so it's the first one unloaded. By the time he's got his horse unloaded, you'll have your cinch pulled and be mounted up, ready to go—lessening the chance of him riding off without you while your horse tries to follow and you're still struggling to get your foot in the stirrup.
2. Never—and I repeat, never—believe the phrase "We'll be right back" when he asks you to help him with something out on the ranch. The echoing words, "This will only take a little while," have filtered through generations of ranch wives and still should inspire



sincere distrust in the woman who hears them.

3. Always know there is NO romantic intention when he asks you to take a ride in the pickup with him around the ranch to check waters and look at cattle. What that sweet request really means is he wants someone to open and close gates.
4. He will always expect you to quickly find one stray in a four-section, brush-covered pasture, but he'll never be able to find the mayonnaise jar in four square feet of the refrigerator.
5. Count every head of everything you see—cattle especially, but sometimes horses, deer, quail, or whatever moves. Count it in the gate, out the gate, or on the horizon. The first time you don't count is when he'll expect you to. That blank, eyelash-batting look you give him when he asks, "How many?" will not be acceptable.
6. Know that you'll never be able to ride a horse or drive a pickup to suit him. Given the choice of jobs, choose throwing feed off the back of the pickup. If he's on the back and you're driving, expect constant criticism of your speed, ability, and eyesight. "How in the @# could


you NOT see that hole?"

7. Never let yourself be on foot in the alley when he's sorting cattle horseback. When he's shoved 20 head of running, bucking, kicking yearlings at you and hollers, "Hold 'em, hold 'em!" at the top of his lungs, don't think you can do it without loss of life or limb. Contrary to what he'll lead you to believe, walking back to the house is always an option that's been used throughout time.
8. Don't expect him to correctly close the snap-on tops of the plastic refrigerator containers, but know he'll expect you to always close every gate. His reasoning? The cows will get out; the food will not.
9. Always praise him when he helps in the kitchen—just as you do when he helps with the ranch work—or not.
10. Know that when you step out of the house, you move from the "wife" department to "hired hand" status. Although the word "hired" implies there should be a paycheck that you'll never see, rest assured, you'll have job security. The price is just right. And most of the time, you'll be "The best help he has," even if it's only

because you're the ONLY help he has.

Well said, Ms. Carter! I can honestly say I've lived each and every one of these scenarios personally, and from casual conversations with many ranching women I know, so have they. Now, fellows, if you've compiled a list about us, and I say "IF," please don't hesitate to share it with me. We'll do our best to give you a turn on the page. In the meantime, try to find the good, see the beauty, and in trying situations, let yourself laugh at the "funny" in the everyday world around you. Those lessons that are hard-won go down much easier with a big ol' dollop of humor!

The next meeting of the WFACW organization will be held on August 18, 2025, at the Forum, 2120 Speedway, Wichita Falls, TX. The meetings are always on the third Tuesday of the month. Members attending the midday meeting are encouraged to bring their lunch and enjoy eating and visiting starting at 11:30, followed by the business meeting at 12:00 noon.

For more information, be sure to follow the Wichita Falls Area CattleWomen (WFACW) on Facebook. 

Grazing North Texas

By Tony Dean, tonydean.tx1@gmail.com

Making it Better



Shane Cody examines his beautiful stand of range grass established this spring. This picture was taken about 90 days after planting. (Photos courtesy of Tony Dean)

Shane Cody is no stranger to working the land. He and his brother, Wes, grew up in a family that frequently acquired worn-out and neglected farm and ranch parcels, then brought them back to life through a commitment to the land and long-needed conserva-

tion practices. The two brothers received an early education in brush clearing, grass planting, and fence building.

When Shane and his wife, Casey, acquired a pasture in Clay County in 2022, they had a sense of what they were getting into.

However, now it was their land that needed attention, and their money that had to be spent. "The land was covered with mesquite," said Shane. "Most of the brush was so thick that a coyote would have trouble crawling through it!"

The Codys had two main goals

as they began this daunting process. Their short-term goal was to shift the land back to productive grazing land while improving wildlife habitat. This meant much of the mesquite had to go, but not all of it. Some mesquite would remain for deer cover, and other



areas would be treated with aerial chemical application.

Their long-term goal was to manage the land in a way that would blend well with the other properties in their ranching operation, leaving their sons with good, productive grazing lands for the future.

Grubbing of the mesquite began in 2023. Progress was slow due to the density of the brush, but this was expected. The brush was grubbed with an excavator, raked into piles, and burned. Then came the tough work of removing sticks, stumps, rocks, and other debris by hand, with help from sons Carson and Cannon, and their cousin Pate. The land was then Rome plowed and dragged with an I-beam, followed by another round of debris removal and plowing with a drag to prepare the seedbed. Shane's brother, Coye, brought in his skid steer and really made the job look good.

The soils in the pasture are clay-based, capable of growing short to knee-high native grasses. Once the land clearing was completed, the Codys decided to plant a mixture of grasses, which included:

Kleingrass 75 — 25%

Wilman lovegrass — 25%

WW-B Dahl bluestem — 20%

Haskell Sideoats grama — 20%

Green Sprangle top — 10%

Illinois Bundleflower, a native perennial forb, was also added to the mix to encourage wildlife use.


Seeding took place in mid-March of 2025 using a Brillion grass drill. In the three months following the seeding, an abundance of rain fell over North Texas, with the area receiving more than 20 inches. The rain encouraged the germination of the grass seed but also led to a heavy crop of weeds, which were mowed on June 1.

A successful stand of good-



Wilman lovegrass (left) was the first grass to germinate, followed by Kleingrass.

quality perennial grass doesn't happen by accident. It is often a long, drawn-out process requiring dedication and attention to detail. In the case of the Cody family,

everyone chipped in—brothers, sons, cousins, and others. The result was an established stand of grass in less than 90 days from planting, one that will support the family's grazing needs for generations to come. 

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The Many Benefits of Rabbit Manure

By Landon Moore



Because rabbit manure doesn't need to be aged, it retains more of its nutrients and is therefore twice as rich as chicken manure and four times more potent than horse or cow manure. (Photos courtesy of Landon Moore)

Rabbits offer a lot to the home gardener, and perhaps the most useful of all is their waste. Rabbit manure is likely the single most versatile and valuable fertilizer of any animal manure.

It's a "cold" manure, meaning it can be applied directly to plants in any form without the risk of burning them. In contrast, manure from sheep, horses, cows, and especially poultry must be aged before it's applied, or it may damage plants.

Because rabbit manure doesn't need to be aged, it retains more of its nutrients and is therefore twice as rich as chicken manure and four times more potent than horse or cow manure.

Rabbit manure is safe to apply to soil growing edible crops, has virtually no smell, and contains no

harmful seeds. It can be used immediately, or be dried, powdered, made into tea, or turned into worm castings. A single trio of rabbits and their offspring can produce up to two cubic yards of fertilizer per year, along with 100 to 200 pounds of meat.

Rabbit manure is in such high demand as a fertilizer, particularly for roses, that it's often sold online at a premium price.

Some rabbitry owners even charge people to come scoop the manure themselves, paying by the bag. Larger rabbitries might sell by the truckload, but many owners keep it all for their own gardens.

You may wonder what makes this little mammal's excrement so uniquely useful. To understand, we first need to look at the qualities that make it special and then

explore its various applications.

To begin with, let's take a closer look at a rabbit's biology. Contrary to popular belief, rabbits are not rodents but belong to the order Lagomorpha and family Leporidae, along with hares. All domestic rabbits are domesticated European rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) and are unable to produce fertile offspring with American cottontails.

Rabbits are considered "pseudo-ruminants" because they have a single-chambered stomach, but they also have an organ called the cecum, which functions similarly to a rumen and makes up about 40% of their digestive tract. They are crepuscular, meaning they are most active at dawn and dusk, typically feeding in the evening.

Rabbits actually produce two

kinds of manure. The familiar dry pellets make up most of their waste, while the other type, known as "cecotropes," is a moist and smelly substance resembling tiny bunches of grapes. Cecotropes are not fully digested, and because rabbits cannot chew their cud, they reingest the cecotropes as they are excreted. This fermented substance allows the rabbit to absorb more nutrients than it would through initial digestion. While cecotropes are occasionally found in cage trays, the feeding behavior that leads to them is usually only witnessed by the rabbit owner.

The dry pellets are the true manure that most people are familiar with. These small, round, dry pellets have almost no smell when kept dry. When crushed,

continued on page 20

continued from page 19

they break down into a powder resembling tiny grass fragments because, in essence, that's what they are. Some people crush the pellets before applying them to speed up their absorption into the soil, while others appreciate their "slow-release" feature.

Additionally, the manure's water solubility can be exploited in several ways. Soaking a wheelbarrow full of manure creates a potent sludge that can be easily applied to flat surfaces. If the odor is not an issue, the smell will dissipate once the manure is either dissolved by moisture or dried by the sun. Another method is to make manure tea: fill a cloth bag with manure, seal it, and submerge it in a barrel of water for a few weeks.

A simpler method involves placing damp manure at the bottom of a barrel, filling it with water, and letting it sit in the sun for a couple of weeks. Stir occasionally, and you'll have a powerful liquid fertilizer ready for use.

Domestic rabbits should be fed a modern, pelleted feed, which provides all the nutrients they require. This diet eliminates the risk of noxious seeds being present in the manure, making it safe to apply directly to the lawn, especially during winter. Winter and spring rains will break it down, and by late spring, you'll have a healthy carpet of turf.

Rabbit manure's nutrient content varies depending on factors like storage, age, and diet, but it generally contains around 2% nitrogen (N), 1.3% phosphorus (P), and 1.2% potassium (K). The Oregon Extension Service gives a range of 3-4.8% nitrogen, 1.5-2.8% phosphorus, and 1-1.3% potassium.

Even at the lower end of the scale, rabbit manure has higher nitrogen content than poultry manure and twice the nitrogen content of cattle manure. One reason rabbit manure doesn't burn plants is due to the biology of birds, which lack bladders and produce



more ammonia in their waste. In contrast, rabbits release ammonia in their urine, which is why their manure may have a stronger odor.

Because of its balanced nitrogen-to-phosphorus ratio, rabbit manure promotes a wider variety of species in the same application area. Applying it directly to heavy clay soils will improve them quickly, especially when combined with other organic matter. It can also improve sandy soils by adding texture and helping them retain moisture.

Anyone raising rabbits will have a steady supply of manure, as they are efficient producers. A small herd of 17 animals, including their litters, can produce about one ton of manure annually.

Beyond fertilizing, rabbit manure has several other uses. It is considered the best food for earthworms and can be combined with moisture-holding bedding like peat moss, shredded paper, or hay taken from used nestboxes.

Many rabbitries (including my own) keep worm beds right under the cages. The resulting castings are rich in nutrients and can be used as-is or incorporated into soil amendments. A couple of feet of manure under a foot of soil in a hotbox can generate enough warmth to start and grow seeds, even in cold climates like




Vermont.

In Europe and Asia, the rabbit meat industry is a billion-dollar market. While the Czech Republic leads in per capita consumption (over 8 pounds per person annually), China is the leading producer of rabbit meat.

A recent study in China examined the effects of replacing peat moss in seed-starting soil with rabbit manure. The study found no significant difference in germination rates and noted that the manure provided increased nutri-

ents for seedlings. The ideal ratios for seed-starting soil were found to be one-third manure, one-third perlite, and one-third vermiculite, or half manure and half perlite.

Rabbit manure is often overlooked as a nuisance, but as we can see, it's an incredibly versatile soil conditioner, excellent fertilizer, ideal food for earthworms, and a superior seed-starting medium.

Anyone with rabbits should consider this benefit, in addition to having a meat supply, exhibition livestock, or pets. 

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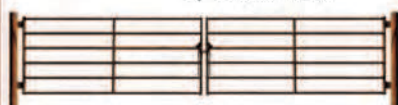
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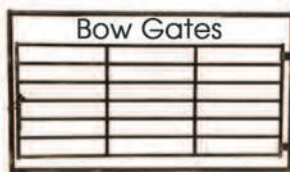
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# North Texas Fair & Rodeo Announces Music Lineup

Continuing its legacy of western heritage, family fun and exceptional entertainment, the 97th Annual North Texas Fair & Rodeo will take place August 15-24, 2025 at

the North Texas Fairgrounds, with nightly rodeos starting at 7:30 p.m. followed by some of the hottest country music!

On June 12, 2025, the North Texas State Fair Association released this year's full concert lineup at the Denton Chamber of Commerce membership luncheon.

Every August, NTFR consistently brings exceptional country music to the north Texas region with not one, but two stages, and multiple shows daily.

Kicking off the event, Shane

Smith & The Saints will perform on the Miller Lite Main Stage Friday, August 15. Then, throughout nine more days of fair fun, headlining artists will include Sawyer Brown, Chancey Williams, Jake Hooker & The Outsiders, Kody West, The Wilder Blue, Ian Munsick, Randall King, Uncle Kracker and Los Pescadores Del Rio Conchos.

"We are so excited to bring live music of this caliber to Denton once again," said NTFR Executive Director Glenn Carlton. "We strive every year to make this event better than it was the previous year, and these artists are sure to put on a great show for all our rodeo and concert fans."

Each evening, NTFR will also

feature supporting concerts on the Cool Zone Revolver Stage, showcasing both local artists and emerging talent from across the country.

These will include Austin Akins, Colby Keeling, Charlie Hickman, Dax Davis, Western Rewind, David Adam Byrnes, Jolie Holliday, Sonny Burgess, Brian Houser, Shane Hamilton Band, Raised Right Men, Ashley Ewing, Bailee Rae, Payton Howie, Shelby Stone, Beau Harris, Jared Thomas, Jason Kyle Wickens, Silverada, Cameron Hobbs, The Damn Torpedoes and Texas Latino.

Continuing the legacy of the association, this year's event will once again bring the north Texas community together to cherish

our western heritage with LIVE entertainment, FUN attractions and NEW exhibits – once again for a full 10 days!

The NTFR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Western heritage.

All revenue is reinvested into programs, scholarships and facilities. The NTFR and its associates contribute around \$500,000 each year to area youth. According to the Center of Economic Development at the University of North Texas, the NTFR and its facilities have a \$7 million economic impact in Denton County and an approximately \$4 million impact on the City of Denton.

For information or to purchase tickets, visit [ntfair.com](http://ntfair.com). 



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# Born & Bred

## ISABELLE PARKEY

**A** Advocating for agriculture and the rural lifestyle comes naturally for 17-year-old Isabelle Parkey, a sixth-generation cattle rancher who's already building a meaningful calling around what she knows and loves best.







Story by Blanche Schaefer  
Photo by Jamie Creel Photography





Top: Isabelle has been involved with agriculture from a very young age. (Photo by MD Livestock Creations)  
Right: Isabelle's family raises commercial Brangus and registered Brangus cattle. (Photo by Next Level Images)

Isabelle Parkey’s fondest memories have centered around cattle for as long as she can remember. “My family has been running cattle since the 1800s in Archer and Clay Counties. My dad’s now a banker and part-time rancher, but when I grew up, he was a ranch manager. When my mom would go to work when I was 2 or 3 years old, I would ride around in the feed truck with my dad, and that’s how I remember my childhood. Reading my little books and coloring books in the feed truck, feeding cows every day with my dad,” now-17-year-old Parkey fondly recalled. “Growing up in the agriculture industry has taught

me so much. I’ve been so involved at such a young age, and that’s something I’m really thankful for, because I know not everyone gets that chance to grow up in such a great industry. I’ve been taught so much from a young age, just about cattle and how to care for others and care for the animals God has given us, and just how to become a better person through that.” Parkey is a former Archer City High School student who is now homeschooled and will enter her senior year of high school this fall. She currently boasts a resume that seems far beyond her years. But spend a few moments speaking with the bright young student, and







it's not surprise how she's already accomplished all that she has in such a short time.

"I started out showing heifers when I turned 7, which I did very competitively, since I grew up on a cow-calf operation. We raise commercial Brangus and registered Brangus, and I added on showing steers my freshman year of high school, which I thoroughly love. We show Americans and a few exotics, and I also show some Limousin heifers here and there," she said. "I currently serve as the International Junior Brangus Breeders Association vice president, and I'm also very involved in 4-H in multiple different ways."

4-H has been a huge part of Parkey's life. Though she just stepped down from two big roles, her 4-H involvement is something to which she credits much of her early success in leadership. It's also led her to incredible global opportunities in agriculture, such

as traveling to Japan this summer with the Texas Youth Livestock Ambassadors group to learn about Japanese agriculture.

"I just retired two of my biggest roles, one of those being the Texas 4-H second vice president on State Council, and the other being the District Three 4-H president. Both of those were a lot of fun, and I got to meet so many amazing people through both of those, and it's just an experience of a lifetime," Parkey explained. "I also serve as a Texas Youth Livestock Ambassador through 4-H, and I've served as that since the summer of 2023 and loved every minute of that."

Parkey's engaging personality, passion for her industry and well-spoken demeanor make her an obvious fit for the roles in which she's served. She says having mentors within the cattle community helped push her to step up and out of her comfort zone as a younger girl and begin pursuing

positions within her organizations.

"The Brangus breed isn't small, per se, but it's a very close group of people. I was very close with a lot of directors who were 10 years older than me when I was little and really looked up to them, so I knew that was something I wanted to do one day. My personality is also very leadership-motivated," Parkey said. "I've always loved working with groups, working with people, and I love the Brangus breed as a whole. When I was old enough to pursue a leadership position, I knew that was the right role for me."

Positively impacting her fellow students is important to Parkey. She wants to serve as the same type of role model to whom she looked up when she was younger.

"I really like seeing the next generation come up, the kids who I once was, seeing them grow. I'm very involved with younger kids in the Brangus and 4-H, and

seeing them grow up and step into position has obviously been one of my favorite parts, because it's all about the next generation," she said. "If we don't train the next generation, we're going to be left with nothing. I think a really amazing part has been just connecting with younger kids and growing both the breed of Brangus and 4-H."

Parkey, who has her sights set on attending college for an agricultural communications degree and plans to eventually launch a livestock marketing company, credits three of her most important mentors as Tyler Kelly, Briana Hicks and Lori Edwards-Dunkerley.

"Tyler has become like an older brother; he's really stepped into my life in the past five years and taught me so much about showing cattle, which is one of my favorite things," Parkey said. "On the mentorship side, I've had quite a

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few in the breed and in Texas 4-H. One in the breed is Briana Hicks, who is about five or six years older than I am. Growing up, she was always on state boards and national boards. She was National Brangus Queen when I was Brangus Sweetheart, and we would do everything together and got really close. My first year on the board was her last year on the board, so that was a really cool experience. Lori Edwards is also someone I look up to so much. She's our International Brangus Adviser, and she does so much for us and is such a great leader and someone I aspire to be like every day."

Just as Parkey's mentors have encouraged her to advocate for the agriculture and cattle industries, she hopes to do the same for fellow kids growing up in rural America.

"It is so important to step up and advocate for what you believe in, because if there weren't leaders and advocates, then this industry wouldn't be here. We have to have those strong voices. I understand not everyone wants to be a leader, but there's a spot for everyone in 4-H or a breed association or even



Just as Isabelle's mentors have encouraged her to advocate for the ag and cattle industries, she hopes to do the same for fellow kids in rural America.

Top photo by Taryn Landes with MD Livestock Creations.

Bottom photo by Lindsay Hanewich.





Isabelle says the most important thing ag kids can do is take the first step and get involved.

Top Left photo by Megan Dunn with Next Level Images.

Top Right photo by Anna Magunson.

a bigger level, like something on your state level like a lobbyist in your career. There's a spot for everyone to advocate for this industry, and it's so important to just get involved, even at your local level, to just speak up for this industry, because you never know when something's going to happen or we aren't going to have it," Parkey said. "I believe it's so important to speak up for what we believe in and take opportunities to talk to people who are uneducated about livestock. When you're in the big city, talk to the fairgoers about livestock. They've never seen an animal, never seen a cow before, and they don't understand what's going on or the difference between a bull, heifer or cow. Take time and talk to people about what agriculture is, what we stand for, and where we're going."

She says the most important thing ag kids can do is to just take the first step and get involved, no matter how small the role or how intimidating it may seem at first.

"I would recommend for all kids to get involved in your local 4-H club or your local FFA chapter, because nothing can get done if you keep saying no to things or turning down opportunities," Parkey said. "You never know when a door is going to open, and it can completely change your life. If I would have stayed shy and scared, I never would have gotten any of the opportunities that I currently have, and each and every one has changed my life. Even the rejections have made me a better person. My biggest piece of advice is to take every opportunity you get, because you never know where it can take you. 🍀"





# Casey Deary Wins 2025 NRHA Derby Championship on Customize My Dream

Article and Photos Courtesy of NRHA Media



The 2025 Level 4 Open Champions of the 6666 NRHA Derby presented by Markel were Weatherford's Casey Deary and Customizze My Dream. (Photos by Carolyn Simancik provided by NRHA)

Reining champions were crowned for the first time in the OG&E Coliseum at the 6666 NRHA Derby presented by Markel on Saturday, June 21. NRHA \$5 Million Rider Casey Deary and Customize My Dream carried the torch for the sport of reining to become Level 4 Open Derby Champions.

The Level 4 Open Derby finals was a display of reining greatness. Twenty-five out of the 33 runs (76 percent) earned a score of 220 or higher from the judges. But none were able to dominate the new OG&E Coliseum as much as the final draw - Customize My Dream and Casey Deary.

The team dazzled with their

powerful maneuvers and finesse, wrapping up the aged event portion of the competition with a stunning 233.5. The 6-year-old stallion, who was nominated by Garth Hystad, took home \$100,000 (including nominator incentives) for the performance.

"That horse didn't have 15 minutes worth of warming up

before he came in here to horse show," said Deary, who also showed the horse's full brother Custom Dreams from Draw 26. "He stopped and ran backward really well. I felt like the finish work on each maneuver helped sell the deal. He turned around really good both ways, and I finally got it shut off at the right spot."





“He circled great - fast and slow - and the lead change worked really well,” Deary continued. “He rolled back extremely well both directions, and I think that helped move the needle up.”

The crowd erupted with excitement as Deary and his team were overcome with emotion. Deary called it an honor to be the first NRHA Level 4 Open Derby Champion in the new facility, but winning it for owner/breeder Devin Warren was even more meaningful.

“This horse was raised by the Warren family,” Deary said. “It was a pretty special night to win it on him, a really great opportunity for that horse to shine. There’s a lot of people praying for that whole family. It’s out of our hands, but it’s not out of God’s hands. It was special for Garrett [Warren’s son] to get to be here and watch all of it and get to be included in it. You try to make as many happy

moments as you can make.”

Among the happy moments over the last week were stellar performances in the preliminary round. Customize My Dream tied for third in the prelim with a 228, while Custom Dreams, another horse from Warren’s program now owned by Custom Dreams Brazil, won the first round after marking a 229.5. Both horses are by NRHA Hall of Famer Magnum Chic Dream and out of Gunna Be Custom.

Custom Dream finished Top 5 in the finals with a 227.5, worth \$22,046. Deary’s third finalist, Pale Face Vintage (Platinum Vintage x Chic Out My Gold), marked a 222.5 to land 21st and \$4,680 for owner Robert Escoc.

Customize My Dream, who was the 2022 NRHA Level 4 Open Futurity Reserve Champion with Deary, now boasts incredible NRHA lifetime earnings of more than \$400,000. And with such tal-



ented horses in his string, Deary is looking forward to the remainder of the show season. He said the next major stop for his Derby standouts is likely The Run For

A Million.

“They’re really good,” Deary said. “They’re happy and they’re sound, so I’m going to keep going as long as they’ll let me.”

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# Summer Traveling Tips

By Krista Lucas Wynn | Copy Editor



Whether staying in North Texas, or traveling across the country, remember to enjoy the experience, but be prepared. (Courtesy photos)

**B**y the month of August, summer is in full swing, and equine enthusiasts will be traveling to rodeos, trail rides and other events with their equine partners. Whether traveling across North Texas or across the country, it is important to know the tricks of the trade before leaving home.

It is vital to carry fresh water when traveling. Offering clean, cool water to horses keeps them hydrated and ready to perform.

Water can be hung in a trailer, stall or while tied to the trailer for a horse to be able to drink at leisure. Stalled horses should have at least two buckets in front of them at all times. It may even be beneficial to pack electrolytes to help replace any lost hydration while on the road. Fans are important to have on hand as well. Box fans may be used while stalling away from home, to keep air flowing during these hot summer days.

Be sure to take plenty of hay and feed, depending on the duration of the trip. If going away for a few hours, one hay bag may suffice. When staying overnight somewhere, it is vital to be able to feed the horse's usual grain from home while on the road, and owners may need to bring bags of shavings for stalls or the trailer, for more comfortable bedding.

Grooming supplies are also important to have on hand. Brushes,

curry combs and hoof picks are a few to not leave home without, along with fly spray and Show-Sheen for the mane and tail. Depending on the discipline, owners may need a few other things besides a saddle, pad, bridle, leg wraps, and bell boots. If going very far from home, it is a good idea to bring multiple of each, just in case something breaks. Some owners even pack a few extra horseshoes and shoeing tools in





case of an emergency.

Speaking of emergencies, it is also important to have certain medical supplies on hand. A veterinarian may not always be on hand or convenient to get ahold of. Horses that are traveling up and down the road, may experience episodes of colic, tying up or other illnesses due to the stress of traveling. Always seek a veterinarian's help when available, but be prepared by packing an emergency first aid kit. There are plenty of lists available online to help decide what a horse may need while on the road. Properly taking care of and knowing the horse can be critical in avoiding emergencies while traveling.

Weather can play a factor in travel, and it is important to be prepared for all types. Being weather aware can also help avoid catastrophe on the road with horses. Other items to consider if going very far include auto products like spare tires and tools to change a

flat. Also, always fuel up when the opportunity arises. Many northern states do not have as many diesel pumps or diesel exhaust fluid available like Texas.

Horses will also need proper papers to travel across state lines. Negative coggins papers and a health certificate is a must. Most events or public places require both.

Coggins is a yearly blood test checking for antibodies against the transmissible viral disease, Equine Infectious Anemia, and a clean health certificate can be obtained for one specific address or for up to six months if traveling multiple places.

Before leaving home, go over this checklist to get started on packing for the next adventure with an equine partner.

Whether staying in North Texas, or traveling across the country, remember to enjoy the experience, and hopefully this list will help to prepare. 🐾

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# Picking Up Pieces, One Step at a Time

By JoAnne Moore

Every day, I lace up walking shoes and head out the door, down the drive and out to the road I live on in Justin. Depending on the season and the weather, I dress for consideration of the heat, humidity, rain, and this past year, even snow. The time of day varies but it is a daily commitment rarely missed.

My husband and I have met many folks along the road. We make a point to wave at everyone that passes us. Some drivers stare straight ahead, some look bewildered, not appreciating neighborly friendliness, while still others stop to introduce themselves, often commenting on the bucket we carry to collect cans, empty cigarette packs, and fast-food carry-out waste dumped along our beautiful road.

We have collected enough cans to fill trash can after trash can with carelessly discarded waste belonging to others to preserve the road's beauty.

We met a man on a bike a few months back and that conversation began a mutually beneficial arrangement. We collect the cans and give them to the local Rotary Club through our new friend. We've been told the Club matches the proceeds generated by recycling and then donates the combined funds raised to The Ronald McDonald House.

Cleaning up becomes a gift to benefit others.

The unfortunate truth is that many travelers of this road do not live on it, and those tossing trash along its margins don't think twice about how the selfish dumping of waste looks to those living along this road if the trash remains; an unwanted gift so to speak.



A simple change in perspective could correct the littering.

I have been amazed to find oversized items dumped--anything from porcelain toilets, metal poles with concrete bases, sacks and sacks of Ready-Mix concrete, recliners, twin busted water heaters - you name it. Whether the garbage is littered along the road or over the bridge into the creek below or her banks, there are folks in this world who take this little town, the beauty all around, or the view that another has daily for granted and they spread their junk all over for someone else to clean up.

Soon after starting this daily walking ritual, I met a neighbor

out on the road who stopped her car and commented that she found it remarkable that I never had ear pods in while walking. She was amused that I had nothing to listen to. I disagreed.

I prefer to listen to the wind in the trees, the beautiful songs of the various birds, a cranky egret that takes flight from a roadside pond, a barn owl who has lost his watch and is active in the afternoon, the train through our town, the sound of approaching cars for my own safety, cattle in the pastures, my neighbor's tractor in the distance.

My husband is unnerved by the train that cuts through town. He says the horns are abusively long and loud. I nod but remain

silent, my ears tuned to the cardinal who sounds as if he's declaring "They're here! They're here! They're here!"

We might chat a bit as we walk but often fall into step, and into silence, alone with our own thoughts. I find some days my thoughts are louder than the train.

I have begun intentionally taking photos up and down my beloved road at specific bends or straightaways on the first day of every month. Sometimes the changes in nature happen rapidly, jarring me with how quickly trees or shrubs or fields have grown, or perhaps died off. However, most often the changes happen slowly, undetected daily, evident only





when compared with other photos across thirty, sixty or ninety days.

The leaves in the trees filled in late this Spring, the poison oak raging back to life, becoming a thick carpet after the rain and making trash retrieval challenging. I witness the bends in the road where I can no longer see the creek's rise and fall through the dense growth of trees and vines. I stop to snap a photo of Indian Blanket bursting with color dotting the sides of the road. In one road-side field, I struggle to find in the reflected lens what my eyes take in.

The array of wildflowers that are so brilliant, swaying in the wind, disappears against the green grass in the phone's camera frame. After multiple tries, I realize I need to get low, shoot from bottoms of stems to have them burst in color against a spring cornflower blue sky to capture the contrast and this temporary gift of beauty.

Last year as Fall made her debut, I called it my Golden Road, in awe of the turning of leaves from a rich dark green, to lighter shades, until the leaves began to glow all together. A dear old oak that stands at the end of our property put on her impressive display when she stretched out gold against the dappled sunlight in the afternoon. Photo worthy. And then Fall made her exit, surrendering to the crisp winds that stripped the trees bare.

I have already walked nearly eight hundred miles so far this year in 2025, roughly three hundred more miles than I walked last year at this time. This road holds gifts for me. This daily rain-or-shine appointment allows me to observe external physical changes in my body as a result. More muscle, more mosquito bites than I can count, sun-lightened hair, suntanned skin. Miles and miles of time spent along this stretch have trained my eyes to look for the beautiful things I might experience while simultaneously on the lookout for the things I do not want to see like a coach whip

snake glistening in the morning sun, raising his head as I approach before all six feet of him zip off into the vines. I don't enjoy sharing the road with the snakes but there are other critters I encounter that entertain from time to time. Deer, rabbits, foxes, or armadillos - I have encountered them all along this country road and when I do, I stop for the moment, appreciating the diversity of this shared space and chance encounter.

I do my best thinking out on this road, away from the distractions and devices. As we approach Chapter 8 of 2025, August, I reflect on difficult chapters and those that I am still walking through eight months in.

The miles put in, alone with my thoughts, are strengthening my interior as I ponder a recent cancer diagnosis for yet another loved one, my desire to find a new permanent church community, the fading memory of my father-in-law who is regressing in childlike ways that frighten him, my husband and me, and the sharp frustration that is heavy to carry for all three of us as we grapple with the next best steps for his care.

We can plan a route but often life surprises us with unforeseen challenges we did not see coming in the Story of our Life. The simple truth is that much of life is out of our control, but we can control how we walk through it, how we respond to the challenges we cannot predict or prevent. Often the only answer is to put one foot in front of the other and walk through the hard.

That hour on the road, sometimes twice a day, allows me to intentionally focus on the landscape of my thoughts; to touch base with my heart and my mind and the life changes that are difficult for me or for people in my life who I support, love, and pray for. These are the changes that are happening within me amidst the changes happening all around me from season to season on my road.

The exercise aspect of walking daily is important and beneficial to my physical body but the time outdoors, amongst the pecan, elm, and oak trees, witnessing the shifts in nature, is strengthening my heart, my mind, and my spirit and is priceless.

These days we are inundated by advertising campaigns on mission to convince us that we need costly solutions dependent on a person, place, or thing outside of us to provide health or contentment. Certainly, there are tools (not magic wands) available to assist with better physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health, no doubt. However, forgetting to unplug from devices, devouring a firehose of voices competing for our attention in the media, distracts us from our own thought-landscape which needs peace and quiet to be heard.

Just a small amount of time outdoors, which costs absolutely

nothing, observing nature's state of constant change might lead to observations of what is changing internally, or perhaps what is not changing that needs to. Change is frightening, disarming, humbling, and beautiful with perspective. Without it, life would be stagnant, boring and we would miss opportunities for growth within.

The road I walk daily isn't just a path through my neighborhood - it's a path through my life. As the seasons shift and the world around me transforms, so do I. And in learning to notice the subtle changes, I've learned how to keep moving forward - step by step, breath by breath, even when the road ahead is unclear.

When we are unable, unavailable - or unwilling--to lean into what is going on inside, while simultaneously observing what is all around us, we may end up spreading our junk all over for someone else to clean up. 🍷



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# WHEN A CITY GIRL *goes country*

By Annette Bridges

## When Ranchers Dress Up



Annette and her husband in October 2023, and the couple around 25 years ago. (Photo courtesy of Annette Bridges)

I'm one of those cattle ranching gals who enjoys any reason to exchange her jeans and rubber boots for a sassy dress and fancy boots. Of course, there are times when I wear some cute little sundress with my rubber boots out in the pasture. Who says there is a dress code for work clothes?

What woman doesn't like to have an excuse to get spruced up?

My hubby and I often look at ourselves when dressed for whatever special occasion and tell each other that we clean up pretty darn well. And why not?

It feels good to put on lavish and elegant duds!

Generally, when working on our ranch we wear clothes we don't worry about getting torn or stained. So, opportunities to get out our good stuff is a treat.

Dressing up for our evening meals is usually part of our vacation fun. Whether we've spent the day in our swimsuits at the beach or our jeans and flannel shirts fishing at our favorite mountain lake, changing into some festive attire for the evening is fun for these cattle ranchers.

Even after over forty years together our reasons for dressing up remain the same. I think the only thing different about us is the length and color of my hair! And a few pounds!

I intend to be like my mom during my senior years. That Mrs. was decked out in her best every day along with the appropriate accessories, jewelry and lipstick color.

I used to joke and say I can't drive my tractor without my lipstick on. Honestly, that is no joke! I simply don't feel ready for the day or dinner out without my lips

properly coated.

And these days I'm almost always channeling my grandmother who had a hat for every situation.

The bottom line is do whatever makes your heart sing whenever and where ever. Your reasons are your own.

Please yourself first, your honey second. That's this city girl gone country's humble philosophy.

Plus, I was fortunate to marry a sweet and very wise man who believes if his wife is happy, then he is happy. 🍷





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# The Medical Profession

By Dal Houston

The medical profession often catches a lot of criticism these days. Yes, it's expensive. Yes, it rarely runs on time. And yes, there always seem to be more tests to run. Lol.

But when most of us stop to think about it, we're grateful - for the way it extends lives and improves the quality of those lives. Over the past week or so, I've come to appreciate another, often overlooked, ben-e-fit of modern healthcare that I believe deserves a mention.

Lately, my sister's family and mine have been going through my parents' home after their passing - sorting through pictures, belongings, and memories.

They lived good, long lives, and I'm incredibly thankful they had access to healthcare that allowed them to age with dignity and comfort. Without it, there's no question they wouldn't have enjoyed the length or quality of life they did.

At the same time, over the past few weeks, I've been riding horses with my daughter each evening. We ride down the road a few miles - just the two of us - and visit about life, our hopes, dreams, and I get to share stories from my youth.

Earlier this week, we rode past an old, deserted homestead I vividly remember from childhood. When I was about ten, the elderly husband who lived there rushed to my grandparents' place, pleading for help - his wife had collapsed. By the time we arrived, it was too late. She had passed away. That experience stuck with me. Seeing something like that at a young age never leaves you.

As I shared that story with my daughter, it hit me: the couple I remembered as elderly were about my age now. Wow.

And that's what brought it all together for me. I realized I



Courtesy photo)

honestly can't remember the last time some-one close to me died unexpectedly. It's been at least 20 years since I've received one of those phone calls that someone passed suddenly, with no warning.

That used to happen all the time. As a kid, I can still feel the sick feeling in my stomach when we'd get the call that someone we knew was gone - just like that. No signs. No goodbyes.

Maybe part of that difference is growing older. But I think it's more than that. I think medical

care has changed the way we lose people. Most of the time now, we have some notice. It doesn't make it easy, but it softens the shock. That space to prepare, to say goodbye, to brace ourselves - it's a gift we often overlook.

I think of that couple from my childhood. They started their day thinking it was just another Tuesday. They didn't know it would be their last one together. That kind of sudden loss leaves a different kind of scar.

So yes, I'm thankful for the

medical professionals out there. Not only for improving healthcare and ex-tending lives - but for the hidden ways they make our lives just a little easier. For giving us time, peace, and sometimes even the chance to say goodbye.

Note: Check out the video related to this article:

Instagram: @DalHouston

YouTube: @theeccentriccow-boy

Facebook: Dal Houston

Website: dalhouston.com 



# Helping Harold Hurts

By Alec Haigood

Through the years, I have tried to be a friend to those who needed help. Many times, people have come to my aid when I needed a helping hand. That's the way it is supposed to work. We all pitch in and help each other out. However, I think we might have to draw a line if the helping regularly causes pain. Such is the case with helping Harold.

Often, when I have gone to help him with some project, I come home worse than when I left. For example, I was trimming some trees around an old farmhouse on his property.

I was way up on a ladder using a chainsaw. I was making good progress when the wooden ladder collapsed into about 50 pieces. I ended up on my back, and the running chainsaw nosedived into the ground and died.

At this point, you would expect someone to ask, "Are you OK? Did you break anything? Do you need help getting up? You sure are lucky that chainsaw didn't get you."

Harold never asked any of those questions. He just looked at me and said, "You broke my ladder." I was sore for a week because of his flimsy old ladder.

Example number two was the time I was trimming his cedar bushes. I got into a nest of yellow jackets and got bit several times. The most painful ones were on my bald head.

Notice a pattern here? I was sawing and trimming, and Harold was observing both times. He apparently was supervising and laughing at my pain.

The last example of how helping can hurt caused Harold some pain as well.

There was a big round slab of concrete out in his pasture. I would guess that a water tank used to sit



(Courtesy photo)

on it. He wanted to get rid of it, so we hitched his trailer behind his truck and were going to load it and haul it off. There's no telling how much this hunk of cement weighed. The plan was to stand it up, then roll it into the back of the trailer and lay it back down.

We stood it up and rolled it up against the trailer. So far, so good. Next, we started to try and roll it up into the trailer. About the time

it crested the trailer bottom, we lost control of the slab. It fell over to one side and smashed my hand between it and the trailer.

Then it rolled back out of the trailer and landed on Harold's foot. This was the only time I can remember where he came out worse than me. The slab actually broke a bone in his foot.

Harold didn't want to miss any work, but he couldn't put his

regular work boots on, so he wore rubber boots for several weeks to drive his truck until the swelling went down. At least this time Harold got to experience the pain of helping.

To give him credit, he has helped me numerous times, but helping me is a walk in the park compared to the hurt he causes. I still help when he calls, but sometimes, you have to draw a line.



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# Standing for the Flag Isn't a Suggestion

By Brandon Baumgarten



(Courtesy photo)

Several years ago, I was speaking at a livestock show in Texas, where both FFA and 4-H students were exhibiting. If you've ever been to a stock show, you know how noisy it can get.

Animals calling out, kids getting ready for the ring, and a general buzz of energy fills the arena. But as the event kicked off, something powerful happened.

The National Anthem began playing over the loudspeakers. And in that instant, the entire arena came to a stop.

Every person there, whether spectator, showman, sponsor, or supporter, put down what they were doing and stood. The barn fell quiet. It was a powerful display of unity and respect.

As the Anthem ended, the arena erupted in applause. Then the announcer's voice rang out: "And folks, that's how we honor America right here in Texas!"

It was already a meaningful moment, but then I overheard a man nearby say quietly, "Dad would have loved to have seen

that." I looked over and saw an older gentleman, tears in his eyes, holding his wife's hand. The way he said those words carried weight.

I walked over and said, "Don't worry, that Anthem gets me every time too. I heard you mention your dad. Was he pretty patriotic?"

The man smiled through his tears and replied, "Yes sir, you could call him patriotic. He loved two things: showing pigs and serving his country. He really loved America. Gave his life for it too."

I paused. "I'm so sorry to hear that. That's an incredible sacrifice."

He nodded and continued, "Well, my dad learned a lot about service and duty from the FFA. That's where he started showing pigs. That's why I showed them, and now my kids and grandkids do too. It's a family thing."

I said, "That's really special, keeping the tradition going. What war did he serve in?"

"World War II," he said. "He enlisted right after getting mar-



ried. Knew he needed to serve. I was just a boy when he left. I think about him every time we come to a pig show and every time we hear that Anthem.”

I looked him in the eye and reached out my hand. “Sir, I didn’t know your dad, but thank you for what he did, and for keeping his memory alive. He clearly left an incredible impact.”

He shook my hand, and we stood there a moment longer before turning back to enjoy the show.

That story has stuck with me ever since. It reminded me that the ripple effects of one person’s selfless sacrifice can stretch far beyond their time.

And it made me think about how important it is to remember the price that has been paid for our freedom.


These days, it’s not hard to find people kneeling during the Anthem or protesting the flag.

They may have their reasons. But none of those reasons should overshadow the gratitude we owe to the men and women who gave everything for this country, many of whom never got to stand for the flag themselves.

So the next time you hear the National Anthem, recite the Pledge of Allegiance, or see the flag waving in the wind, pause and remember.

Long before ribbons and buckles, the values of service, patriotism, duty, and remembrance were being passed down through families like that one. And they still matter.

And if you ever hear someone say, “Dad would have loved to have seen this,” I hope you’re standing to see it too, because countless others never got the chance.

Thank you to all who paid the ultimate sacrifice. We remember you. 

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Hey Texas Music lovers. So many fans and friends often ask me, "Where can we hear some great Western Swing Music?" Well, now is the time to secure your tickets for the biggest and best Western Swing Festival in the country, The Birthplace of Western Swing Festival, coming this fall and returning to Fort Worth, Texas,

The Birthplace of Western Swing Music Festival is the brainchild of Mike Marquart who is probably the biggest western swing fan I know. He has also produced a documentary film explaining how Fort Worth became the Birthplace of Western Swing thanks to the late Bob Wills and Milton Brown among others.

It all takes place at the legendary National Hall located on Roberts -Cutoff in Fort Worth. The four-day festival also includes a guided excursion to Cowtown, three nights of dancing to some the greatest Western Swing bands, concerts at Crystal Springs dance pavilion and passes to the Texas Country Music Awards at Billy Bob's.

Mark your calendars now for November 6-9. You can get your tickets now by visiting [www.birthplaceof-westernswing.com](http://www.birthplaceof-westernswing.com).

I'll be there Friday, November 7 with my Big Texas Swing Band to celebrate the Big Band sound of Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys. Make plans to attend. It's going to be great.

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Oklahoma Swing  
Bob Wills' Texas Playboys  
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**Nov 9**  
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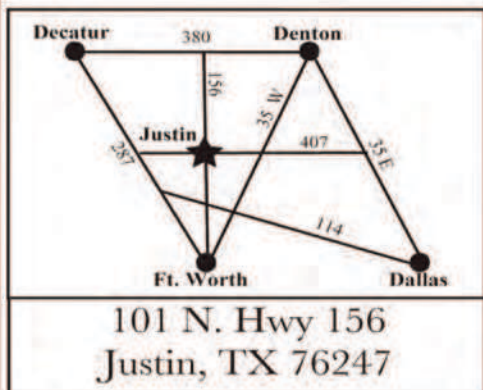


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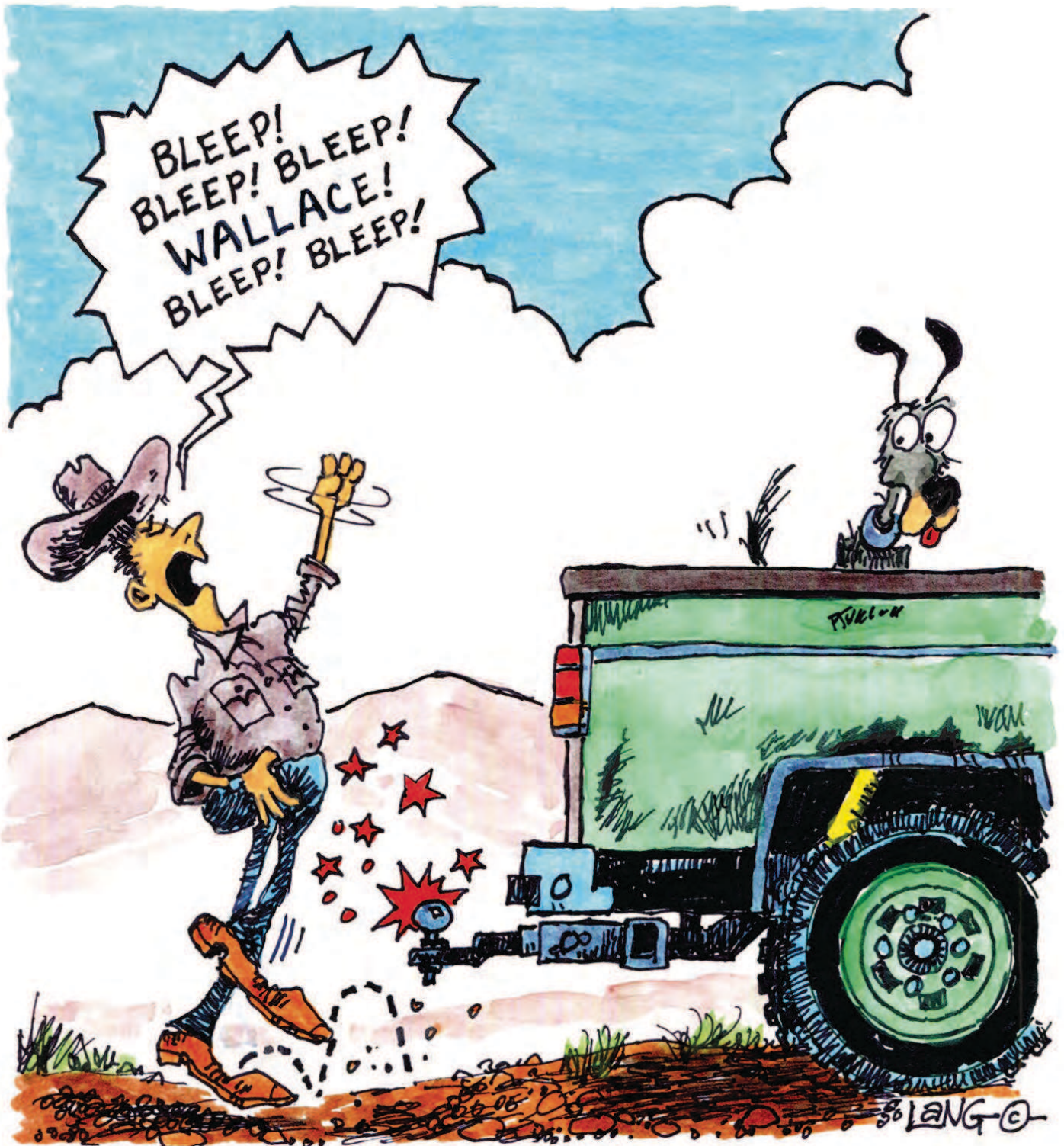
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# North Texas Fair & Rodeo Scholarship Recipients Announced

From North Texas Fair & Rodeo

Notified June 10, 2025, five local students were awarded scholarships by the North Texas State Fair Association for the 2025-2026 school year.

Scholarships are one way that the association gives back and contributes to its mission of supporting youth, agriculture and community. Applications were due May 1, 2025.

Awarded the North Texas State Fair Association scholarship was Keely Hunninghaus from Denton, Texas. Hunninghaus has been involved in FFA for four years and 4H for two years, and she plans to start an Agricultural Business degree at Blinn College before transferring to Texas A&M University.

Her goal is to specialize in livestock production and agricultural business management.

Kara Williams, from Trophy Club, Texas, was the recipient of the Bob C. Powers scholarship. Williams has been involved in FFA for four years and plans to major in Animal Science at Tarleton State University with hopes of becoming a large animal veterinarian.

The recipient of the Robert Bell and Bobby & Judy Jones Trade or Vocational scholarship was Luke Nelson from Krum, Texas. Nelson has been involved in FFA for 10 years and 4H for 10 years, and he plans to attend North Central Texas College to earn a degree and certificate in welding.

Madison Eaton was awarded the Clyde & Pauline Fisher Foundation scholarship. From Valley View, Texas, she was involved in FFA for five years. Her plans include attending Tarleton State University to earn a degree in



(Left-right) Keely Hunninghaus, Kara Williams and Madison Eaton.



(Left-right) Luke Nelson and Cameron Tune.

Agricultural Communications, to advocate for farmers and ranchers and share stories from rural America to make a lasting impact on Texas agriculture.


A new scholarship this year, the Walt Garrison Higher Education/Rodeo scholarship was awarded to Cameron Tune. Tune, from Perrin, Texas, competed in

high school rodeo all four years and has qualified for the Texas High School Rodeo Association State Finals. He will attend Sul Ross State University to compete in college rodeo and earn a degree in Animal Science.

The NTFR is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to preserving Western heritage. All

revenue is reinvested into programs, scholarships and facilities.

The NTFR and its associates contribute around \$700,000 each year to area youth and charity.

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# Fair Weather Hunter

By Andy Anderson



(Courtesy photo)

I was deer hunting for the week at the lease, I didn't have much as far as a camp was concerned. I had converted the bed of my pick up into a tent of sorts. A blue tarp stretched across the bed of the truck with bungee cords, an old

mattress in the bed, a sleeping bag and a couple pillows proved suitable for the mild fall weather. I had a camp fire, cooler of basic staples common for a camping trip, bread, lunch meat, eggs and bacon with a 10 gallon jug of water. The days

melted away with warm days and cool nights, light breeze and little humidity; it was nearly surreal as to how perfect the weather was.

The long hours in the stand yielded little reward as far as game, mostly squirrels, birds and

armadillos frequenting the area. The amazing weather balanced the frustration of not seeing much, after all it was the reason for subjecting ones self to such primitive conditions.

The evening of the fourth day





was coming to an end as the sun settled below the horizon, a red hue reached up to the heavens and darkness settled across the earth. The birds stopped chirping, the squirrels retired for the night and the light breeze that once was to cease to remain. It was absolutely still and quite; well, except for the rumble of hunger from my belly, time to make it back to camp and make some dinner.

I had a good fire going for several days with a nice bed of coals. I managed to tuck away ingredients for hobo stew, prepped in sandwich bags and ready to be wrapped in foil. I placed my hobo stew in the coals to cook, as I prepped my bedding, shed some articles of clothing to begin settling down for the evening.

It wasn't long before I calmed my belly with a full meal, cleaned up and was ready for bed. The nights had been kind, so I left the tailgate down as I crawled into bed

for the evening. As I lay looking out the back of the truck, the glow from the fire was flickering down, the smoke rising straight up was hypnotizing and aided in falling to sleep quickly.

Suddenly I was over come with smoke, the whole sleeping chamber was filled with dense smoke; as I woke I realized the wind had kicked up, kindled the fire and was blowing the smoke right into my truck tent. I quickly exited the truck and moved it around to the opposite side or down wind from the fire.

In a matter of minutes the wind really picked up, the tarp on my truck tent was now popping from the strong gust. Worried about the fire getting out of control I poured the remaining water on it and covered it with some dirt. I crawled back into my truck tent and the security of the sleeping bag. The wind was really howling now, at least 20 mph or more. The cool

temp began to drop quickly and continued to do so throughout the night. Needless to say, I didn't get much sleep the rest of the night.

I decided that morning I was going to sit in an enclosed blind, for some much needed rest from the hounding wind. I settled into the blind, leaning back into the corner with my rifle secured in the opposite corner; I gazed out the window as the night giveaway to the rising sun. It was now in the 20's with an even colder wind chill.

I had just accepted that I wasn't going to be successful this trip and decided that after this mornings hunt I would pack up and head home. As the sun rose higher it began to warm my face and close my eyes; I began to drift off easily from the lack of sleep from the night before.

A huge gust of wind suddenly shook the little blind and startled me awake. I sat up to see out

the window, trees blowing hard against the wind, leaves blowing around like water against rocks in stream. I just shook my head and decided to just call it quits, after all nothing was going to be moving in this weather. I grabbed my rifle and prepared to exit the blind, but then something caught my eye. A deer was making its way though the brush, A small doe followed by a nice typical 8 point.

I harvested the buck, got it back to my pick up where I just wrapped it in the tarp and loaded it up in the truck; I would finish the remaining work at home in the shelter of my heated garage. A lesson learned from the fair weather and time spent hunting, camp when its nice, hunt when its just nasty out, a theory that's proven itself time and again. Of course now I have a camper complete with heat and such that allows me to do both without being smoked out in the middle of the night. 🍖

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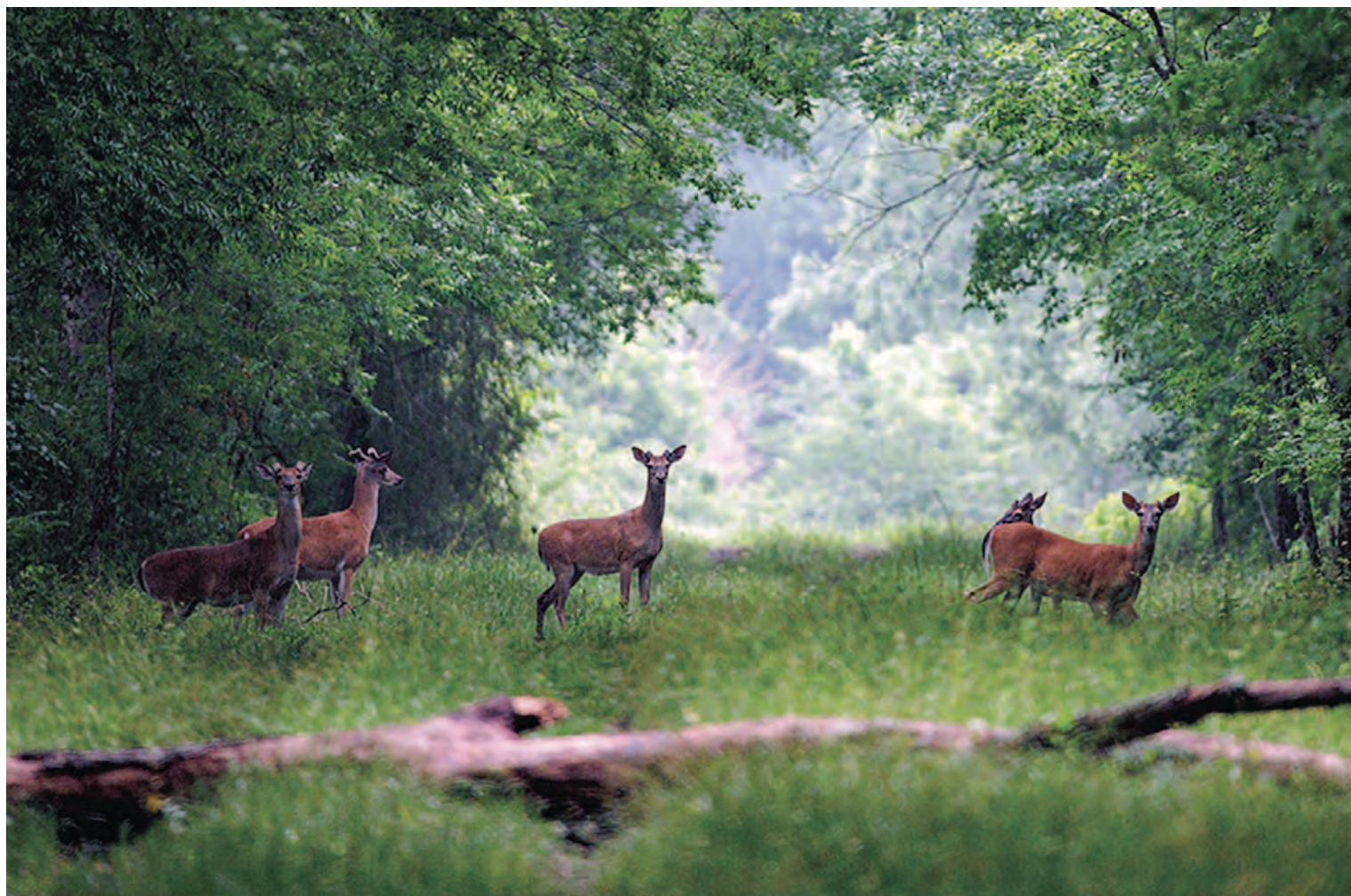




# Noble Learning:

## Stewardship that Pays

By Maddy Bezner



Across the ranching landscape, hunting enterprises are proving their added value in profitability, sustainability and meaningful land stewardship. (Photo courtesy of Noble Research Institute)

What if the land you manage could do more than just feed livestock? By integrating recreational hunting and fishing into their regenerative grazing operations, ranchers like Michael Vance, John Phelan and Jennifer Hernandez are building healthier land, stronger communities and more profitable bottom lines.

### Educating through experience: Michael Vance

Michael Vance manages a regenerative ranching operation near Palestine, Texas, alongside his family, raising Red Angus cattle primarily for seedstock while also producing grass-fed beef. His philosophy is rooted in the idea that cattle management and wild-

life conservation can and should work hand in hand, enhancing ecosystems to support thriving populations of deer, turkeys, quail, geese and other wildlife.

"We've been 'regenerative' for over a decade — since before it was cool," Vance says. "For the past 15 years, we've really tried to operate as an ecosystem."

For Vance, hunting is more than an extra profit stream. It's a way to bring people back to the land and to reconnect them with something many have lost.

"The biggest issue in the entire world right now, in my opinion, is that people are not connected to dirt," he says. "It's our responsibility as landowners and land manag-





ers to create those opportunities.”

Hosting hunters allows Vance to offer that opportunity firsthand. Visitors experience not only the abundance of wildlife but also the health of a landscape managed through regenerative management practices. Often, he’s found that these experiences make an impact.

“Usually, my hunters are the first ones that ask for our grass-fed beef,” he says. “They see how we’re operating and they’re like, ‘We want beef off of this operation.’”

He encourages ranchers to think outside the box about offering hunting experiences, moving beyond traditional leases or outfitters.

“Even if a rancher hosts just two people a year, it’s an easy way to build valuable relationships without much effort,” he says. “It doesn’t have to be about trophies, but the experience.”

That firsthand exposure not only builds trust but can change perceptions.

“I’ve had people come in thinking you have to feed deer to have big horns,” he says. “But when they get here and see how we operate, they realize there’s so much food naturally, they see more deer than ever.”

The benefits of Vance’s ecosystem-focused management stretch beyond just wildlife numbers. His grazing and cover-crop strategies have even improved the quality of the game itself.

“We planted 2,000 acres of cover crops, essentially food plots, and we’re seeing better flavor in the wild pigs because they’re grazing regenerative plants,” he says. “It’s a high-value protein without any extra inputs.”

As his operation’s reputation has grown, so too have the opportunities. Landowners nearby have taken notice, opening doors for Vance to expand the ranch’s grazing footprint.

“We have people calling us saying, ‘If you find property next to you, we’ll partner with you and



let you graze it free because we realize you can manage our deer,” he says. “There’s so much value ranchers may be missing.”

For Vance, it’s about creating lasting impact.

“We need to build relationships,” he says. “Our hunting needs to bear fruit, again, not just in trophy size, but in healthier ecosystems, better experiences and stronger connections.”

Through every hunt and handshake, Vance is helping bridge the gap between people and the land, leaving both better than he found them.

### **Opportunity through integration: John Phelan**

John Phelan’s ranching journey began with his father’s purchase of land near a wildlife refuge, a decision that would shape Phelan’s view of land management for decades to come. Over the years, Phelan’s operation, outside

Mountain Park, Oklahoma, grew to include raising cattle and sheep as well as offering elk hunting, demonstrating how traditional ranching practices and recreational enterprises can work together.

Initially, offering hunting access wasn’t part of his original business strategy. It began as a casual opportunity that presented itself naturally.

“I had some folks interested in paying to hunt,” Phelan says. “It seemed like a good idea to let people hunt who were willing to pay. It helped us know who was out there and turned into a real business opportunity.”

What started as a side venture quickly developed into a successful enterprise. Phelan transitioned from simple, informal leases to fully guided elk hunts, managed by a dedicated guide, expanding his income potential without adding extra work to his plate.

One of the biggest advantages, Phelan says, has been the ability

to manage his grazing and wildlife habitats strategically. By integrating adaptive grazing with his hunting operation, he can move livestock in ways that benefit both the health of his land and the success of his hunts.

“You can stay out of the hot spots where the hunting is best,” he says. “On my lease place, I can completely destock during hunting season to give hunters the best experience.”

The financial impact has been significant. His hunting enterprise provides an additional income stream that supports the ranch’s long-term stability. Beyond the revenue, it has simplified property management and eased day-to-day operations.

“It’s made all the difference as far as being able to stay in business and take care of my country,” he says. “Having another source of income sure helps.”

Still, Phelan emphasizes that

**continued on page 56**



continued from page 54

simplicity has been key to making it work.

“We learned we’re not necessarily interested in a bed-and-breakfast-type hunting operation. Keeping it simple has worked for us.”

By aligning his grazing management with wildlife needs, Phelan has created a more resilient and profitable ranch. For those considering a similar path, his advice is straightforward: “Don’t spend much on infrastructure initially. Electric fencing technology is affordable and easy to move. Just start small, allow grass recovery and grow into it gradually.”

### Low effort, high reward: Jennifer Hernandez

At 3J Farms OK in Blanchard, Oklahoma, adaptability has been part of the story from the beginning. Managed today by Jennifer Hernandez and her husband, Luis, the farm has evolved through the years. It began as a dairy in 1977 before the Hernandezes expanded into stockers and a cow-calf operation, with adaptive grazing, greenhouse gardening and Airbnb agritourism.

Most recently, the family added hunting and fishing opportunities, finding yet another way to diversify without stretching their resources too thin.

The decision to offer hunting access came from a growing need to better manage guest activity on the property.

“People want to fish all the time, especially during the greenhouse season,” Hernandez says. “I wanted to allow people to fish, but we needed something to help manage that.”

She first heard about LandTrust, a service that connects landowners with outdoor enthusiasts, while listening to a podcast.

“I learned about LandTrust, and since we’d already had a great experience with Airbnb, I thought we’d give it a try,” she says. The partnership turned out



to be a smart move, giving the Hernandez family their time back while LandTrust handles most of the logistics for visitor booking, making the process simple.

For Hernandez, integrating hunting into the operation made sense because it naturally complemented the way they already managed the land.

“Managing resources — specifically your grass and soil health — tends to naturally create good wildlife habitat,” she says. Beyond land management benefits, adding hunting access made solid business sense.

“Hunting is a missed opportunity for many farmers and ranchers,” she says. “It has minimal added inputs and is very profitable.”

The returns came quickly, Hernandez recalls, pointing out a practical example.

“We have deer hunters booked for this fall, two hunters over six days, and that’s going to bring in about \$2,100,” she says. Similarly, she says, duck hunting is relatively

easy to manage and can generate substantial income.

Their adaptive cattle management practices also help keep livestock and hunters safely separated, allowing both enterprises to operate without conflict.

“Because of the way we manage cattle, we can always ensure that hunters have their space and cattle have theirs, even on the same property.”

Her husband’s experience with and observations during adaptive grazing have played a major role in making sure guests have successful outings.

“Luis knows exactly where the deer go,” she says. “He’s not hunting them, but he knows their patterns. That’s a huge advantage for our guests.”

Looking ahead, Hernandez sees opportunities to expand the enterprise but remains focused on keeping things simple at the start.

“Hunters appreciate blinds or stands, and as the enterprise grows, we’ll invest in those,” she says. “But we don’t need to

initially. It’s profitable from the start.”

### Diversification’s true value

Vance, Phelan and Hernandez may each have unique approaches to their hunting enterprises, but their goals converge around a simple idea: sharing the land with hunters strengthens both the ranch and the community.

Hunting enterprises, whether focused on profit, education or both, help ranchers maximize the value of their land — not just financially but socially and ecologically. Integrating hunting into ranching isn’t just diversification, it contributes to responsible stewardship and connections with the public.

As Vance puts it, “When someone criticizes cattle ranching’s environmental impact, I want someone else there saying, ‘Wait, I’ve seen regenerative ranching firsthand, and that’s just not true.’ Ranchers can create these connections. Hunting provides that chance.”





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# The GARDEN GUY

## Mexican Bush Sage A Favorite for Butterflies and Hummingbirds

By Norman Winter | Horticulturist, Author, Speaker

The Mexican bush sage has been blooming for a few weeks now, and like clockwork, it's proving to be a favorite nectar source for Monarch butterflies heading south. It's always fascinated me that, with so many other nectar flowers available in the fall, there's something they especially like about this salvia.

Known botanically as *Salvia leucantha*, the Mexican bush sage is native to Mexico and Central America. It's one of those plants I can't imagine not having in my garden. A short-day (or long-night) bloomer, it starts flowering in late summer and keeps going through several frosts. The fuzzy, velvety purple spikes with white or purple flowers are produced in abundance.

For cut-flower enthusiasts, this plant can easily yield a hundred stems for the vase. Even when not in bloom, its gray-green foliage adds interest to the garden.

As I mentioned, it's a favorite for butterflies - especially Monarchs - but it's also a regular feeding stop for hummingbirds. They're drawn to the white blooms emerging from the velvety purple calyces. The ideal growing location is full sun, though the plant can tolerate a bit of afternoon shade.

The soil must be very well-drained, so consider planting in raised beds or amending heavy soils with compost or humus. In fact, well-drained soil may be the key to encouraging a surprising



The Mexican bush sage is the perfect complement to fall planted marigolds, sometimes called Marimums. (Photos courtesy of Norman Winter, The Garden Guy)





Left: This Ruby-throated hummingbird finds the Mexican bush sage to be just perfect.

Right: The Golden Thyrallis is becoming popular in Texas and makes an ideal companion for the Mexican Bush sage.

spring return in regions farther north than expected.

When preparing your soil, incorporate 2 pounds of a slow-release 12-6-6 fertilizer per 100 square feet of bed space. Space the plants 24 to 36 inches apart, and plant them at the same depth they were growing in their containers. Avoid planting near streetlights or floodlights, as this salvia blooms in response to the number of dark hours.

Provide supplemental water during prolonged dry periods. After the first hard frost in the fall, cut the plants back to ground level and add a layer of mulch for winter protection. Feed again in the

spring when you see new growth emerging, and continue feeding every six to eight weeks through September. For even more blooms in the fall, lightly prune once or twice in late April and early June. You can also harvest stems and tie them with sprigs of rosemary to hang in the kitchen - an aromatic and beautiful touch.

Mexican bush sage is mostly sold generically, but there are some standout selections worth noting: Midnight (with dark purple flowers), Kathiann Brown (a dwarf with lavender blooms), and the similar Santa Barbara (also a compact lavender variety). The standard form of Mexican bush

sage typically reaches about 4 feet tall, while the compact varieties stay under 3 feet.

For companion planting, consider pairing with classic fall-blooming yellow mums - they're an obvious but perfect match. In the herb garden, Mexican bush sage pairs well with rosemary, garlic chives, and lavender. The fall-blooming forsythia sage (*Salvia madrensis*), with its massive yellow flower spikes, also makes an incredible companion. Other great partners include yellow marigolds and golden lantana.

Mexican bush sage is perennial in USDA zones 8 and sometimes in zone 7, especially with perfect

drainage and a protective layer of mulch. Even in cooler climates, it's worth growing as an annual if you have a long enough season - just know it won't bloom until August. In places like St. Louis, it typically blooms from mid-August through frost. It's also one of the easiest plants to root from cuttings or propagate by division.

Spiky flowers always bring energy and visual interest to a garden, and Mexican bush sage is one of the best - providing nectar for pollinators, beauty in the landscape, and cut flowers by the dozen. At this time of year, it's practically without equal. I hope you'll give it a try. 🍷





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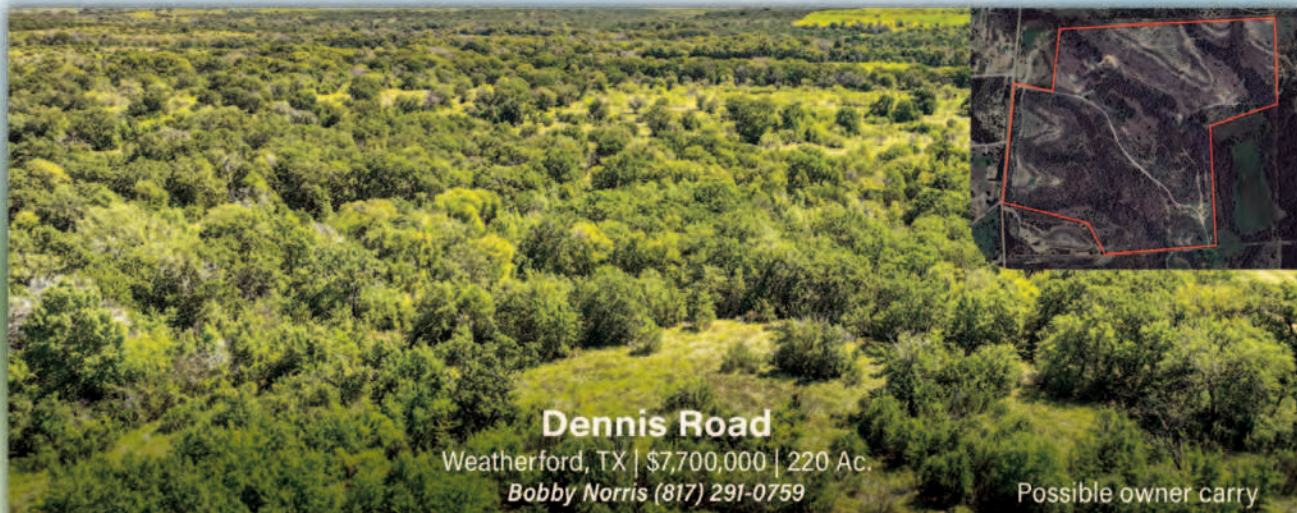
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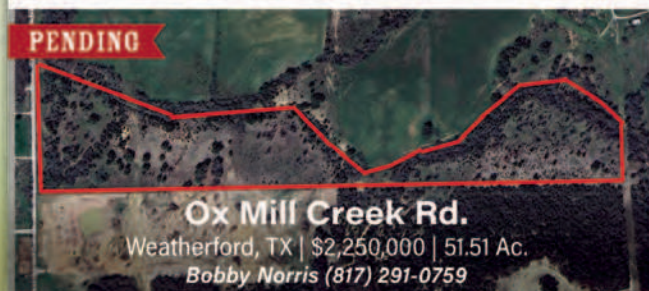


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