



THE CATTLE CALL

Newsletter for Alumni of the
TCU Ranch Management Program

Spring 2015

FROM THE PRESIDENT, SKYLER FLAKE

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Well, first off, I'd like to say what an honor and a privilege it is to be your alumni president for the next two years. I have some awfully big shoes to fill due to the great job my predecessors have done, but I'll try my best. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Skyler Flake, graduate of the Class of 2006. I currently take care of a ranch for a family in W. Texas between Midland and Rankin. As I write this there is a nice, slow, steady, and much welcomed rain falling. I hope you are getting rain where you need it.

I want to touch on something that has been on my mind for a while now. What are we doing on an individual level to train and teach the next generation? I feel like this is vital to the longevity of our industry. This is a two part mission in my opinion.

The first part being; who are you training to replace you? Are we taking the time out of busy daily schedules to teach the next generation the why's and how's of production agriculture? There is an abundance of younger people who want to call themselves cowboys and cowmen, but they haven't been exposed to the industry in order to have a good grasp on the basics. It is part of our responsibility to production agriculture to help them learn. As production agriculture becomes more and more in the public's crosshairs, we need to teach good animal welfare practices and natural resource stewardship to those that will carry the torch when we are gone.

The second part being; what are you doing to educate the next generation of consumers? We are a consumer driven industry. We can raise the most tender, delicious piece of beef you've ever put on the grill, but if the consumer won't pick it up out of the meat counter, we lose our market. There are a lot of voices in the media that want to tell our story and most of the time they only have part of the truth. We need to help educate the next generation of consumers about what we do. We need to teach them about how we take care of the environment, about how we excel at animal stewardship skills, and about how we care about the consumers.

I'd like to issue a challenge, take a look at your operation and see how you can have a positive impact on the next generation of agricultural producers and consumers.

We hope you were able to stop by the TCU Ranch Management Alumni Reception we hosted at The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Convention on Sat., March 28 and if not, we hope to see you in June at the Summer Gathering in Hamilton, TX. If I can do anything to help you, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Thank you,
Skyler Flake '06



RANCHING IN THE GOOD TIMES

I had the privilege of traveling with the current class of students up to the Noble Foundation, near Ardmore, Oklahoma yesterday. While we were there, we visited with several of the researchers and consultants. One of the consultants made a statement that “jarred” my memory and triggered a few thoughts for my idle mind while driving back into Fort Worth.

Basically, he stated that we are not ranching in the 90’s anymore. What he was referring to was that the rainfall patterns nowadays are not what we observed in the 1990’s. While I do recall the drought period of 1995-96, he was trying to make the point that our stocking rates and other management should be adjusted from those times, and be aware that another dry or droughty period could be lurking ahead.

As I drove back down south yesterday evening, I thought of other shifts in the dynamics of ranching since the 90’s. Another big shift that we’ve seen is our cow cost, the expense associated with maintaining a mother cow on the ranch for one year’s production cycle. We all know that this cow cost expense is likely at its all-time high. But then I also thought of one more change that we have enjoyed in recent times, much higher values for our calves. Last week’s USDA National Feeder/Stocker Cattle Summary gave a 550 pound Number 1 steer in Texas to be worth \$270/cwt, which makes that animal bring almost \$1,500 per head. The range of cow cost numbers we’ve seen in recent months are from \$750 up to \$1,100 or more. I realize that all of us can do the simple math that shows a net return per calf pretty close to what the whole calf was worth about 5-6 years ago. In this good time of ranching, at least for those in the cow-calf sector, I still have a couple of concerns.

My first concern is that it may get easier to forget about the details of the operation. When the big dollars are flying around within easy grasp, folks sometimes forego the opportunity to bend over and pick up a small coin. To be sustainable, we must be diligent in our budgeting and continue to monitor how our annual costs pay out as the year goes by. We don’t have to look far to see how the oil industry has dealt with the setback in crude oil prices.

Another concern may actually go along with the first one, but in a different direction. For some, instinct may be to recognize a profit potential and try to squeeze all that we can from it. We need to bear in mind that we cannot skimp on our key inputs. Coming out of winter 2014-15, every cow should be in very good body condition, despite the recent cold and wet weather. After all, should we try to save that additional \$10-15 in supplemental energy feed, and bring a thin cow through the winter that won’t breed back this spring?

I realize that there needs to be a balance in this budgeting process, but we cannot lose site of the details. Continue to spend time analyzing your budgets and study the input costs, as well as trying to look for ways to manage market risk. As always, I wish you all a great spring and summer growing season. Please let me know if I can ever be a help to you.

ALUMNI ROUNDUP - JANUARY 24, 2015

MANY THANKS TO

“Trail Boss” sponsor: Merial

“Wrangler” sponsors: Bayer Animal Health,
Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica,

Elanco Cattle W/Elanco Stocker Cattle Division,
Lone Star Ag, Merck Animal Health

“Cowboy” sponsors: Purina Animal Nutrition
and Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers



Mr. Mark Ryan, Class of 2015 Partners Scholarship recipient, with Mr. Stan Horwood, 2015 Partners Award honoree, and Mr. Kerry Cornelius



Skyler Flake '06, 2016-2018 alumni president, with Chad McCormick '06, 2014-2016 alumni president



TCU RANCH MANAGEMENT ALUMNI AND FAMILY SUMMER GATHERING

BY MISSY BONDS

Summer is fast approaching and we are frantically working to bring you another fantastic Summer Gathering. This year it will be held in Hamilton, TX at the *Circle T Arena* June 19-21. Friday evening will be fellowship and fun at the *Circle T Arena* and *Inn at Circle T* with the use of the volleyball courts, swimming pool, and horse shoe pits. There will be a great meal Friday night provided by Forrest Watson with AHI, Clay McKesson with Bayer Animal Health, and Robert Horner with Elanco. Saturday morning we will start with our calf roping and team roping events, as well as, have our shooting events. We will then come back that afternoon and have a ranch rodeo. After Saturday's activities we will gather for a steak dinner with entertainment, as well as, give out all the amazing awards.

I have included a RSVP form for this year's event to have an idea of head counts for planning purposes. *Please let us know if you are planning on attending.* Keep an eye out on Facebook facebook.com/tcusummer2014 and in the mail for additional information concerning the entries for the ranch rodeo and more information about stalls, RV hookup reservations, raffle items, and hotel updates. The hotel does not guarantee blocks of rooms so book early - *Inn at Circle T* (4021 West Hwy 36, Hamilton, TX 76531; (877) 310-3209; inn-at-circle-t.com).

Look forward to seeing you in June!

Donations can be made to: *NTRM Summer Gathering, PO Box 79590 Saginaw, TX 76179.*

Any questions or desire to help with the event please contact
Missy Bonds at (817) 917-2958 or email msag98@aol.com.



Ranch Management items available for purchase:

cap \$15 tie or scarf \$25 mug \$6
gate sign \$10 koozie \$3 calculator \$7
2014 Summer Gathering book \$55

**proceeds benefit Ranch Management
student scholarships**

THANK YOU

We are pleased that so many of you take advantage of this form to indicate change of address, marriage, birth, or job.

You are helping us keep up with you and that's what we want to do!



WHO DID WHAT:

- Send NEWS to TCU Box 297420, Fort Worth, TX 76129 OR
 - call 817-257-7145 OR
 - email ranching@tcu.edu

Grad Year _____

Name _____

NEW ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____

CATTLE CALL BY E-MAIL

SEE ALL OF THE PICTURES IN COLOR!

Cattle Call can be sent out by email for those of you who would like to cut down on the amount of mail that accumulates in your mailbox.

To receive your copy of *Cattle Call* by email, just send an email to ranching@tcu.edu with "Email Cattle Call" in the subject line.

Please be sure to give us your name if it isn't clear from your email address.

JOB CHANGE

Company _____

Position _____

Address _____

City _____ State/Zip _____

Work Phone _____

Work E-Mail _____

WEDDING

Spouse's Name _____

Date Married _____

Where _____

BIRTH

Baby's Name _____

Date Born _____

Weight _____ Length _____



TCU RANCH MANAGEMENT ALUMNI AND FAMILY SUMMER GATHERING

June 19 - 21 Circle T Arena: Hamilton, TX

Name: _____

Class: _____

For planning purpose *only*:

Do you plan on participating in any of the following and if so, number of people:

_____ Team Roping

_____ Calf Roping

_____ Ranch Rodeo

_____ Shooting

_____ Dinner Friday

_____ Dinner Saturday

***Make hotel reservations early!!!!**

Inn at Circle T 4021 West Hwy 36, Hamilton, TX 76531; (877) 310-3209; inn-at-circle-t.com

***RV hookups are available at the arena**

Circle T Arena 4007 West Hwy 36, Hamilton, TX 76531; (254) 386-3559; circletarena.net

Please make all donations and return this RSVP form to:

NTRM Summer Gathering

PO Box 79590

Saginaw, TX 76179

If you would like to help or have questions please contact
Missy Bonds at (817) 917-2958 or msag98@aol.com