

Well here we go with another newsletter so sit down, have another cup of coffee and count your blessings. When you think you've got it tough just look around and notice the others that aren't as fortunate as you. We in agriculture sometimes get to complaining about the lack of support from Mother Nature, the Federal Government, and the attacks we take from the Environmentalist and low prices for our product. Then I get to looking around and realize I wouldn't trade places with anyone. I have a great loving family, who all has the love of family and the love of land to keep us together. I'm going to take a moment here and talk about what it means to be a cowboy. You people who have taken it upon yourself to come join us for a week certainly have that same kind of commitment to life and will relate and understand where I'm coming from. The greatest reward we have received from the cattle drives is finding out that the cowboy spirit lives in many whom no longer have direct roots to the soil. Being a cowboy is really an approach to life. While several politicians have labeled President Bush a cowboy and are meaning it in a derogatory way I look at the term in a complimentary way. Being a cowboy is about character and character is something you are taught at home growing up. It has nothing to do with your place of birth, how much money you make, your gender, or your political association. I came across this statement in the American Cowboy magazine. This was written by Lyn Nofziger. In cowboy country a man's word is his bond. You can trust him. In cowboy country a man extends a helping hand to his neighbor—or to a stranger. In cowboy country women are respected and treated as ladies. In cowboy country a man accepts responsibility for his deeds and for the welfare of his family. He does not turn to government for a handout but instead offers a hand up to those in need. In cowboy country liberty is more important than government mandated security. And in cowboy country folks believe in and turn to God, because his hand easily can be seen throughout that vast expanse. If you look at people you call your friends, and I know when I look at mine, it's because the one bond that makes them a friend is that they live the cowboy code in their every day lives. So don't be afraid to cowboy up to keep this great country alive and well!!!

WEATHER REPORT:

Well the drought hangs on and it is certainly going to make the year one for the record books. According to the climatologist we have had the driest winter in 70 years here in Wyoming. Alice went to Flagstaff Arizona for a weeklong teacher's conference in Feb. She called home the first night and was bragging that it was gorgeous there and 80 degrees. We were 73 that day. Now that is really amazing when you figure that the seasonal norm for that time of year is probably around 30degrees. This drought is certainly going to bring about some unique situations on the mountain this summer. We are discussing some different pasture rotations and the possibility that we might work the herd in September and leave some of them on the mountain for the clean up ride to gather in order to save any grass we might have in the valley. Here again that decision won't be made until Sept and we see what Mother Nature has done to us.

For the first time in my life I have purchased insurance on our pasture land. Like all insurance it is weighted in their favor. You pick a level that you think the drought will be

in your county and if it is at that level or greater you get paid according to the level you bought in at. It doesn't pay at all until there is a 55% loss and then proceeds from there. My cost at the level I entered into the agreement is 16cents and acre for the insurance. The really interesting thing is that one of the local papers came out since I purchased the insurance and said northern Wyo could be wetter than normal for June, July, and Aug.. Yup, it looks safe for the September trip and normal for whatever I plan to do, to figure on the opposite happening.

FAMILY HAPPENINGS:

Kraytons oldest daughter had her second baby in late February. Meagan and her husband Tim graduated from college in North Dakota in December and have moved back to Laurel Mt where she is employed as a speech pathologist and Tim is a pilot who is employed by Laurel Aviation.

Taylor's Destination Imagination team won the State meet in April and will be competing in the world championships in Nashville Tennessee in late May. This old country hick just might take in the "Grand Ole Opera" while I'm there.

The rumor was true and Patty has gone to Hawaii where she is enrolled in Massage Therapy. It is a 6 month school so whether Patty will be joining us this year we just don't know yet.

Stan Sharp did take the managers job of a business in Buffalo (for you Tim Foster that's Wyoming not New York) He doesn't know what his availability will be for sure. He is going to try and do as many as he can. As I said to him, if you can only do one I need you on the Sept trip the most. His reply, "I'm not dry from the last one yet".

It looks like we are going to have a great crew again this summer with most of the same people who were with us last year.

Those of you who were on last years July trip remember the one afternoon when some photographers showed up and shot video while we were branding. I hadn't heard a word from them until last week. They were from Pittsburgh and were out here trying to finish up their documentary. They think that PBS is going to buy it and air it in June or July. They came out and shot some more film showing a little of what we do in the off season. We shall see. --- They did say they would send us a copy of what they shot. Once it's released if anyone wants a copy let me know.

UNITED STATES FOREST SERVICE:

I know some of you are aware of the discovery of E Coli in the North Tongue Drainage and have read about it or heard about it on the news. I know I received some emails from some of you with questions. Well I'll try to fill you in on what it's all about and the ramifications that it might have. The North Tongue Drainage is about an hours ride south of the cow camp and you have crossed the North Tongue when you drive into our cow camp.

This all started when a fly fisherman got mad at some cows that were standing in the fishing hole that he was wanting to fish in. He just happened to be an employee of the D.E Q. Now that is Department of Environmental Quality, not Dumb Environmental Questions. He went to his vehicle and got a jar and took a water sample and sent it in. The bacteria count came out higher than standards. Now there is no standard in the state of Wyoming so the only standard they could use was the federal standard. Now the

federal standard basically states that if 1000 people swim in it, 8 of them will become sick. These standards were put together to protect people in the heavily populated areas of the US such as Virginia Beach, Palm Beach and so forth. (If they voluntarily swim in that 33 degree water they were sick before they got in.)

They don't know enough to have any idea where the high bacteria count came from or that maybe it can survive for hundreds of years in the bank and then something happens such as a flood, fire, or maybe cattle tearing up the stream bank and stirs it up and it is then released into the water supply. Anyway, the environmentalist have purchased water monitoring equipment and will be monitoring all of the major streams in the Big Horns this summer. WWP is an environmental group who has vowed to remove all cattle from public lands in the US and will be monitoring also. They are a major group of legalized terrorist supported and driven by emotion, but they are a major power and a major pain in the ---.

Of course their attack plan is very simple; get a judge to issue an injunction to stop grazing until the answers can be found. At that point the enviro's have won. Every ranch that grazes the Big Horns won't have grass so most of the ranches will be sold off in small lots for housing. You hear tree huggers talking about green belts to help halt urban sprawl but they are creating the very thing they are trying to prevent. We are not concerned for this summer but after that who knows what will happen. I do have to say, this is one of those times the USFS is actually on our side and did not create this problem. If the federal government will allow the conservation districts to handle the situation, solutions will be worked out and life will continue. The conservation districts are mandated by federal law to handle water quality, but as we have seen recently the courts will do whatever they damn well please.

A year ago last February a bunch of ranchers got together from both sides of the mountains and formed an organization to help the permittee's battle these types of problems. I'm on the board of directors and I wish we had a little more time to get organized before having to get involved. As a fledgling grass roots organization the hardest part for us is always the fund raising. We have a dynamite executive director but she's not cheap. She is extremely bright and a real word smith. We are trying to get the business community to join our group to give us a little more leverage because if we go down it will have a huge impact on all of these small agriculture business communities. I know our group; GUARDIANS OF THE RANGE is in for one hell of a battle. The WWP have time and resources on their side. They don't have to win the battle all they have to do is convince some judge to issue an injunction. Anyway, I feel as threatened as I ever have been by an outside group.

APRIL 8TH:

I FEEL AS HAPPY AS A CORN EATING HORSE! IT RAINED LAST NIGHT, ALL NIGHT!!!! WE HAD SOMEWHERE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF $\frac{3}{4}$ OF AN INCH. MUD WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SIGHT!! I JUST ABOUT GOT THE PICKUP STUCK IN THE HAY YARD BUT YOU KNOW WHAT---I DIDN'T CARE!!

RANCH HUMOR:

Alice and I were headed to Casper Wy. last winter to a basketball game and we were playing a tape that had a lot of the songs written by the SONS OF THE PIONEERS,

anyway the song SOUIX CITY SUE was playing. There is a verse in their that states "With your red hair and eyes of blue I would trade my dog and horse for you". I heard the verse and wondered if I had heard it right so listened again and sure enough I had. I turned to Alice and said "It must not have been a very good dog!! Now everyone knows Alice doesn't have red hair but she hit me for 20 miles going down the interstate. I'm still at a complete loss of understanding, but the phrase You have never lived till you've damn near died sure means more to me now!!!

LITTLE KNOWN FACTS:

Did you know that I have to pay 6% sales tax on the lodging. Not at the banquet but on the sleeping in the tents. Even if you are in 6 inches of mud or 12 inches of snow. I would really like to take someone from the Dept of Revenue on one of our trips.

EQUIPMENT UPGRADE:

This year there will be 5 new saddles in the string and a brand new cook tent in Rock Cabin Park. The new cook tent is 12 x 20 and will have room for those that always leave their sleeping bag in the wrong trailer. (Denise and Meg)

CONGRATULATIONS:

I'm happy to announce the following people have earned free trips this year:

CINDY BURKE

JIM McGARVEY

MARY KEATING

BOBBIE KUYKENDALL

GINO CARFORA

Thanks for all of your hard work, the effort and the suggestions you have made over the years. I couldn't do it without you.

BOOKINGS:

The trips have filled up nicely but we have had a group of 6 drop out of the August BEEF ROUNDUP so there is room there for anyone that might want to come along. There will be lots of cowboying on this trip and we will probably do an old time branding also on one of the days. We have had a couple of September bookings drop out due to a needed back surgery and another couple decided to move to the Sept 2006 trip. So there is a little room left on Sept still.

There probably won't be a newsletter in Aug as it will all be in the trip reports on the web site. Doublerafter.com

Dana

PS. April 20, 21. We had a weather change. We had an inch and ¾ of moisture including about 3 inches of snow. They had 15 inches in Gillette. (Remember Bobbie you drove through Gillette) We only had about 6 inches of new snow on the mountain.

April 27- Winter storm warning. It's been snowing all morning and we are white at 10:00am. They are calling for a high of 35 today.