

Howdy from the Double Rafter,

I hope the winter is treating everyone well and hope it finds you in good health. Our winter has been extremely mild and open, up until the last couple of weeks. We have since had a little snow, probably a total of 12 inches and of course some cold weather to go along with it. However, overall it's extremely mild.

I am sorry to say but we have had to cancel out of the Harrisburg Show. The blue tag heifers that everyone chased around last summer are going to calve at exactly the same time as the show. They were all synchronized, so will all calve in about a 10 day period. My sense of humor won't be good because sleep is going to be imaginary during those 10 days. Brendon is going to be here but he has never calved a set of heifers, so he doesn't know the wrecks that can happen. With the drought last year there just wasn't any market for them and I wasn't about to give them away. Besides I haven't been chased out of the corral by a mad momma in about three years. I probably didn't mention it but in the cow business that is called PMS. (Protective Mother Syndrome).

### **LONGHORNS:**

In the last episode, if you remember, I hauled the Longhorns out to my lease east of Sheridan right before Thanksgiving. Even though the trip was an experience, I did complete what I set out to do, which was to not have to feed the longhorns any of this high priced hay this winter. The pasture is about an hour's drive east of here. Well after Christmas the phone rang and it was one of my neighbors out there. He said that he had 4 longhorns in his haystack and he had heard that they might be mine. Now this particular neighbor is located about 10 miles before we get to our pasture. It was apparent that the longhorns were on there way home. Now where the 5<sup>th</sup> one was, we had no idea. We suspect they were working their way home and just couldn't resist the neighbors haystack, so they helped themselves. Trent took out a horse and when they saw him coming they took off like the devil was after them. They couldn't outrun Lakota so Trent just let them run and after about ½ mile they slowed down and started to behave. It was obvious that someone really ran the vinegar out of them at sometime. Well, yesterday the phone rang and it was another neighbor about 15 miles from the pasture and he had found the 5<sup>th</sup> one and had corralled him, so I grudgingly drove out and picked him up. So I guess I am going to have to feed those 5 pigs for the rest of the winter. With those big horns they are getting all the hay they want because nothing will challenge them. **THEY ARE FOR SALE SO IF ANYONE WANTS ONE AS A PET OR AS A HEAD MOUNT CALL ME PLEASE!** You can even have the meat!!

### **ON THE LIGHTER SIDE:**

Alice and I have decided that we need to expand the ranch operation and have been looking at parcels of land that will work. We have come across an incredible ranch for sale, 5 miles west of the Rocky Bottom, right at the foot of the mountains. It is one of the most incredibly beautiful ranches in the area. The sellers have said they will consider selling the ranch in parcels, which suits me just fine. Alice and I are going to try and purchase a piece of it and thought there might be somebody or somebodies that have had the dream of owning a Montana ranch. Here is what is listed, and what is available in a

nut shell and how I think the ranch could be operated. This is a phenomenal ranch, in primarily one chunk and has a ton of potential.

The listing shows 3, 297 deeded acres, along with several thousand acres of lease that would go with it. They have an additional 5,000 acres that could be purchased also, that are not listed at this time, but are for sale, after the sale of the listed 3,297. I do think the entire thing could and should be purchased and put together as one unit. With the addition of the leases, there is over 11,000 acres in this ranch and more lease land is available. If this is something that might interest you, this is how I would propose to put it together. Each buyer would purchase whatever deeded acres and said deed would go to them. After the purchase of either one, or all of these parcels, I would suggest it be thrown together and operated as one ranch. This cuts operational costs way down because each buyer doesn't have to have their own tractor, pickups and so forth, thus duplicating expenses. The only thing that would be owned jointly would be the equipment needed to operate the ranch and the leases that go with it. Each owner would contribute to the ranch operation according to the amount of deeded land that they contributed to the operation. They in return would also receive the net income using the same formula. There are some incredible home sites available along the mile of creek, if the whole thing is purchased. The opportunities for deer and bird hunting, as well as fishing, are all there. You could also cross country ski, snow machine, as well as all other winter and fall activities and not to mention the opportunity to spend as much time in the saddle as you would like. Like all land investments, the annual return would be low but the primary return would be on the inflation of the land and that should be good. The return would depend a lot on how much of this ranch could be purchased. It takes just about the same dollars to run 500 head as it does 1,000 head. This land is priced at \$1,340 an acre but I think it could be purchased for less, especially if a large chunk of it could be obtained. This might be the perfect chance for someone to purchase that getaway spot that would let you not only live your dreams as a cowboy but get away from all the pressures of the everyday rat race. The potential of this ranch is unlimited because of the isolated location, the beauty of the mountains out your back door, and it is in great grass country. Since it is Montana, the zoning states you have to purchase at least 160 acres and it damn sure is zoned agriculture. If you have ever wanted to own a ranch, you won't find a better one, or have a better opportunity to do so than this one. It's not often that you can buy a whole beef and not get mostly hamburger, this ranch is all Prime Rib. When I was in my early 20's Dad and I managed a ranch for an absentee owner for 10 years, so I do have 10 years experience of managing a ranch for an absentee owner. Feel free to call me if you have any questions. There is way more to this than I can put in an email. I do have a plan on how to operate this. Call me if you're interested and I can try and answer your questions. Just think the trail dust you are eating might be what you own. Since I was a little kid I have always wanted to have a good ranch. This is part of my dream, to be able to run a large ranch. At age 51 I still have that burning passion to run a large ranch. I get so excited thinking about this opportunity at times I have a hard time sleeping. If you've ever had that distant dream but didn't know how to go about getting it, then this is the perfect opportunity for both of us.

**BENEFITS:**

YOUR OWN PIECE OF COWBOY PARADISE  
UNLIMITED RIDING OPPORTUNITIES  
AS AN ABSENTEE OWNER YOU HAVE THE BEST OF BOTH WORLDS  
RIGHT AT THE FOOT OF THE BIG HORN MOUNTAINS  
DEER AND BIRD HUNTING  
FISHING  
SNOW MACHINE IN THE WINTER TIME  
CROSS COUNTRY SKIING  
BIG HORN MOUNTAIN ACCESS  
SPECTACULAR HOME SITES ON THE CREEK  
LAND- THERE NOT MAKING ANY MORE OF IT, IT IS A GREAT  
OPPORTUNITY  
PRIVACY AND SOLITUDE  
IF YOU THINK I HAVE THE PERFECT LIFE THEN HERE IS YOUR  
CHANCE TO GET AS BIG A PIECE OF IT AS YOU WANT

There is still a little room left on the trips but it does look like we will be full this year. Call and let me know if you want a spot.

Dana