



# CATTLE CALL

A PUBLICATION OF THE HOLLISTER RANCH CATTLE COOPERATIVE  
BECAUSE WE KNOW YOU WANT TO KNOW

## The Hollister Ranch Co-op Mission Statement :

To operate a single self-sustaining livestock grazing operation over multiple properties collectively known as the Hollister Ranch. This unified range management structure promotes rangeland health and preserves the Ranch's pastoral beauty and historic character. (adopted June 2008)



## GRAZE..... MANAGE.....OPTIMIZE.....

by Sue Benech Field - HR Co-op Board President

The HR Co-op continues to move forward to restructure operations in an effort to reestablish a positive cash flow and achieve profitability.

As part of this restructure, after much thought and discussion, the Co-op Board adopted a new mission statement and set of goals to more closely reflect a new direction. Goals are extremely important as they serve as vital guide posts influencing every HR Co-op decision, big or small, conscious or unconscious.

The most important contribution the HR Co-op can make to our members, HROA and the environment is to continue a unified, viable livestock grazing program and that is the basis on which the Co-op will focus, while making every effort to achieve profitability and enhance grass production.



### New HR Co-op Mission Statement:

To operate a single self-sustaining livestock grazing operation over multiple properties collectively known as the Hollister Ranch. This unified range management structure promotes rangeland health and preserves the Ranch's pastoral beauty and historic character.

### New HR Co-op Goals:

- 1) *Grazed the multiple properties of Hollister Ranch as a single ranching operation.*
- 2) *Manage a profitable livestock grazing operation.*
- 3) *Optimize grass production.*

Grazing the Ranch as a single unified landscape does more to maintain the natural function of this coastal rangeland than any other single conservation effort.

It is the HR Co-op's first and foremost charge. It not

only maintains natural plant and animal community structure, but reduces visual fragmentation and continues an unbroken thread of vaquero culture linked to this

last vestige of the 1791 Spanish land grazing concession, known as Nuestra Señora Del Refugio. The HR Co-op will continue to provide a single, ranching operation specifically tailored to local conditions.

Managing towards profitability is difficult in these times plagued by drought, high fuel and labor costs but not impossible.

Reflecting our memberships' wishes, the HR Co-op has adopted a "Lean & Mean" budget for the 2008/2009 fiscal year that gives the best "bang for the buck". Labor, material and equipment intensive stewardship programs are not in our budget. However, the Co-op anticipates and will gladly enter into a contract for services to facilitate such programs funded by HROA. Our new structure and budget is innovative and takes greater risks but if it rains, the Co-op could lift itself up by its bootstraps and get back in the black.

Optimizing grass production is a goal that will keep the HR Co-op focused on improving the quality of our rangelands. Using large mammal grazing techniques specifically tailored to the topography, geography and biology of the ranch, the HR Co-op will continue to improve our unique coastal prairie by grazing for perennial grasses. Perennial grasses stay greener longer. Perennial grasses also have deeper root systems which enhance erosion control and carbon sequestration. Many if not most of the perennial grasses on the Ranch are native species. [HR](#)

"To be simple is to be great"  
Ralph Waldo Emerson



## Jus' a Small Change in Perspective

A Brahma-mix jumped down th' cliff,  
Boss let his ranch rope slide.  
No use give'n Pony a scare  
his first big catch outside.

Both rope an' steer slid down-canyon,  
but Boss still full o' hope,  
loped 'round t' th' barranca's mouth,  
T' greet both steer 'n rope.

Steer ran past as Boss leaned t' grab  
th' rope trail'n it his wake,  
But Pony shied an' lept sideways  
'cause he just saw a snake!

Boss started cuss'n as he spurred,  
T' catch that on'ry steer.  
Six times Boss reached out for his  
rope, six times lil' Pony veered.

Pony jus' kept think'n big snake,  
Boss smiled, he got th' joke.  
So stepped t' th' ground, walked over,  
reached down, picked up his rope.

Colt an' steer stood rock-still staren',  
as Boss coiled up his slack.  
Stuck his boot back in th' stirrup,  
swung up on Pony's back.

Guess it sure goes t' show ya,  
we all can make mistakes.  
At times yur EYES see lariat,  
but MIND jus' shouts out SNAKE!

Now a small change in perspective,  
can be a handy aide.  
Will turn th' tide t' yur favor,  
change how th' game is played.

Boss took a turn an' swung colt slow,  
then jus' slick as could be,  
Dragged-off th' on'ry roan white-face,  
thru sage as tall as trees.

-Sue Benech Field

## COWS 101

by John McCarty

The Hollister Ranch Cooperative very simply is a commercial cattle "grazing operation". We market grass through cattle. Presently we have two grazing operations: stocker yearlings (stockers); cow/calf (cows)

The stockers are typically young cattle (6-10 months old) brought in from various locations (Mexico – Utah). These cattle are owned by an outside operator. All expenses associated with these cattle (purchases, vaccines, supplemental feed and transportation, death loss, etc.) are covered by the owner not the Co-op. The Co-op provides grass, water and care for the cattle. Therefore the risk is low along with the potential income. The income for the Co-op is based upon the amount of weight the cattle gain while pastured on the Ranch. The typical grazing season for these cattle is November through the 1st of June if you are following a normal year. That was not the case this past season. We were following one of the worst drought years recorded and we had to wait for rains to start the grass before cattle could be brought on. This always results in lower projected gains due to the length of time the cattle can graze. The stockers stop gaining after the grass matures and dries out. An average season gain is 200 lbs, good season 250 lbs, and an exceptional season 300 lbs. A terrible season is no gain or no cattle at all. The price received for the gain doesn't fluctuate like the cattle market. Our recent contracts run \$0.30 - \$0.36 per pound of gain. The gross dollars received for a stocker can be any where from \$0 on a terrible year to \$108 on an exceptional year. Typically we expect to receive \$66 per head (average year). Fully stocked the Ranch could handle 2200 head which would be a projected income of \$146,500.00.



John McCarty and Jenny Alexander at the Santa Anita scales.

A cow pasture arrangement is much different. The cows are commercial breeding cows for the purpose of raising calves. Like the stockers, the ownership and expenses are with an outside operator. These cattle are on the Ranch year-round. The care provided is more time consuming due to calving season, branding and weaning, in addition to the normal checking. The price is based upon per cow per month and pro-rated for the year. Today's cow pasture runs between \$15

**If you want the potential  
to make a bigger profit  
you need to risk more.**

- \$20 dollars per cow per month or \$180 - \$240 per year. These prices are negotiable based upon the conditions of the contract and quality of grass. The Co-op's price is \$222.00 per cow. The Ranch, if fully stocked, could run 900 cows with a projected gross income of \$199,000.00.

The Co-op, for 2009 season, is expecting to run 1000 stockers and 500 cows. This will be a projected income of \$180,000.00. The obvious question:

Continued on Next page

## COWS 101

*continued*

why doesn't the Co-op run all cows which have the potential to generate a larger income? The reason is that our number of animals can be adjusted in a drought year or an exceptional year with stocker cattle whereas with cows, it cannot. Cows are here for the season, calving and raising babies, and are hard to move or transport if the season turns out to be poor, whereas the stocker cattle can be shipped rather quickly. A bit of an insurance program in which you don't always get your premium back but when you need it, it's there.



Regardless of the combination of grazing operations, the fact remains that the previous year and the condition in which the Ranch is in on November 1, and the current year's seasonal quality play a major role in reaching our projected income. Another, maybe not quite so obvious

question is what the outside operator's potential for gross income is. Let's put it this way; considerably more per head. The down-side is the potential loss and the large capital investment. On stocker cattle, on small gains with a market drop, the operator could lose \$100 per stocker. A cow operator could be forced to sell off cows at a much lower price than originally paid, suffer a low calf market and be labored with always increasing production costs, transportation being a critical one with fuel costs what they are.

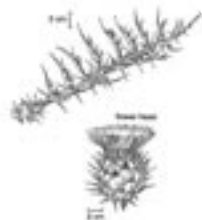
What kind of capital would the Co-op need to be a stocker operator and fully stock the Ranch? In the neighborhood of \$1,155,000.00. What would it cost to fully stock the Ranch with cows (& bulls to service the cows)? In the neighborhood of \$1,032,000.00.

The current Co-op Board is considering assessing the membership this next fall to purchase our optimum number of livestock (500 cows and 1000 stockers) which is an estimated gross investment of \$1,124,000.00, approximately \$9,500 per member. This will definitely make you "players" in the cattle business... NOT! I'm just fooling, but trying to prove a point. If you want the potential to make a bigger profit you need to risk more. It's a gamble to be in the cattle business but the Co-op's operation is not a gamble. What the cattle and our grazing operation does for this Ranch by far out-weighs the largest projected investment. Details on "benefits of the grazing operation" in the next "CATTLE CALL".

As the saying goes "if you want to make a small fortune in the cattle business start off with a large one". For those members who have willingly paid your assessments, **THANK YOU**, for those of you who haven't... don't worry you still get the benefits. [LR](#)

## Good, Bad and the Ugly

Not all thistles are alike. After thirty years, and tens of thousands of dollars of effort the Co-op has fought and all but won the battle with the "BAD" Artichoke Thistle, a noxious weed whose large spines not only prevent it from being eaten but builds a barrier to movement by both man and beast. They all may be "UGLY" to the inexperienced eye but at least one species, "The Blessed Milk Thistle", has more good points than bad. Yes it is not native and it does have spines but it produces both seed and vegetation that are readily devoured wet or dry by both



native and non-native grazers. The seed-head of this species is targeted by grazers for its rich source of nutritional oils. It's "GOOD" because it provides valuable forage during the dry summer months. It became known as the "Blessed Milk Thistle" by the vaqueros during a series of devastating droughts in the mid 1800's, providing their livestock, life-sustaining nutrients through long dry summers. Another "BAD" thistle would be the Bull Thistle but don't confuse it with the readily grazed Italian Thistle and a number of native thistle species that are not considered NOXIOUS. [LR](#)

## HR Co-op Assessments

An essential component to the Co-op's path toward profitability is and will remain a small annual assessment. This means the Co-op will need to assess its membership for the next few years to maintain cash flow and build up cash reserves that will allow us to operate during drought cycles. The HR Co-op so far has issued two assessments to its members; one in December 2007 and one in March 2008. These two assessments combined, made up for last year's drought-related shortfall. As part of the HR Co-op's membership's mandate for self-reliance, we will continue to assess once each year until a "drought reserve" is built. The HR Co-op Board would like to thank our members for your timely payments of these annual assessments. [LR](#)

## HROA/HR Co-op License Agreement

**HR** Co-op profitability will be closely tied to an equitable licensing agreement between HROA and the Co-op. HR Co-op fiscal success hinges upon being treated on equal footing with HROA with regard to operating privileges. The HR Co-op Board has recently approved a working draft of this agreement which we hope will be finalized before the end of our fiscal year. The license agreement is by plan, simple. It provides the HR Co-op

three employee houses and existing barn facilities. It grants HR Co-op employees the same privileges as HROA employees. Finally, it puts the HR Co-op operations on equal footing with HROA operations. This license agreement will be reviewed, renewed and, if necessary, revised every three years. In addition, a yearly memorandum of understanding (MOU) will outline specific short-term goals and joint stewardship projects. ER

“Do what you can,  
with what you have,  
where you are.”

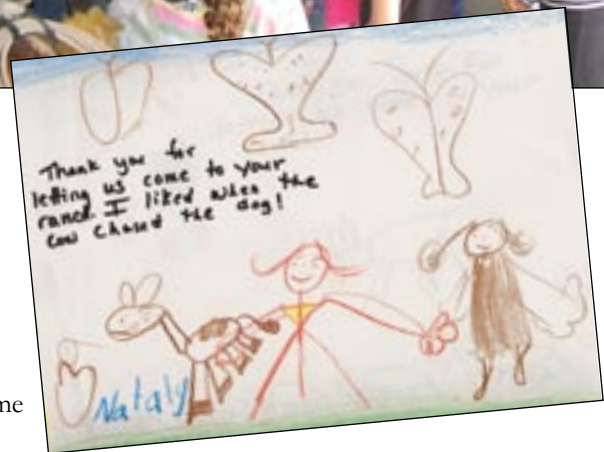
F. D. Roosevelt

## Kindergarten Cattle Day

**O**n June 12, 2008 the Hollister Ranch Co-op hosted a cattle day “field trip” for the Vista De La Cruces kindergarten class. Mrs. Williamson and her class of 13 students along with an additional 5 chaperones came to the Ranch to get a birds-eye view of cattle ranching including hands-on experience with tools, horses, dogs and cowboys to see how they play a part in managing and raising commercial cattle on the Hollister Ranch.

The day began in the tack room where lots of good stuff was displayed and explained such as veterinarian products, ear tags, branding irons, saddles, bridles, chaps and much more. The kids really like to handle all the different stuff, especially the automatic syringes which they quickly converted into water pistols. The questions and answers produced by such a young group were entertaining. It was amazing how much our local kids knew about ranching.

All the kids got to get on Grey McCarty’s cow horse “Bobby”. Will Ingram, HR Co-op Cowboy gave a great “working cow dog” demonstration, using his good dog “Hank”, which everyone enjoyed.



Everyone was sent home with some souvenirs including, an HR brand on wood and cattle ear tags with their names on them. The day ended with an enjoyable picnic at Bultio Cabana.

The Co-op has been hosting field trips with students of all ages for many years. It is a great way to share the wonderful life of ranching on the Ranch with the next generation. ER

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