

Bradley 3 Ranch

LONG ROAD — SHORT RIDE

As I reflect back on the fifty years that I have had the opportunity and good fortune to live out here on the ranch, I think back on some things that will never be forgotten and the many changes that have occurred.

The drought of the 1950s was one of the worst in history for Childress County. Many vacant farm houses were to the west of where we settled in 1955. My most vivid memory during our first year on the ranch was looking down the road to our gate entrance and seeing only a wall of red, the cattle guard was hidden by the dirt. Our ranch was literally blowing away. Before buying the ranch we had to dig up the roots to see if they were alive as no grass was on top of the ground. It took many years to learn how to grow grass and run cattle and I am proud to say that this ole' country has turned into a sea of grass and was awarded the Texas Parks and Wildlife Stewardship award in 1998.

The windmill towers were made of wood and had 3-inch pipe in them and no one had ever used pipe compound. All the mills were down and it is a vivid memory the day we decided to pull one. Using a World War II topless jeep with a tarp pulled over it for shade we hooked it to the rope and tackle to pull the pipe. I was selected to be the driver. Both of my inlaws got on each of the running boards to help hold it on the ground when Bill got it hooked up. I could only see straight ahead. He yelled, "Ready, put it in reverse and give it _____." I did as any young bride would do; I took him at his word. Suddenly my in-laws jumped from the jeep, Bill was leaving the tower in a fast run and I knew nothing of what was happening. All of a sudden timbers were falling all around me. The jeep and I were half way up the now three-sided tower dangling from a much-shredded rope. I have often wondered what a 2005 OSHA agent would have to say about the safety regulations on the Bradley 3 Ranch. Today most towers are only there for direction points as solar systems have replaced the most reverend of all, the windmill.

Back problems never seemed to be as prevalent as they are today and I would guess it might be because we didn't have worker's comp and health insurance for employees. All our feed came in 100 pound burlap sacks. Somehow we managed to put them in the barn each fall, lift them into a pickup and the third time we would walk among the cows feeding them. I was asked one time what was one of the better things that had happened to the cow business and I told them it's when they went to the fifty pound bag and I didn't think it could get any better. What a deal today, we drive under an overhead, pull a lever, fill the pickup, drive to a pasture, and set our gauge to feed a certain number of pounds. The pickup is set at 72 degrees, the heated coffee mug is beside me, Willie Nelson is singing and those Angus cows are nursing a calf 200 pounds heavier than a few years earlier. How good can ranching be in 2005?

Communications were a little slow for all of us out in northwest Childress County. For many years we had no phone, no television, and when we finally got some rain in the late fifties the bridges on all sides washed out so our method of transportation was horseback. A grocery list was pretty small when you had to bring it in by packhorse. Our only source of drinkable water was Mr. Richburg's water hauling rig of 1,000 gallons. Our well water was so gypsy that we bathed, drank and cooked with the one good water well in Estelline. It was delivered to our cistern every two weeks. When the creek came down and took the wooden bridges with it we were forced to only drink and cook with the Estelline water so a number two tub was filled with gyp water and set out in the sun and baths were taken outside. What a deal we have in 2005. We are on a rural water system, we have two lane concrete bridges, our road is cleache, we have an underground cabled phone system with lines for phones, faxes, and internet. The ranch pickup has a radio and I can talk with the cowboys carrying handheld radios. This allows us to communicate while gathering cattle. It saves us miles of riding and more cattle are gathered. Cell phones are now a must for efficiency. Better yet, we have some cows wearing GPS collars and can be identified as to their location every ten minutes. We can communicate in seconds with ranchers across the world. In

the fifties we could never have dreamed of such technology let alone a cowman of our size being able to utilize such tools for our outfit.

Many of you do not remember the scourge of the screwworm and the effect it had in the southwestern United States on ranchers of cattle, sheep and goats. They dictated when you could cut, dehorn, calve, and brand. In 1956 we got in 300 head of yearlings and placed our first figure 3 on cattle. It was early October and we thought by the time the brand peeled we would have a frost and the screw worm flies would be gone but instead the drought started to break and it set in and rained and stayed warm and the brands peeled early. We had 300 cases of worms scattered over sixteen sections of brush. From daylight to dark we rode, roped and doctored. We carried an Army canteen of water and a can of Vienna sausages and for thirty days that was our lunch.

The drive to eradicate the screwworm was fought by many; we had county and state meetings to try and help fund the project. As I recall, each person that had cattle, sheep or goats was asked to write a check. It had to be a very small amount or we could not have contributed. It met a lot of resistance but in the long haul they raised enough money for the project to start turning loose sterile flies and in a short period the flies were eradicated. The biggest scourge in the ranching industry had been lifted. It reminds me today of the resistance we have in the cow business currently - those who resist those very things that can help us to survive and prosper such as the beef check-off and regaining our export markets.

As I recall, there was a thirty minute lecture in 1952 at Oklahoma A&M on perhaps weighing individual cattle and seeing if there was a variance in weight of cattle from different genetics. In 1955 both Bill and I had remembered that lecture and realized that cattle are sold by the pound and perhaps that professor who was thinking out of the box just might have a good idea. We purchased a pair of scales with a chute attached. We hauled it from pasture to pasture weighing both cows and calves, recording the weights but not really knowing what to do with them. Several years later the American Angus Association board of directors braved all fronts and began attaching weights to genetics and EPDs were established. Most of you now know the power of those records and years later, ultrasound information was introduced. I am proud to say we have been in on the ground floor on most of all those tools. Now the Association is developing what I consider the most important - placing a dollar value on all of traits and adding efficiency factors. It's just got to be the most exciting time in my many years of ranching.

Does anyone remember the old bookkeeping system where we entered everything by pencil in a two-ledger system? Each month I would enter every check and run totals for the month. At the end of the year we would tally up to see if we had made money or lost. Now we are on quick books. All is done on a computer and a profit and loss statement is printed monthly, in just a matter of minutes. We know exactly where we are on almost a daily basis so needed changes can be made before a wreck occurs.

All these changes have been good for our outfit, I have been blessed with good employees through the years, and I have learned something from each of them. Now I am more fortunate than a lot of ranching families as Mary Lou and James are coming into the organization and are helping me a lot and no doubt they will bring new ideas and practices that they have developed in their other businesses. I will probably have to swallow a time or two on some of their suggestions but I am betting I am not too old and set in my ways to accept new ways of doing business. Bradley 3 Ranch will be in great hands for years to come. In another part of the newsletter we will tell you just who Bradley 3 Ranch is and what we have done to make Bradley 3 Ranch Angus genetics a profitable product for all to own.

New Facilities at Bradley 3 Ranch

We have recognized for a number of years that we needed some new facilities for our customers

who come to the ranch and learn more about our cattle. Last October, we completed our new hunting lodge/guest facility. It has a beautiful view of part of the ranch and is complete with a kitchen, satellite TV, two full baths and will sleep up to eight adults. We want all of our current and prospective customers to know they are welcome to utilize these facilities. We do ask for you to give us some advance notice so that we can have things ready for your comfort upon arrival and that someone will be available at the ranch to discuss your cattle needs.

We are also nearing completion of our new office. The portable building we have used as an office since the mid sixties has served beyond its usefulness. We have designed a new office that we think will serve our needs as we grow for the next forty years. We will have a number of exciting features in our new office, but most of all we want it to be very functional and comfortable for our ranch visitors. Please come by the ranch and let us show you the new facilities we have to help showcase our herd that has fifty years of heritage.

Who is Bradley 3 Ranch?

Bradley 3 Ranch has spent fifty plus years breeding performance cattle that are gentle, structurally correct, fertile, efficient, with excellent carcass traits that have longevity in a large ranch environment.

Gentle Cattle: As labor becomes more difficult to find and our average rancher age continues to increase, having gentle cattle becomes more and more important. Bradley 3 Ranch actively culls any cattle that display temperament that could be perceived as dangerous to anyone handling those cattle.

Structurally Correct: Minnie Lou has used her award-winning abilities to judge livestock to select cattle for structural correctness for over fifty years. Any defects in feet, legs or udders have been eliminated from the herd and all females on the ranch have been bred and born on the Bradley 3 Ranch.

Fertile: Cows on the Bradley 3 Ranch are exposed to bulls for sixty (60) days in two section pastures. Cows that do not breed in these conditions are culled from the herd or used as recipient cows in our embryo program.

Efficient: Cows on the Bradley 3 Ranch average \$25.75 \$EN as compared to the Angus breed average of \$13.09 \$EN. Cows are weighed along with their calves at weaning and a cow that does not wean fifty percent of her body weight is not allowed to remain in the herd.

Our cows must be efficient to live on our native grass pastures. With average Cow Energy Values (\$EN) of \$25.75, our cattle will work in a variety of environments and improve your herd's efficiency.

Excellent Carcass Traits: Bradley 3 Ranch has been involved in selling meat to customers and tracking carcass data for over twenty (20) years. All Bradley 3 Ranch herd bulls have been bred and born on the ranch. Four (4) herd bulls are in the top twenty percent of the breed for %IMF EPDs. Eleven (11) herd bulls are in the top twenty percent of the breed for Ribeye EPDs. Ten (10) herd bulls are in the top twenty percent of the breed for % Retail Product EPDs. Ten (10) herd bulls are in the top twenty percent of the breed for \$Grid.

Longevity: Bradley 3 Ranch cows are not sold from the herd because of age until they are eleven (11) years old. At eleven years of age, they become eligible to enter the Bradley 3 Ranch Donor Program if they meet the other stringent criterion. Cows at this age have been producing 80 to 100 number one embryos in five to six flushes.

Large Ranch Environment: Bradley 3 Ranch pastures are mostly two sections (1,280 acres) in

size. Most pastures are rolling terrain and heavily covered in brush. Cows on the Bradley 3 Ranch have to calve during November and December and rebreed during a 60-day exposure to bulls from mid-January to mid-March in these large pastures. We believe that seedstock cattle should be able to thrive in the same conditions that most commercial cattle are raised in.

Mary Lou and James Henderson

Mary Lou and James have been doing and learning more things at the ranch since their departure from BC Natural Foods, but are also forming new ventures to help cattle producers and purchasers of beef.

Mary Lou has been spending considerably more time at the ranch learning the many things that are going on there and covering for Minnie Lou as she travels on her duties as President of the American Angus Association. Mary Lou is also in the process of setting up a company to help commercial and registered customers of Bradley 3 Ranch. Her company will provide services for ranches that will include, but are not limited to, managing and input of data and turning data into information that can be readily used for decision making. Her company will also handle all paper work necessary for registered cattle. If you think that Mary Lou might be able to assist you with your data, please contact her at 940-585-6471.

James and Micro Beef Technologies along with some other investors have joined forces to form a new company called Synergy Beef Ltd. Synergy Beef will design Specification Beef Systems. Synergy will work with any customers of beef and beef products to build the cattle and processing production chain to facilitate whatever specifications they might require or desire for their specific market application. Synergy Beef will work with processors, packers, feedyards, cow-calf operations and seedstock producers to align the production chain for any customers of beef. Instead of trying to market beef raised through a specific production system, they will design the production system for the customer. This will allow any customer to differentiate their product as much as desired. If you have interest in enrolling your cattle in this type of production system, contact James at 940-585-6171.

Bradley 3 Ranch, Number One in Texas for 2004 Pathfinder Cows

Qualification for Pathfinder designation by the American Angus Association requires a female to calve with the herd average on their first calf (24 months at Bradley 3 Ranch) and her first three calves must come at a calving interval of 365 days plus thirty. Each calf must also index 105 percent for weaning weight.

For 2004, Bradley 3 Ranch had twenty (20) cows qualify as Pathfinders, more than any other breeder in Texas. All Bradley 3 Ranch females were bred and raised on the ranch including these twenty (20). Our efforts to concentrate on maternal traits as well as efficiency, fertility and longevity are showing very positive results within the Angus breed.

For the first time, Bradley 3 Ranch also had one of their herd sires make Pathfinder. The home bred and raised herd sire had sixty percent of his daughters make Pathfinder. In contrast, Bon View New Design 1407 had eight percent of his daughters make Pathfinder.

Our cows are bred for maternal traits as well as efficiency, structural correctness, longevity, and fertility. We invite you to come look at our herd that has been built on structural correctness and efficiency (Breed Average \$EN = \$13.09; Bradley 3 Ranch Average = \$25.75). From mid-May to Mid-August, our cow herd is on improved pasture that is easy for you to view and analyze. We also have our new guest facilities available for accommodations for you and your family.

2006 Bradley 3 Ranch Bull and Female Sale

February 11, 2006, will be the date of our annual production sale. We will be offering 160 to 170 bulls born fall of 2004 and twenty-five to thirty of our top open heifers that will be the same age as the bulls offered for sale. We will also have a few bred heifers to offer that will be bred to calve in early March 2006 to M048. If we have any of our bull customers that would like to offer commercial daughters of bulls they have purchased from Bradley 3 Ranch, we will also offer those commercial females for sale. **If you have interest in selling commercial females, please contact the ranch no later than October 1, 2005.**

Superior Livestock Auctions on RFD TV will again broadcast the sale. Start time will be 12:30 p.m. CST. We will move our educational seminar time to Friday afternoon, February 10, 2006, and will cap it off with a pitchfork fondue dinner Friday evening. So plan to come early and enjoy time with friends and allow plenty of time to view the cattle that will be available for sale.

We will be offering over twenty (20) sons and a few heifers of our herd bull 0004 whose sons topped our 2005 sale. 0004 is the best phenotypic bull we have had at Bradley 3 Ranch. He is sleek haired, which will improve the heat tolerance for our purchasers in the South. 0004 is in the top twenty percent of the breed for Calving Ease Direct EPD, the top three percent of the breed for Birth Weight EPD and the top ten percent of the breed for \$EN. His calves should work on any heifers and his females should be very efficient.

We will also be offering the first sons and daughters of our exciting herd bull M048. M048 is in the top ten percent of the breed for Birth Weight EPD, the top one percent of the breed for %IMF EPD, the top two percent of the breed for Ribeye EPD, the top four percent of the breed for Retail Product EPD, the top one percent of the breed for \$G, and the top five percent of the breed for \$B. He is sleek haired to improve heat tolerance and he is still maturing but is very nice phenotypically.

We also have semen available for sale on all of our herd sires and we will have some bred females and open heifers for sale in August. For information on any of the cattle we will have for sale please give us a call: Ranch 806-888-1062, Minnie Lou's cell 940-585-8075, Mary Lou's cell 940-585-6471, James' cell 940-585-6171.

Bradley 3 Ranch Hosts Childress FFA Banquet

For the second year, Bradley 3 Ranch hosted the Childress FFA for their annual awards banquet. Childress FFA has been recognized as one of the top chapters in the nation. More than thirty-five percent of all Childress High School students are members of the FFA chapter, which is the largest in the district. Instructors, Russell Graves and Roy Novak have these students involved in many projects that get these young people excited about a future in agriculture.

In 2004 Minnie Lou was presented with the Chapter's Honorary FFA Degree and the chapter framed wildlife photographs of native wildlife that were taken by Russell Graves. Those photos are part of the décor of the ranch's new hunting lodge/guest facility and will also be displayed in our new office upon completion. Bradley 3 Ranch encourages all of our friends and associates to get involved in getting young people excited about a future in agriculture.

Thank You to Our Customers

We would like to pause to say thank you to our many customers. It is your trust that you have placed in us as seedstock producers that has allowed our success. Our 2004 sale was our most successful year ever.

In our 2005 Production Sale, we sold 165 head of cattle to forty-two locations in Texas, eleven

head of cattle to four locations in New Mexico, seven head of cattle to five locations in Oklahoma, four head of cattle to two locations in Arkansas, two head of cattle to one location in Colorado, one head to one location in Kansas, and one head to one location in Louisiana. We are very humbled indeed to serve this many cattle producers in this large of a geographic area. We have heard from some of you and will add Lot # Tags to the sale cattle for 2006 and allow for more cattle viewing time on Sale Day. If you have any comments that could improve our sale we would appreciate your input.

Dove Hunt Available for Groups

Bradley 3 Ranch has the first two weekends of Dove Season available for lease. If you have any interest in a group dove hunt, [contact us](#) for details.