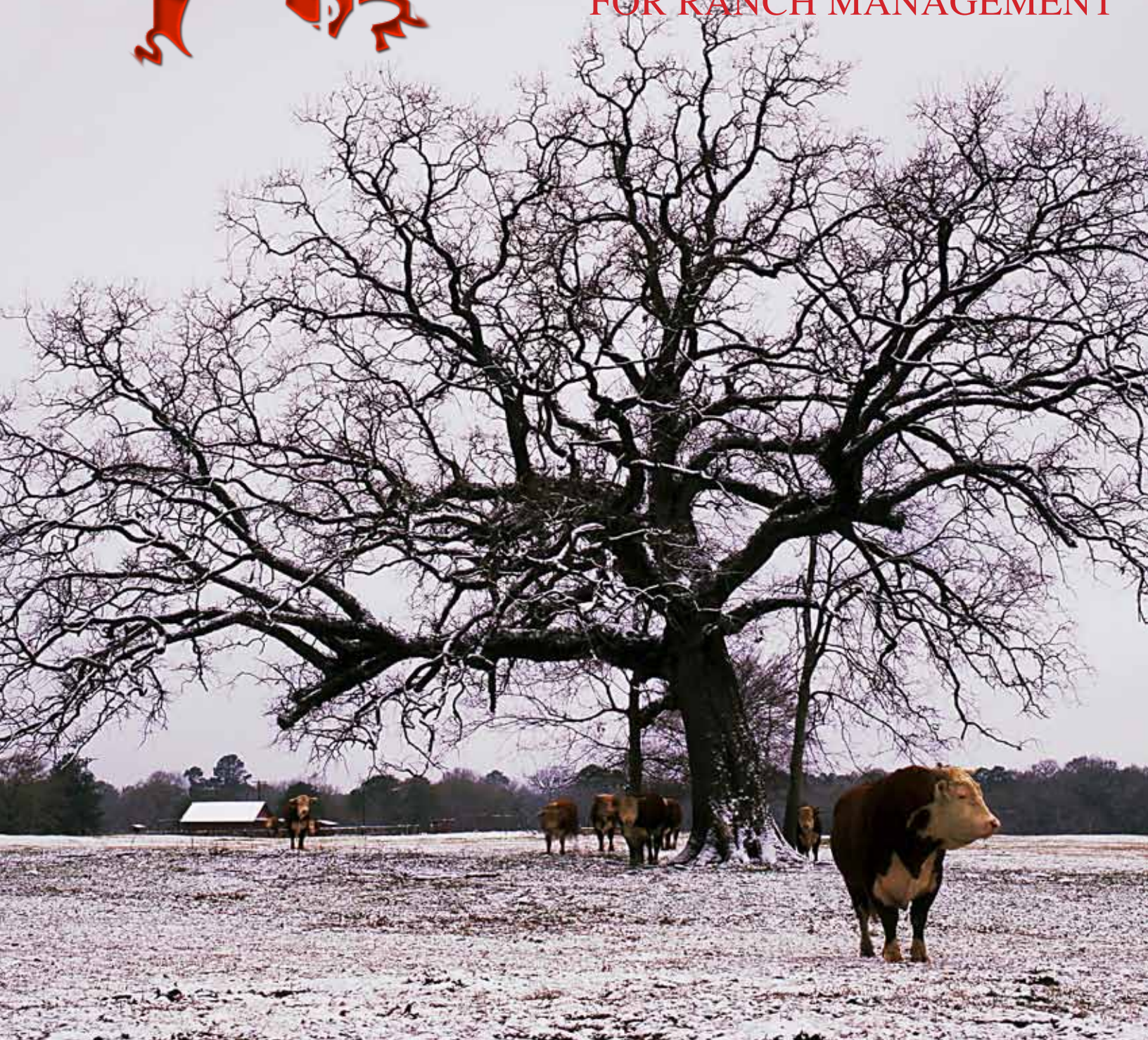


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KING RANCH INSTITUTE

FOR RANCH MANAGEMENT



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On Our Cover:

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www.joelowery.com

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“Plan to be Flexible”

From the Director, Dr. Clay P. Mathis

This Fall I have had the opportunity to listen to and ponder over the comments and data presented by some great agriculture economists, and the constant outlook theme has been “market volatility.” In fact, market volatility has been the major theme for a number of years. Market drivers that are somewhat predictable are generally priced into the futures markets, but the volatility stems from the fact that some of the market stimuli, like foreign and domestic policy, are relatively unpredictable. If drivers of the market were more predictable the market would be much less volatile, but the fact is many of the drivers are not very predictable. It can be challenging to grow or sometimes just sustain a ranching operation when livestock and input commodity prices are variable. This is especially true if the ranch is locked into a business model that does not include flexibility in purchasing and livestock sales alternatives. Often ranch location and environment limit adaptability, but business survival and especially growth will most likely favor ranching operations that can take advantage of purchasing and sales opportunities created by favorable swings in commodity input prices and livestock sales prices. It will be those willing to make changes, the “adaptable”, that will have the advantage. This is exactly the point Dr. Michael Swanson of Wells Fargo recently made when he said, “When the environment changes, it’s the adaptable that thrive not the well adapted.” Even though the direction and magnitude of market swings may not be easily foreseen, the continued or even increasing market volatility will create great opportunity for the astute and flexible producers in the U.S.

The successful ranch business plan should be built around the central theme of staying as flexible as possible to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

In general, opportunities in the ranching business abound. Feedlots are very current, average price projections for the next few years for all classes of cattle are very strong, and with a little more market access we could experi-

ence an even faster export market growth rate. There are many “bullish” signals for the cattle market, but significant political uncertainties also exist that will impact cattle prices. If the predictions of strong but volatile prices are correct, we might see cattle and input commodity prices follow a pattern of 5-steps forward, 11-steps backward, 12-steps forward. If that is the case some ranching operations will do very well; likely others will not. I believe those operations that have focused on building a strategic plan to face these uncertainties will greatly improve their chances of business survival and growth through the next decade. Dr. Swanson also said “planning can’t be about predicting.” It must be a plan for how a ranch will capitalize on the market swings and reduce risk exposure. The most successful production system or mixture of enterprises on a given



Continued on page 10

W*wagon*
T*tracks*

The Pursuit of Excellence

Superior cattle, legendary Quarter Horses, and a focus on the future – including consumers – are hallmarks of the Four Sixes Ranch.

By Kindra Gordon

What's the key to creating a ranch legacy that has spanned more than 140 years? It's pushing beyond the status quo and striving for excellence, says Joe Leathers, current cattle manager at the Four Sixes Ranch headquartered in Guthrie, TX.

The historic ranch is part of the Burnett Ranches, LLC, which was founded in 1868 by Captain Samuel "Burk" Burnett when he purchased 100 head of cattle wearing the "6666" brand. Today, Burnett Ranches, which encompasses 275,000 acres near Panhandle and Guthrie, is owned and operated by Anne Burnett Windfohr Marion, the great-granddaughter of Captain Burnett. Superbly bred cattle, champion horses and abundant wildlife grace its landscape.

"This ranch has stayed in business because it is progressive. We strive for excellence in our horses and cattle and have for years and years. We strive for excellence in our people too," says Leathers.

He tells that as the ranch legacy has been passed through each generation of the Burnett family the focus on determination, innovation and high expectations has been passed to the managers – there have only been six since 1870 – and employees as well.

As a result, the Four Sixes today is a premier example of dedication to a family ranching legacy. "We have second and third generation employees who work here, and they take as much pride in the ranch as the owners," says Leathers.

Quality Quest

The foundation for the Four Sixes exemplary success can be traced to its emphasis on superior genetics for its cattle and Quarter Horses (see sidebar.)

Within the last 15 years, a transition to a new Black Angus program for the herd's 7,000 cows was initiated by former managers J.J. and Mike Gibson and is being continued by Leathers. The Four Sixes' goal is to produce animals with a

moderate frame, good temperament, exceptional feedlot performance and superior carcass quality. Steers are sold as feeders or retained through finishing. The ranch is also specializing in the sale of top-quality replacement females to enhance other breeding programs.

Leathers reports that the investment in Angus genetics has added efficiency and end-product quality to the beef produced by the Four Sixes. He says, "People are standing in line to buy our cattle. I'm proud of where we came from and what we are doing today."

As he oversees the cattle management of the ranch, Leathers' focus on producing quality beef is driven by his sincere commitment to the ranching industry – and American consumers. He says, "Sustainability of the ranching industry is a key factor for the future. We have a population that is expanding rapidly. To stay in business, American ranchers are going to have to produce more tons of beef on fewer acres while still providing a safe, nutritious, high quality beef product. The alternative is increasing use of foreign beef...it becomes a national security issue."

He adds, "I want the American public to realize this and understand that they are part of this ranch [the Four Sixes] and the ranching industry as a whole. They have a valuable stake in it, and it's called food."

To that end, Leathers goal for the Four Sixes is to continue improving the genetics of their cows and the productivity of their range so they have the ability to produce more pounds of American beef for consumers.

He shares that through an intensive brush control program over the last several years the Four Sixes has cleared 160,000 acres so that it is once again productive rangeland that can be





utilized by cattle and wildlife. Before this the ranch was averaging one cow to 38-40 acres, now they are able to stock about one cow/30 acres – meaning they can run more cows and produce more beef.



Looking Forward

Leathers' vision for the future is to continue striving for excellence – and he realizes this means not only with ranch management, but also with doing a better job of informing and educating the American public.

“Most Americans used to have a concept of where their food came from, but we’ve lost that connection to agriculture. We need to make it a priority to educate the American public and policy makers about what we do in agriculture and how the challenges that face our industry affect us,” says Leathers. He acknowledges that a litany of issues face the ag industry – from environmental issues, GIPSA, Cap and Trade, to the death tax. But he believes until policy makers and the American people have a better understanding of agriculture, those issues will remain contentious and there will continue to be new items added to the list.

Rather, he says, “With a better understanding of agricul-

ture by the American people and our policy makers we could alleviate a lot of what comes out of D.C. We as ranchers need to individually take the time to educate others and share the message that American ranchers produce a safe quality product for the US and the world.”

Leathers has been active in meeting with political leaders in Austin and on the national level, and says he speaks to groups “at every opportunity he gets.” That said, he encourages other ranchers to do the same and says, “You don’t have to be a professional speaker; just educate others about what you do. There is no reason the everyday rancher can’t tell his story.” Leathers says Facebook and websites can be a valuable tool in sharing ranchers’ stories as well.

Continued on page 6



Photos provided by Four Sixes Ranch. Above: Joe Leathers, Cattle Manager, Four Sixes Ranch.

Four Sixes Horses & Veterinary Services

In addition to its cattle enterprise, the Four Sixes stands some of the most well-respected Quarter Horse stallions in the industry, with elite broodmares that produce superior individuals for cutting, reining, racing, ranch work and all-around performance-bred stallions.

Quarter Horses with the 6666 brand are consistently ranked among the best in the breed, as evidenced by receipt of the AQHA Best Remuda Award and as an AQHA All-Time Leading Breeder of Performance Horses and Race Money-Earners and Winners.

Complementing its horse program, the Four Sixes offers a full range of equine veterinary services at its modern, state-of-the-art medical facilities located at the main headquarters just west of Guthrie. Each year, more than 1,200 mares are bred from ranch, performance and racing Quarter Horse disciplines, while maintaining a 95% conception rate. Dr. Glenn Blodgett is the horse division manager and leads the team of veterinary staff members. He oversees all of the veterinary and reproductive services provided at the 6666 Ranch, as well as all horse breeding and management responsibilities.

Continued from page 5

Shaping Future Leaders

The Four Sixes is also committed to helping shape future leaders in the beef industry. They are a major contributor to the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management Endowment Fellowship which supports students enrolled in the program.

James Clement, Jr., King Ranch chairman, compliments the Four Sixes for that vision and support. He says, “When Anne Marion and I have discussed the future of ranching it is obvious innovation is critical to success. Anne acknowledges that nothing can be accomplished without the contributions of a smart, experienced manager and supportive team. The King Ranch Institute is fortunate people like Anne believe as they do and reinforce that belief with their philanthropic support.”

Toward that purpose, Leathers adds, “KRIRM provides an opportunity to teach managers to be visionaries. Future managers must not only manage the ranch but the people as well. If you don’t manage people with integrity; they won’t have integrity in what they do – that’s an important principle in our industry.”

He continues, “Ranching sends men and women of character into the world. If you ever had to be in a foxhole, they are the type of people you’d want with you. We need more people who have a knowledge of our industry’s past in leadership roles to mold the future of our industry.”

Along with that, Leathers recounts the increasing importance for future managers and beef industry leaders to always look ahead, think out of the box, push beyond status quo – and share information with the American public.

He concludes, “I want people to realize the decisions we make on the Four Sixes are for the good of the American public. When I look out across a ridge and see a large herd of cattle, I realize how blessed I am to see the landscape my forefathers and the Indians saw. I wish everybody in the US could experience that.”

For more about the Four Sixes visit: <http://6666ranch.com/>



Business Law for Ranchers

Texas A&M University-Kingsville
April 7-8, 2011
Registration: \$300.00



For more information or to register
contact us at <http://krirm.tamuk.edu>
or call (361) 593-5401



Book Donation Continues to Build Resources for KRIRM Graduate Students



The students of the King Ranch Institute recently received a large donation of books to add to their library of resources from Dr. Lynn Drawe. Dr. Drawe has been a supporter of the Institute from the outset and serves on the Management Council for KRIRM. Our students benefit greatly from the materials Dr. Drawe accumulated through his life's work. Their studies are continually enhanced by people like Dr. Drawe who not only donate resources, but also their ideas and time to help make this Institute a success. Dr. Drawe teaches the Prescribed Burning Lectureship for KRIRM every January. Thank you, Dr. Lynn Drawe, for the support you have shown us at the King Ranch Institute.

KRIRM Welcomes a New Class

This August KRIRM welcomed three new students to our Master's program. Our students come from all over the United States to enhance their knowledge of management and the ranching industry.



*Jeremy Gingerich
Dillon, Montana*

Jeremy comes to KRIRM from Dillon, Montana. Jason grew up along the Front Range of Colorado, spending as much time as possible outdoors on the ranches of friends and neighbors. After earning a Bachelor's Degree in Natural Resources Management

and completing an Interdisciplinary Program in Conservation Biology at Colorado State University in 1999, he entered the ranching profession with a conservation perspective.

Jeremy began his career as a ranch management trainee on an 87,000-acre in southeastern Colorado, where he managed 850 cows on 35,000 acres of sandhills and shortgrass prairie. Then, in 2004, Jeremy moved to southwest Montana to become the Operations Director at the Sun Ranch, a 25,000-acre scenic treasure of productive rangelands, critical wildlife habitat, and abundant recreational opportunities. On the Sun Ranch, Jeremy was responsible for grazing 1,600-1,800 yearlings while maintaining significant stretches of riparian habitat and providing winter range for up to 2,500 elk. Add to that the challenges of a resident wolf pack and grizzly bears. Jeremy states that "it was a highly rewarding and valuable learning experience."

In 2007, Jeremy joined Turner Enterprises as the manager of the Red Rock Ranch, near Dillon, MT. The Red Rock includes bison cow/calf and yearling operations and 11 miles of the Red Rock River, highly renowned for its trout fishing. Like all of Turner properties, the Red Rock was managed in an economically sustainable and ecologically sensitive man-

ner while promoting the conservation of native species. The diversity of people and landscapes comprising Turner Enterprises made for a very rewarding experience, but the draw of higher education had been pulling for several years.

In 2010, Jeremy and his wife, Maud, decided to take the plunge and move to south Texas to attend the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management to improve Jeremy's business acumen and hone the broad set of skills needed to manage large landscapes for profit and conservation values. He believes the knowledge, exposure, and connections gained through the KRIRM, coupled with his diverse experience, will allow him to create a larger positive impact on the ranching profession and the conservation of Western Landscapes.



*Caleb Roach
Sarita, Texas*

Caleb is a native Texan, born and raised in San Antonio. He is an Eagle Scout and a graduate of Texas Military Institute. He is also a former member of the Corps of Cadets at Texas A&M, and graduated in 2006 from Sul Ross State University with a B.S.

in Natural Resource Management, where he was vice president of Delta Tau Alpha agricultural honor society.

Caleb developed a passion for the outdoors, animals, and land stewardship from his grandfather, a veterinarian and cattleman, and grew up hunting and helping manage his family hunting leases in South Texas and traveling through the Panhandle and Trans-Pecos in the feedlot cattle industry. He further developed a profound interest in the biological sciences and conservation throughout school and Scouting. Over time, he determined that his love for the outdoors, science, and ranching should become his professional career. Caleb has worked extensively to diversify his knowledge and experience in ranching, from involvement with hunting, conservation, cattle, and veterinary medicine as a youngster, to working as a ranch hand, guide, and fence-builder in college. Caleb gained experience in other ranching enterprises as well, including equine management, hay production, wildlife health and nutrition and scientific breeder deer. His last position was on the Kenedy Ranch in Sarita, TX, where he was involved in the management of wildlife, range, and groundwater resources, prescribed burning, oil & gas and wind farm production, property and mineral leases, security, and real estate and business management.

Caleb comes to the KRIRM with the hope of expanding his knowledge base and sharpening his skills to enhance his

professional and personal abilities. He firmly believes that the education and experience gained from the Institute will enable him to apply the art and science of modern ranch management techniques to help shape the industry and eventually educate the next generation of ranching professionals.

In addition to being a student at the KRIRM, Caleb is a member of several professional organizations, is actively involved in local and community activities, is a volunteer firefighter, and oversees a hunting camp in his spare time.



*Jason Van Tassell
Halfway, Oregon*

Jason was born and raised in the valleys of northern Utah. There, he gained a great love and interest in ranching and range improvements. He received a B.S. Degree in Animal Science from Utah State University while working for Ensign Ranches of Utah

as a herdsman, gathering, branding, weaning and shipping 4,500 cows to and from winter and summer ranges. Jason also worked as the “special projects” coordinator,

overseeing the design and construction of two major cattle working facilities and several livestock watering systems totaling nearly 100 miles in length and expanding over 100,000 acres. Jason then went to work for Deseret Land and Livestock in Woodruff, Utah first as a cowboy and then as the range improvement foreman overseeing brush control operations, range reseeding and installation of additional watering systems on the ranch.

In 2004, Jason left Utah and started work as the cattle manager at Pine Valley Ranch in Eastern Oregon. During his time there, he introduced and developed a synchronization and AI program for 300 replacement heifers and 1,200 mother cows, built a grazing plan for the ranch on both irrigated pasture and rangeland. The ranch consisted of 140,000 acres of private land, BLM land and forest allotments. Jason designed and constructed a 15-mile stock watering system and, most recently, coordinated procedures and implemented protocols to flush and implant over 200 Registered Angus embryos into commercial cows on the ranch.

Jason and his wife Laurie have three ranch-raised children, Laney who is ten years old, Macey who is eight, and Cache who is six. Jason loves the challenges of ranching and appreciates the heritage of hard work, innovation, tradition, dedication and education that helps move the ranching industry forward. He is excited about his opportunity to be a part of the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management and recognizes its value in preparing him for future opportunities.



*Current KRIRM Graduate
Students: Jennifer Johnson,
Jason Van Tassell, John
Hay, Tommy Gilmore,
Jeremy Gingerich, and
Caleb Roach.*

Commit to Lifelong Learning



Upcoming Events

January 3-7, 2011

Gus T. Canales Lectureship
on Prescribed Burning

February 18-19, 2011

Strategic Planning and
Management of a Ranch

March 14-16, 2011

W.B. "Dub" Yarborough Lectureship
Oil & Gas

April 7-8, 2011

J.A. "Tony" Canales Lectureship on
Business Law for Ranching

May 16-19, 2011

Richard Mifflin Kleberg, Jr. Family
Lectureship on GIS Technology

June 27-30, 2011

Richard Mifflin Kleberg, Jr. Family
Lectureship on Equine Management

July 18-21, 2011

Grazing Management Lectureship

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ranch over the last 25 years may not be the best for the future. It will probably need to be tweaked to capitalize on new opportunities created by market volatility. The successful ranch business plan should be built around the central theme of staying as flexible as possible to take advantage of unforeseen opportunities.

Developing an adaptable ranch business plan may seem like a daunting task, but there are many tools and resources available to ranch managers today to help make the process easier. A strategic plan is something every business should have. Developing ranch strategic planning skills and those needed to communicate the plan to all involved is an integral part of the KRIRM graduate training program.

We believe a well-developed and communicated plan creates the synergy among ranch leadership and employees needed for the ranch business to thrive.

On February

18-19, 2011, KRIRM will hold the "Strategic Planning and Management of a Ranch" lectureship to help ranch managers and our students further develop their tool-set for building and communicating a strategic ranch plan. If you are interested in further developing your strategic planning skills, please consider joining us for this event in Kingsville.

We believe a well-developed and communicated plan creates the synergy among ranch leadership and employees needed for the ranch business to thrive.

For more information about our lectureships visit our website at <http://krirm.tamuk.edu> or call (361) 593-5401.



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Master's level program
in ranch management;
we bring our students
and top experts in the
ranching industry
together. We are now
accepting new student
applications.**

Earn an M.S. Degree in Ranch Management



Photo by JoAnne Meeker

At the King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management we teach a multi-disciplinary, systems approach to ranch management and develop skills in our students for managing large ranches. The KRIRM curriculum compliments our student's practical experience by further building their abilities in ranching operations and business management. Our alumni have found careers in ranch management, academia and with land management agencies.

We will accept applications through March 31st. New students will begin classes in August, 2011. Please call or email us for more information about earning a Master's Degree in Ranch Management.



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Why a Master's Degree in Ranch Management?

The King Ranch Institute for Ranch Management creates a high leverage point for those pursuing a career in ranching. With a curriculum that teaches the many aspects of ranching and ranch operations, our students are highly sought after as well-trained leaders with a passion for ranching.

As a student with KRIRM you will take courses ranging in Animal Science, Wildlife, Range Management, Business and Finance. The KRIRM curriculum is enhanced by hands-on training via internships arranged to fit your interests and needs. During your two years in the program, your time will be spent not only in the classroom, but also in various lectureships, short courses and symposia, designed to highlight every area of ranch management. Our alumni have found careers in ranch management, academia, wildlife and with state and federal agencies.

APPLICATION PROCESS

KRIRM accepts applications beginning January 1st and ending March 31st every year. New students are selected and announced in April, classes begin in August. New students kick off the program with the John B. Armstrong Lectureship on Systems Thinking held annually the 2nd week of August.

ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

- B.S. degree with adequate course work in the field of interest.
- A minimum score of 800 (verbal + quantitative) on the GRE.
- Minimum undergraduate GPA of 3.0.
- Acceptance by a KRIRM graduate faculty member to guide the student's program and serve as their major advisor.
- Leveling courses may be required in areas where an applicants background is deficient.

If you are interested in applying, please provide the following:

1. A cover letter introducing yourself, describing your background, and explaining why you are interested in a ranching career.
2. Official copy of all undergraduate and graduate (if applicable) transcripts.
3. GRE scores.
4. Three letters of recommendation.
5. Resume/Curriculum Vitae.

For more information about our program or the application process please call us at (361) 593-5401.