Ideals of freedom, independence, and land ownership helped form and perpetuate the mythology of ranching in the United States. However, stereotypes emerged as a result of distortion from the media and the move away from the land. Social philosophies changed regarding the environment, land use, and the health and safety of the food supply in the late 20th century. In relation to the mythology, stereotype, and social theory regarding the ranching culture, this research seeks to clarify the fundamental principles, business philosophy, lifestyle, and values of men and women raising beef as a food product on both public and private lands in the 1990's. The mythology surrounding ranchers and cowboys are the result of three historical periods in the United States; however, the last 100 years have had the most profound effect in developing stereotypes. In this survey, 42 ranchers in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California describe the challenges, satisfactions, and the partnership with Nature that is part of their livelihood in the harsh, high desert environment of eastern Oregon and northeastern California. The low ratio of private ground in these counties creates a dependency on use of public lands for grazing. This use is often stereotyped as "welfare ranching," without computation for other variables that make it comparable with private leasing. Historically, the Taylor Grazing
Act authorizes fee grazing between ranchers and the U.S. government, but current philosophy has shifted its view of free enterprise on public lands, terming it "resource extraction." Although ranching is high in risk and low in economic return, ranchers stay in the business because they value freedom, hard work, family cohesiveness, and the interaction with Nature and the land. The future of ranching is challenged by environmental policy, government agency relations, public opinion, the high cost of land and production, and a lack of unity in the beef industry. To survive, ranchers need to unify, sharpen communication skills, provide education about ranching practices to the public, and become service-oriented as an organization to change stereotype and meet the social criteria of the next century.
Perspectives from the Ranching Culture in the 1990's: Addressing Mythological and Environmental Concerns

by

Judith A. Steward

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Judith A. Steward, Author
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DEDICATION

Here's to the ranchers of Lake County, Oregon and Modoc California; who answered my questions thoughtfully and in the spirit of truth; giving me knowledge, and a sense that messages for living still exist.
Perspectives From the Ranching Culture in the 1990's: Addressing Mythological and Environmental Concerns

Chapter 1
Research Objectives

1.1 Thesis Statement

The ideals of freedom, independence, and land ownership helped form and perpetuate the mythology of ranching in the United States. However, stereotypes later emerged as a result of distortion from the media and the move away from the land. Also, social philosophies changed concerning the environment, land use, and the health and safety of the food supply in the late 20th century. In relation to the mythology, stereotype, and social theory regarding the ranching culture, this research seeks to clarify the fundamental principles, business philosophy, lifestyle, and values of men and women raising beef as a food product on both public and private lands in the 1990's.

1.2 Background: The Myth Begins

In defining the ranching culture in the 1990's, there are many factors contributing to what is perceived as a rancher or cowboy, in both physical description and personal nature. Ranching has been part of our national mythology for over 150 years, evolving in three stages. The spirit of freedom and independence that early ranchers and cowboys embellished was symbolic of America and the basic ideals our forefathers originally sought.

A western mythology developed, in that these individuals, described as brave, rugged, or uncivilized as the case may be, became the embodiment of ideals in a message for living. They were the heroes of the day, and young boys dreamed of becoming a wild
cowboy. They crossed raging rivers, rode fearlessly through previously impenetrable country, fought the natives, and romanced the ladies on Saturday night.

Reorganization and reconstruction after the U.S. Civil War took many forms; including ranching and settlement of the Plains. Entrepreneurs were anxious to put the war behind, and the exploration of new territory for business ventures interested them. Ranching had its origins in Texas and the central plains after the War, when free-ranging wild cows in the Texas border area were lassoed and branded for trailing to market in such places as Dodge City and Abilene, Kansas and St. Louis and Kansas City, Missouri where the railhead shipped them east for consumption. The men who herded these animals were called cowboys and their owners, ranchers. The trail drives became famous, as did the trails; such as the Goodnight-Loving Trail and the Chisholm Trail. The myths began about their high level of skills with a horse and a rope, their personal integrity, and code of conduct. These things were indeed necessary; attributes for living in close contact with other men and accomplishing the daily work with horses and cattle. Also, the image of the cowboy gone bad was created—the gunslinger, such as Billy the Kid, Jesse James, and others. The latter makes good grist for entertainment, which immortalized these types far beyond what their deeds and character deserved.

1.3 Background: Transformation of the Myth

The second period influencing the definition of ranching, took shape at the turn of the century. Professor Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis stated that the old west was gone, over, and done. The West was fenced and transportation systems crisscrossed the plains—eliminating the trail drives and their colorful image. Farming had begun in the west in earnest, with the passage of the Homestead Act of 1862. The Age of Industrialization and the ensuing growth in urban areas began the exodus from an agrarian society to an industrialized culture. Even President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt embraced the cowboy-ranching lifestyle, stating that ranchers were
the true moralists of the times. He owned a ranch, and loved the dude experience. Train transportation provided a way west for those wanting an adventure in the ranching lifestyle.

One of the early dude establishments was Eaton's Ranch in Wyoming. Dude ranching is still popular today, and a growing business. Settings and atmosphere vary, but may include guided trips, gourmet meals, and outdoor campfire entertainment with guitar strumming cowboys. Some ranches provide a catered experience, while others offer an un-enhanced, real-life experience. Prices vary with activities and amenities.

The mythology of the ranching existence was also carried forward by the entertainment industry. Such communication mediums as the Wild West show, western novels, silent film, western movies, television, and the advertising industry used the mythological hero to keep him alive for those who had moved from the land, still desiring a way to keep the hero in their minds. Efforts by promoters turned the mythological hero into a stereotypical character, easily identifiable with his big hat and tough, hard hitting style.

Cinematographers continue to be enthralled with the myth of the West, producing movies and television specials centered on western subjects (Logan 1992: 86). Since movies came into being, such heroes as Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, Roy Rogers, and John Wayne have captivated audiences. Modern box office draws such as "City Slickers" capture the urbanite in a fictitious western dude setting with ludicrous outcomes.

1.4 New Philosophies, and the Evolution of the Stereotype

After the rebuilding period of WW II, the move away from an agrarian-based society was complete. Rural life was a thing of the past for the majority of the population in the United States. Technology developed rapidly, education and research information became widely available, and those who remained in agriculture witnessed a transformation that made the United States the "breadbasket to the world."
In the late 1960's and early 1970's, society in the United States experienced further change. We began to see ourselves as a global community, and that our planet was experiencing pollution, depletion of valuable resources, and management by economic incentive, rather than sustainable use. The philosophy and conduct of the United States in business affairs around the world came under question. The environmental movement, and other groups evolving in the '70's, championed new philosophies regarding extractive use of natural resources. Full-time commitment on the part of these groups caught both national and global attention to reassess the planet's future sustainability.

Ranchers who raise beef in conjunction with public land grazing rights began to be labeled as resource extractive consumers. Along with using national grasslands to benefit their economic enterprises for a nominal fee, the perception that range degradation can be blamed on cattle grazing cast a negative light on ranching. The theory that ranching is bad for the environment took form; and ranchers with grazing permits on public lands being considered as rapists of the land, tyrants, and moral degenerates by many in the environmental movement.

A multitude of literature exists by environmental writers regarding ranching and land use. William Kittredge has two recurring themes in his writing about ranching and the land; (1) the myth of ownership, which is really a myth of war against nature, and (2) the rituals of violence against the land (Holthaus, et al., 1991: 126). Wallace Stegner in The American West as Living Space states that the west never got over its heightened and romantic idea of itself (Stegner 1987: 68). He sees the real life cattle baron as a non-democratic feudal baron who uses his employee, the cowboy, as an overworked and underpaid hireling. Denzel Ferguson, author of Sacred Cows at the Public Trough led the movement for cattle-free public ranges. He cheerfully admits his book is biased, justifying his thinking with "we have been listening far too long to the other side of the story" (Russell 1993: 19). He also calls ranchers big shots, arrogant, and elitist. He claims that their relationship with the land is superficial. Fradkin states in his book,
Wanderings of an Environmental Journalist, that eating beef is an indulgence with a high environmental cost, with the real importance of livestock in the West debatable (Fradkin 1993: 181). Environmental organizations echo these sentiments with memberships far larger than the number of ranchers who use public lands (Russell 1993: 9).

And so, the stereotypical image takes many forms. Some images are based on early myth, some are taken out of context from periods of history that differ from the current period, and some are negative in their connotation regarding land use and ranchers' methods of doing business.

1.5 Escapism: Creating New Myths

Publisher Harry Myers created the magazine "Western Styles" in 1993, to target what he calls "a national attitude," rather than being confined to the West (American Demographics 1993: 16). Its target market is western 'wannabes' who love western clothing, dance, and material objects of the culture. Its first issue runs a story about a Minneapolis, Minnesota attorney who owns a dozen pairs of cowboy boots and loves to go western dancing. Whether in Minneapolis or the heart of cattle country, 'cowboy' styles are widely imitated by people whose occupation is not ranching.

Companies manufacturing western style clothing benefit from large gains in the increase of popularity of this particular style. Clothing that was originally designed for outdoor work is marketed to country line dancers, entertainers, and western enthusiasts of all ages. Although agriculture in the United States, including the production of beef, comprises less than 1% of the population, a Cowles magazine survey indicates that one adult in four in the United States is an enthusiast of the western lifestyle (ODA 1995:1); (American Demographics 1993: 16).

Bars and dance clubs cater to regulars in the line dance crowd, inspired by Country Music Television's country line dance programming. Participants join dance clubs, take lessons in the boot scootin' boogie, and perform at local fairs and events. They spend a
considerable amount of money in outfitting their wardrobe with hats, boots, belts, buckles, western shirts, dresses, skirts, blouses, shirts, and denim jeans.

Cowboy poetry events, rodeos, western art shows, and chuckwagon barbecues are popular in the United States and Canada as part of the craze to be western. Anne Nothof writes that the gathering of poets at Pincher Creek, Alberta evokes a lifestyle that becomes more romantic as it becomes more remote (Nothof 1994: 153). Nothof observes that while there is a need to validate a way of life through tradition, there is also the acknowledgment that this tradition is entertainment and enjoyable fiction.

There are advocates and antagonists for the ranching lifestyle. Some enjoy it and imitate it in dress and rituals, such as the rodeo, and continue the demand for western literature and media programming. Although many supporters are not directly associated with the land, they want to be part of the mythology and persona. Environmentalists have very different views regarding ranching. There is wide separation in theory regarding the 'right and wrongs' of ranching. The beef raising industry is another sector affected by the values clash of the 1990's.

In the 1990's, ranchers live a lifestyle synonymous with the traditional cowboy skills while attempting to blend their life's work into a society that for the most part, does not understand rural ranch culture or the demands of the business. To accomplish their day's work, ranchers need well-honed skills with horses and cattle. In addition, ownership of land, cattle, and other assets are required; or in the words of a rancher--"me and the bank do." Cowboys and ranchers share two similar values; that of work and community. Further definition of cowboy as used in Modoc and Lake Counties will be covered further with the introduction of the regional word for cowboy, "buckaroo."

Along with an evaluation of images regarding ranchers' goals and responsibilities, this research will contribute to the historical record with ethnographic data from both male and female components of the culture. Information regarding the geography in which they conduct business, the economics of ranching, relationships with the government
agencies, ethical values, perceptions of their future, and a comparison or myth and stereotype to their actual practices in the 1990's will be evaluated.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

2.1 Myth and Stereotype Defined

John Sisk, in his essay "Cowboy," writes that a great deal of the attraction of the western hero comes from the fact that he is mortgaged to the past (Sisk 1987: 400). Myths about ranchers and cowboys developed in the last half of the 19th Century that embody the skills, values, and way of life that is important to their culture. Stereotypes have also formed. Since this review deals with both myth and stereotype, further definition of these terms is appropriate.

Discussions within this research frequently refer to 'myth,' and 'mythology.' Confusion exists regarding usage of the word 'myth,' with a common interpretation of its definition as a "falsehood, or untruth." This is not the context of use in this document. It is important that the reader understand the theoretical perspectives of myth and mythology as applied in the fields of Anthropology and Speech Communication in this text.

Joseph Campbell, one of the world's foremost scholars of myth, believed that the key to learning how to live lies in the myths of the world (Konner 1988: 1). Mythology creates a harmony in life, providing a type of therapy for the seeker. It erases anxiety, puts people in accord with the inevitable, and reveals the adventure of being alive. Myth calls for a deeper awareness, produces awe, evokes rapture, vivifies and validates the search for significance. Campbell defines myth as a "message for living" (Konner 1988: 1). Joanne Stiles adds that myth, in times of uncertainty, can be an escape; allowing both writer and reader to dwell in an age when life was perceived as simpler and better than it is in their own time (Northof 1994: 154).

Communication theorist Gerry Philipsen expands the definition of myth as symbolic narrative which provides a base for harmonious thought and action from which the least
member of a tribe can gain coherence for his life (Philipsen 1987: 253). He adds the
terms "ritual and social drama," events that shape a culture's search for meaning. Ritual
is a communication form that affirms and celebrates shared identity; such as brandings,
rural school and holiday functions, livestock events, and so on. Social drama is a means
of defining the boundaries of the group on identifiable ground. These dramas involve
crisis, in which resolve is sought in some area that the culture recognizes as schismatic.
Social drama is a way to remake and negotiate a sense of communal life (Philipsen 1987:
252). As Philipsen defines, they occur currently for ranchers in the form of land and
water use issues, food safety and nutrition, passing the ranch to future generations, and in
how to educate populations which do not understand rancher's goals or see their business
as important. Myth and other examples of ritual and social drama will be illustrated in
the research.

Stereotype is a simplified or standardized conception or image of a group or person
held in common by members of another group; a convention, or that to which a fixed
form is given. Stereotyping issues a 'blanket statement,' 'one size fits all' concept; such as
all cowboys wear hats and boots, play the guitar, and sing around the campfire. Or from
the literature, Robbins' description of the Cowboy Way as ranchers' shooting, trapping,
often stereotype city people as uncaring, unfriendly, and uneducated to the interaction
between nature and the land. A mix of stereotypes exist regarding ranchers and city
populations perception of the other, and in varying degrees.

2.2 Land is Freedom; "Go West, Young Man;" "Oregon or Bust"

Myths that create national character are formed when nations undergo the creation
process, lasting far beyond the actual conditions that create the mythology (Limerick et
al., 1991: 94). A major adventure giving form to the mythic romance of the West began
with Lewis and Clark's quest in exploration of the Louisiana Purchase. Thomas
Jefferson's vision was of a democracy resting on an abundance of cheap available land
(Limerick et.al, 1991: 113). Thoreau and others echoed this sentiment of westward direction stating it was the direction of freedom (Walker 1981: 88). Agriculture and land ownership insured independence and virtue.

In addition to the Louisiana Purchase, other acquisitions provided the United States with millions of additional acres and unexplored open spaces. California and the southwestern states were wrested from Mexico by 1848, and all of Texas by 1850 (White 1991: 80). The British relinquished full claim to the Oregon Territory by 1846.

The Western hero was created during this period of expansionism in the United States. Joseph Campbell speaks of the hero as someone who reveals the potential of the human spirit. Romantic and colorful legends developed, although some were truth and others fictionalized. The myths and legends of cowboy and rancher remain a national symbol. A diverse group of people built the West, including cowboys. Among these were Caucasian Americans, African-Americans, and Native Americans (Athearn 1986: 23).

2.3 Cowboy Myth Begins in the U.S.

Cattle appeared on the prairies before the buffalo were gone, when stockmen discovered they thrive on the grass and could withstand the winters. Range areas were often claimed by simple "use." Grass was mostly free in the early years, for few ranchers bought the land on which their cattle grazed (White 1991: 223). Later an abundance of cheap land for sale and the Homestead Act of 1862 expanded stock operations, furthered open settlement, and farming (White 1991: 142).

Ranching began in Texas where large herds of horses and cattle roamed wild, available for the taking after territorial disputes with the United States forced Mexican ranchers to abandon stock. Texas herds formed the foundation stock for many ranches from Texas to Montana and Kansas to California (Time-Life, The Ranchers, 1977: 19). Stock raising became the first business to endure in the newly acquired territory of the United States. Along with it, came the traditions of the vaquero, the Spanish-American
cowboy, with his colorful dress, vocabulary, and horse handling techniques. Known for their skill with horses, ability to rope and stay in the saddle all day, these men accomplished the work on the ranches and getting the cattle over the trail to grass and the markets.

Large numbers of cattle came to the Plains after the Civil War. In the heyday of ranching from 1866-1886, ranchers shipped ten million cattle to markets in the East; creating jobs for 40,000 cowboys (Time-Life, The Ranchers, 1977: 19). Ranchers, both large and small operations, engraved their brand on America, although survival was not always easy. They defended themselves in isolated places where their only protection was by their own hand, and coped with natural disasters such as fire, wind, heat, pests, and drought. Livestock survived and did well in regions formerly impenetrable by farmers, making stock raising a paying proposition. Ranchers represented the core American values of independence, resourcefulness, hard work, and conquering the unknown.

Established routes and trails were used to bring cattle to the railhead, which was Kansas City in the earlier days of the trade. The Chisholm, Overland, and the Goodnight-Loving Trail are immortalized in song and verse, accounting the day-to-day monotony, hardships, the camaraderie, and sometimes—the thrill of the cowboy’s duty. Miss Kitty waited at the end of the trail and Marshall Dillon kept the cowhands in line.

Although ranching created empires for some, stock raising as a business changed rapidly. Barbed wire came in 1870, homesteaders moved onto cattle ranges, and sheep overgrazed the land (Time-Life, The Ranchers, 1977: 21). Encouraged by earlier booms in the cattle market, eastern financiers poured enormous sums of money into beef. The result ended in ranchers becoming over-financed, over-stocked, and over-extended. The final blow for many came with the harsh winter of 1886-87 when temperatures reached as low as minus 46 below zero on the prairies (Time-Life, The Ranchers, 1977: 21). Cattle froze to death by the thousands, either from the cold or from lack of available feed.
Although the end of the nineteenth century found overstocked ranges, barbed wire, and financial failure, ranchers were recognized as those who organized churches, schools, and built communities. Early ranchers had political influence and were part of a rural aristocracy in the West. When they were no longer able to compete with those who fenced and farmed the land, they were obliged to become more collaborative members of their communities as stock raisers, settling down on parcels of land to raise beef (Athearn 1986: 28). In the family ranching operation, the role of cowboy and rancher began to overlap.

2.4 The Myth as Entertainment: Wild West Shows, Art, and Literature

After this, the early years of major scale ranching development in the United States lived on in the imagination. Frederick Jackson Turner, a young history professor at the University of Wisconsin, declared that the "Old West" was over by 1890. His essay, known as "The Frontier Thesis," dramatically changed the way historians view the West (Malone and Eutalain 1989: 1). The industrialization of American had begun the exodus from the farm to the city for higher paying jobs and more opportunity. Turner declared that the American frontier, rather than European influence, had done the most to spawn democracy, individualism, and naturalism celebrated in America. He quoted the 1890 census as an indicator that settlements now stretched across the continent, thus closing the first period of American history and the frontier era with its vast reserves of free land. Frontiering, according to Turner, shaped the American character and a new culture (Limerick et al, 1991: 114). Circumstances promoted individualism, self-reliance, optimism, and a democratic spirit.

While Turner presented his thesis in Chicago at a meeting during the World Exhibition, Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show played to crowds in the same city. Buffalo Bill Cody made millions both stateside and abroad by re-creating frontier episodes featuring real Indians, sharp shooter Annie Oakley, and bronc-busting cowboys.
European royalty was enthralled, and he was so popular in Europe that French fashion houses offered gowns with a Western motif (Time-Life, The End and the Myth 1979: 74). Over 5,000 dime novels were published about Buffalo Bill Cody, adding to his success in show business (Harris and Rainey 1976: 10). Fans all over the world who saw his performances and read of his daring, began to identify the Western image with that of actors in his show. This added to the idea of what cowboys and ranching was about, but also began an image which stereotyped Western culture.

Spectator Frederick Remington watched Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show in Chicago at the same time Turner was presenting his paper in the city. As an artist and writer, Remington produced books, articles, bronzes, and paintings that furthered the myth of the Western hero to the general public. He grew up in the East; forming a childhood image of cowboys from newspapers, geography textbooks, and children's literature (Logan 1992: 76).

Arriving in the West for the first time, his observation was that it bore no resemblance to his perception of what he believed it would be. Remington sought to re-establish the ideals he imagined. By the 1880's, an anti-image of the cowboy as a drunken, brawling, itinerant species grew. Dime store novels and the Wild West Show had reduced the cowboy to a cardboard character. Remington redesigned his cowboy as a fearless, masculine hero who needed nothing but his horse.

Remington became a regular contributor to the widely circulated Harper's Magazine, allowing familiarization of his work to the general population, and especially in the East. Remington was endorsed by Theodore Roosevelt, another Western enthusiast, as "one of the few who really depicted the reality of the West (Logan 1992: 85). Remington is well-known for his illustration of The Virginian, a novel created by Owen Wister. Logan states that both Wister and Remington were responsible for the shaping the image of the American cowboy with admirable qualities such as masculinity, individuality,
intelligence, and action-oriented behavior. This mythic re-creation of the cowboy life was a response to social change in the latter part of the 19th century (Logan 1992: 85).

In creating The Virginian, Owen Wister lays the cornerstone for the Western hero for future novels, the western movies, and television. The Virginian is generally known as the prototype Western and made the cowboy hero enduring (Harris and Rainey 1976: 13). The Virginian comes west, experiences life, and wins the sophisticated schoolmarm. He, also, personifies the qualities of the Western hero in his honesty, courage, and good judgment. The role of the Virginian is duplicated later in both movies and television. Wister himself was a Philadelphia aristocrat, a well-educated man who came west as Remington and Roosevelt did, to experience the glory before it disappeared.

The cowboy hero of the Western novel was isolated to technological advances such as the telephone, automobile, and tractor (Harris and Rainey 1976: 13). Their setting remained in another time, accompanied only by wide open spaces, his horse, perhaps a lady friend, and danger of one sort or another. Such stories built up a folk hero only remotely associated with reality of life for either the working cowboy or the rancher who employed him.

Other well-known authors such as Zane Grey and Louis L'Amour produced hundreds of widely read novels with similar themes. Zane Grey made the "western" a generic literary term (Harris and Rainey 1976: 14). L'Amour has outsold them all, including Zane Grey (Harris and Rainey 1976: 14).

2.5 Experiencing the Myth: Dudes on the Ranch

Dude ranching had its origins in the 1880's, catering mostly to Eastern tourists who sought to experience a piece of the ranching lifestyle. The word "dude" has several modern-day connotations, but in ranching terminology it means a greenhorn or tenderfoot who pays to enjoy the lifestyle; which may include photographic outings, riding, fishing, hunting, and plain relaxation (Borne 1983: 2). In the early 1900's, there were enough of
these establishments in the west to form a professional Dude Rancher's Association (Taylor and Marr 1983: 77). In 1927, a dude ranch was opened in Florida as a reverse migration of the idea, with horses and cattle imported from Montana (Taylor and Marr 1983: 77). Dude ranches differed from other resorts in that they were places to "pretend."

Theodore Roosevelt, an eastern-born politician and later president of the United States, sensed the popularity of the cowboy/ranching lifestyle and often presented himself to the public as part of it. He owned a working ranch in the Dakotas, and believed that cowboys were morally superior (Taylor and Marr 1983: 77). He organized the "Rough Riders" in the Spanish-American War; an elite company of cowboy soldiers, mostly from the East. He had his photograph taken often on horseback, waving his ten-gallon hat (Taylor and Marr 1983: 77). Both Wister and Roosevelt were introduced to the West through dude ranch experiences.

2.6 Myth and the Cinema

The cinema advanced the mythology of the Wild West hero with the fast action or roping and riding, straight shooting, and acrobatics. Bronco Billy Anderson was one of the first silent screen stars between 1908 and 1915, a throwback to the dime novel (Taylor and Marr 1983: 74). Others, such as Hoot Gibson, Tom Mix, Hopalong Cassidy, and Lash LaRue followed. The acrobatic cowboy disappeared from the screen about 1950, replaced by romantic heroes such as Randolph Scott, Gary Cooper, and John Wayne (Taylor and Marr 1983: 75). The coming of sound to film and radio brought the crooning, guitar-strumming entertainer. By the 1940's, most Americans believed the guitar was standard equipment for a cowboy, along with rope, horse, and saddle. Will Rogers was a national entertainer during the 1920's, an authentic specimen from Oklahoma. He represented cowboy humor, ethics, and domestic values. Many saw him as an American hero transcended from a real life cowboy who achieved fame through political commentary and film appearances.
The population shifted to the city after the Great Depression, finding employment in war effort manufacturing, ship-building, and aircraft factories. They had free time and could afford entertainment at the movies, and the western was a great escape. Most of this population did not return to the land after WW II was over, their children growing up as city kids who still went to the western movies. Film became a major form of communication in planting images of western ranch life in the minds of thousands of fans. Without immediate ties to the land and the real-life experience, stereotypes began to develop about ranching and the cowboy lifestyle.

Although the B-Westerns were without significant substance, they continued, perfected, and extended stereotypes to a great degree (Harris and Rainey 1976: 18). In many of these, cows had disappeared from the story, replaced by hard-hitting, bullet-proof cowboys in big hats who shot villains right and left, to the tune of orchestrated music. Cowboy costume symbolized a life in the rough and tough outdoors, including leather chaps and boots, gun, and bandanna. Ten-gallon hats never left a cowboy's head except as a shy gesture of politeness in the presence of women. American kids growing up in this era played "Cowboys and Indians," riding stick horses and shooting cap pistols. Television in the 1950's, 1960's and beyond continued both the mythological pedagogy and the stereotypical images in such weekly productions as Rawhide, The Big Valley, Bonanza, Gunsmoke, The Rifleman, and Dallas.

Harris and Rainey say "the western left us with a dream, a dream we could conveniently tuck away in our minds and enjoy whenever we wished (1976: 54)." Film director, George Stevens, is quoted as saying "the pioneers of western legend that were presented in films filled the same role for Americans as King Arthur and his knights hold in English mythology (Athearn 1986: 257)."
2.7 The Cowboy in Advertising

Another powerful form of communication to the general public is advertising. If prior means of affixing stereotypes were not totally convincing, Madison Avenue closed the gap. Advertisers grabbed hold of the cowboy hero as a way to produce and increase sales long before the Marlboro Man climbed on his horse in 1954. Ralston Purina sponsored a children's radio show with Tom Mix that continued until 1950, ten years after Mix's death (Taylor and Marr 1983: 78). After Ralston Purina's success, Quaker Oats Company sponsored The Roy Rogers Show with General Mills backing Hopalong Cassidy and the Lone Ranger (Taylor and Marr 1983: 78). Taco Bell fast food chain has a commercial featuring Curly, the villainous "Black Bart" character from the movie City Slickers, selling their Texas Taco. There are countless other advertisers who use the commercial cowboy to sell everything from beer, picante' sauce, and pickup trucks to cologne and fashions.

The Marlboro Man, as the most famous of all commercial cowboys, is no mere cowpoke as described by Athearn (1986: 269). He describes him as "a stockman, with proper wrinkles to show he has been out-of-doors, dressed as an owner, not an employee. He is a businessman with roots, with property, and he is not a drifter. He is solid and conservative; and beyond all doubts he votes the Republican ticket."

Historian William Savage points out that the cowboy was introduced to advertising initially as a symbol of masculinity, but that he has come to represent leisure and pleasure (Taylor and Marr 1983: 79). The ranch style home is architecture's most popular model. Businessmen wear cowboy boots, and ranchers currently consider the continued popularity of dude ranching as a way to diversify their operation.

2.8 Myth, Stereotype, and the Environmental Movement

Although the term cowboy, and their way of life is part of our national mythology, during the last few years the ranching culture has seen a shift in public perceptions of
wise use of the land and the goals of those who use it. In question is use of public land for grazing, wildlife and habitat preservation, and the health of riparian areas. The environmental movement has targeted resource-based businesses, located primarily in the West. The movement ascribes to natural diversity in nature, saving plant and animal species, and accuses humankind of cruelty in their attempt to control nature through such activities as logging and agriculture. Many groups are active in both the West and the United States as a whole. The depth of involvement in preservation efforts ranges from concerned interest to extremism.

John C. Ryan, a research director at Northwest Environmental Watch, cites the controversy over the health of rangelands in State of the Northwest for 1994. The U.S. Bureau of Land Management reported in 1990 that rangelands were in the most optimal condition in 50 years. Yet, the BLM's 1989 report stated that two-thirds were in fair or poor condition (Ryan 1994: 26). Riparian areas, which make up 1% of the western United States are viewed as particularly degraded, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's report (Ryan 1994: 26). In 1994, the National Research Council reported that, despite massive research efforts, the condition of America's rangelands have yet to be effectively measured (State of the Northwest 1994: 26).

Cattle grazing is blamed for a diminished plant colony, introduction of non-native 'junk' species, and resulting lack of natural biodiversity on rangelands. Range reseeding and off-road recreation have had smaller impacts, according to Ryan (1994:27). Ryan also states that, although less obvious, grazing impacts are analogous to that of logging. Fradkin states that the "indulgence" for beef and the physical impact of cattle on the environment has done more to alter vegetation and landforms of the West than all the water projects, strip mines, power plants, freeways, and subdivision developments combined (1993:182). He further states that overgrazing has had a greater effect on wildlife than any other factor except climate (183).
Bill Kittredge, a former resident and native of Lake County, Oregon has established a successful career as a writer and sides with the environmental perspective. Although no longer a rancher, he grew up participating in the development of the family-owned MC Ranch, a 5,000 head cattle ranch of approximately 35,000 acres in eastern Lake County. He states that "agriculturists have a myth of ownership which is really a myth against nature (Holthaus, et al., 1991: 126)." Ownership provides a defense against the outside world in the garnering of property. It provides a fortification against threatening humans and a dream of power over nature. Kittredge, from his experience, sees the relationship of humans and landscape as a violent one.

Kittredge writes that agricultural ownership is part of a mythology that was validated early in our history. Taking land from native inhabitants and taming it for agricultural purposes brought civilization and law-abiding citizens (Russell 1993:14). This mythology, writes Kittredge, is racist, sexist, and imperialistic; a rationale for violence against other people and nature.

Other ecologists blame overgrazing for the desertification of grasslands in arid regions. Overuse and aridity nudge out more palatable and productive plants, replacing them with less desirable species. Denuding of vegetation leads to greater erosion in times of runoff. Earlier policies by federal agencies such as the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service to seed range areas with crested wheatgrass have formed large areas of monocultures. Cattle are also blamed for crowding out wildlife species such as elk, bighorn sheep, antelope, and mule deer. Grazing is also faulted for the disappearance of quail species, the prairie chicken, and sage grouse, among others.

Stockgrowers' rebuff to these accusations is that they are unfounded and not based on accurate research, since wise conservation practices are necessary to the health and livelihood of their business. Environmental writers, such as Phillip Fradkin, criticize rangeland researchers at land grant universities as siding with ranchers, for their own job security. The charge is that they serve an agricultural political constituency whose vote
for higher education keeps them on salary (Fradkin 1993: 183). Natural occurrences, such as the weather, bring extremes in drought and intense cold and intensify damage to the range; but are rarely mentioned in the environmental perspective.

Preservation of wetlands and endangered animal species have forced ranchers from publicly leased land in several areas of the west to date. Animals such as the Tule Elk, the Mexican Wolf, the Warner Valley Sucker, the Red-Band Trout, the Desert Tortoise, and the Bruno Snail have become the subject of intense scrutiny regarding preservation and agricultural use. In 1992, cattle were eliminated from grazing on Hart Mountain National Wildlife Refuge in Lake County, Oregon. This measure was taken to protect riparian areas and support additional wildlife habitat. Economic loss to the county from displacement of beef cattle on Hart Mountain is estimated at a mean of over a million and a half dollars in economic impact (Riggs 1991: 2).

Wildlife biologist Alan Savory insists that over-resting or non-use concepts can cause more harm to the range than overgrazing. While some find Savory's Holistic Resource Management methods invigorating, others dispute his ideas as too simplistic for complicated ecosystems (Russell 1993: 61). In Savory's opinion, land managed and owned by large environmental groups, such as The Audubon Society, are in worse shape than those managed by using cattle grazing as a management tool (Russell 1993: 10).

A growing number of critics view the stockgrower as connected to the land in view of economic production only. The numbers in this debate are in favor of the environmental movement. Public land ranchers make up about 3% of all livestock producers in the United States and number approximately 23,000 permittees (Russell 1993: 9). Environmental organizations, such as the Sierra Club, have 30 times as many members (Russell 1993: 9). Dozens more organizations exist, with varying degrees of membership numbers.

Several groups in the West work solely against livestock grazing on federal property. Ranchers who use public lands for grazing are termed "welfare ranchers" by those against
such use (Robbins 1993: 86). Congress has made attempts to increase grazing fees without success to date, with immense pressure to do so from environmental groups. The accusation that grazing fees on public lands are much lower than rates on private ground do not take into consideration such factors as decreased gain from marginal forage, vandalism, theft, cost of water improvement, fence maintenance, predatory loss, poison plants, and labor required for transportation and moving the cattle. In a 1992 research study by Dr. Fred Obermiller of Oregon State University, such variables are considered in the overall cost of public land grazing. Costs are estimated at figures that are often higher than grazing on private property. Obermiller cites an average of $16.54 per A.U.M. as a more accurate figure, compared to $15.03 on privately leased ground (Obermiller 1992: 11). An A.U.M. is defined as the cost of feed for one animal unit month for one cow/calf pair.

Denzel and Nancy Ferguson, authors of *Sacred Cows at the Public Trough*, were among the earliest preservationists to demand that cows be eliminated from the public range (Russell 1993: 20). Slogans such as "No More Moo By '92" and "Cattle Free By '93" followed. Ferguson sees the rancher as an uncivilized person without much intelligence, living in small western towns governed by folks with even less intelligence. He compares ranchers defending their economies to drug dealers and slave-owning plantation owners who refuse to give up their way of life (Russell 1993: 20). Robbins describes the term "The Cowboy Way" as the way ranchers do business; including eliminating obstacles by shooting, poisoning, or trapping them (Robbins 1993: 75). According to Robbins, this philosophy is a way of life, handed down from generation to generation. Radicalism in such environmental organizations as Earth First! encourage sabotage; known also as "ecotage" and "ecoterrorism" by describing how to vandalize windmills that water cattle, slash ranchers' pickup tires, and shoot cattle (Robbins 1993: 87). Dave Forman, founder of the group views such monkey-wrenching tactics as nonviolent, and having fun; yet a serious form of worship to the earth (Robbins 1993:

2.9 The Sites

Resulting polarization of ranchers and environmentalists have affected many small communities in the West, including those in Modoc County, California and Lake County, Oregon. Lake County's land base is 78% federally owned while Modoc County is 75.8% federal (Johnson, et al 1995: 3; Ruch 1978: 38). Stockgrowers in both counties use grazing permits administered by the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service. There are 81 permittees with grazing permits in Lake County and 128 in Modoc County, using BLM, U.S. Forest Service, Indian lands, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agency-administered lands (1992 Census of Agriculture; Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California: Table 39). Wildlife habitat and uses of public lands for grazing are issues of concern in both counties, along with condition of riparian areas and preservation of wildlife habitat.

This conflict is complex and controversial, and full of emotion. To date, the debate continues; demanding and consuming large amounts of time and input from these communities. New "messages for living" have been created relating to the value of ranching. The admiration of ranchers as strong, independent, freedom-loving, masculine, action-oriented, risk takers is an image that no longer fits the ideals of new philosophies regarding diversity, global awareness, social conditions, and technology.

The ranching business has changed over time; seeing the end of a wide-open free land era, the idealization of the lifestyle and its people characterized in literature, art, film, and the media. The population in the United States has shifted from an agrarian society to a technological, service-industry, urban based culture. Each of these historical periods were distinct; The have their own particular politics, social conditions, and technological advancements that affected the way agriculture, including ranching, is viewed. The
mythology that formed the image of rancher remains strong in our culture, although it's definition has changed through the years by contextual interpretations, societal change, and stereotyping by factors outside of the ranching industry. This research will explore current myths, stereotypes, and the philosophies regarding ranching in the 1990's. Although the relationship of speech styles and the rules governing use is not the major objective of this study, references from communication theory add to defining ranching as a culture.
Chapter 3
Field Research and Methodology

3.1 Fieldwork

Data presented up to this point has indicated a number of myths, stereotypes, and attitudes about the ranching culture. The methodology used in this study was the ethnographic method; gathering information regarding their perspectives from the ranchers themselves, in their own language, in their own voices. Michael Agar in *The Ethnographic Interview* states that the purpose of ethnography is to understand the human species and also, to serve the needs of humankind by representing their point of view (Agar 1979; 16).

3.2 Sample

The participants in this survey are 42 ranchers, with the sample split between males and females in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California. The majority of the sample operate their businesses with a base of 300 - 600 head of mother cows. To provide comparison data on operations size in both counties, Lake County has 34 ranches with 200-499 beef cows and in Modoc County there are 40; totaling 74 in this inventory category (1992 Census of Agriculture; Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California: Table 14). [For comparison, ranches with base numbers greater than 500 cows total 57; with almost identical numbers of 28 operations in Lake and 29 in Modoc (1992 Census of Agriculture; Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California: Table 14)]. This research sample assesses over 50% of the ranchers owning 300-600 head of cows. Important to this research and also cited in Section 2.9, is the high percentage of federal land ownership; totaling 78% in Lake County and over 75% in Modoc County. In Modoc County, 128 ranchers use public lands for grazing and in Lake County, there are 81 permittees. In this sample, 74% of the respondents depend on public lands as part of their operation.
Interviews were open-ended in nature, allowing discussion of other subjects relative to the culture. Ranchers were selected from mailing lists provided by the local land grant university Extension Services in each county, the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and agency personnel and ranchers who knew individuals that would enhance the balance in age, gender, or size of operation. This sample seeks a wide representation of the geography of each county, types of operations (including private, public, and leased ground), various experience in ranching in these locations and others, and inclusion of both men and women who have worked in the business.

Michael Agar calls this method of sample selection "theoretical sampling," which he defines as a procedure used in informal work, or formal work in which the researcher uses ethnographic data to add creditability or substantiate a particular hypothesis—or to compare data from one source to another in different locations (Agar 1980: 124).

Agar describes 'theoretical sampling' in his text, The Professional Stranger.

At minimum, you must worry about the representativeness of your sample. But even if you can't get a probability sample—such as a random or stratified—there are other options between that and an opportunistic sample. For example, Glaser and Strauss introduced the idea of theoretical sampling to cover a practice long used by ethnographers. The procedure can be used in informal work or it can be more formally documented to add creditability to a statement you want to make. Theoretical sampling simply means that the ethnographer chose the next people to talk with in a self-conscious way to obtain data for comparison with that that she already has (Agar 1980: 124).

3.3 Methods

After a list of ranchers was obtained, they were contacted by telephone or letter to introduce the concept of the research, explain the methodology, and request their participation. Appointments were mutually arranged at their business locations. Interview subjects ranged geographically within a 120 mile radius of Lakeview, Oregon.
The informed consent document was explained prior to their signature, as required by the Human Subjects Review Board at the Research Office, Oregon State University. Information gathered from the interviews is confidential. Statements are not attributable to particular subjects to protect their way of life, integrity, and trust; in addition to maintaining the researcher's professional code of ethics.

Ranchers responded to questions regarding their background, ranch operation, business practices, social responsibilities, and future concerns for ranching. The interviews focused on a series of 45 questions in these categories, based on critical points from the literature review. It is important that the results reported in this research are their concepts, and not only the writer's interpretation of them. Quotes by the respondents in this text were selected primarily as to how closely they represented the general views of the majority of respondents in answering the interview questions. Citations are included that express sentiments succinctly, or as a sample of an interesting viewpoint expressed in a particular style used in rancher's speaking. Philipsen calls these 'cultural codes,' which assist in defining rancher's identity (Philipsen 1992: 8). Also added are selected viewpoints which do not signify the majority of responses, but are provided as an example of a diversity of opinion. An effort is made to consider the ranchers' cultural code for speaking. Data collection comprises 939 pages of transcript material from tape-recorded interviews, from which excerpts have been selected. These provide basic structure to this document. Interviews with ranchers in Lake and Modoc Counties ranged from one to four hours in length.

Transcription of taped material was a major portion of the research process. As this took place, recurring themes in the data emerged. Tapes were reviewed for thematic responses, similarities, differences, and relationship to the literature review. Final analysis reflects a comprehensive review of the ranching culture in these two counties, supporting previous discussions provided in the introduction and literature review. Field
notes provide physical notations of environment, the people, and communication styles, including body language; which supplemented the material in the taped data.

This ethnography assists in understanding the philosophy of the men and women who raise beef in Modoc and Lake Counties. They constitute the less than 1% of the population who provide food for human and animal consumption throughout the world (Oregon Department of Agriculture: Ag Facts 1995: 1). Locally, they also fulfill an important role in stabilizing their rural economies and in service to their communities in various ways.
Chapter 4
Introduction to the Research

4.1 Researcher's Narrative

This story begins in the fall of 1995. Perhaps "story" is the wrong choice of words, in that it might indicate a fallacy or fabrication. This is a true story. It is one of many that are the basis of the formation of myths about the western United States, but, specifically, one written about ranchers, their lives, and their businesses in Modoc County, California and Lake County, Oregon.

This researcher seeks a 1990's response to the myth and stereotypes that surround the cowboy and stockgrower, while traveling and interviewing 42 participants along the backroads of Modoc County, California and Lake County, Oregon. Research was conducted beginning in the fall of 1995 and continuing into 1996. This study will describe and examine the setting, the land, the people, the business and lifestyle, their mythological beliefs, the future of the beef industry in these counties, reach a conclusion upon completion of the investigation, and provide suggestions for application of the results.

At this time, it is appropriate to discuss reasons for selecting this culture for the subject of research. Current research information from the ranchers' point of view is minimal, while an abundance of literature exists regarding myths, stereotypes, and anti-ranching sentiments. Also, if research is to be a tool for clarification, the people's voice is the strongest element in assessing a culture.

In addition, the results of this study will be used by the writer, who is an educator for Oregon State University Extension Service in Lake County, Oregon. The researcher seeks this analysis to assist in educating local business people and others about ranching in the 1990's; with particular emphasis on the current social and economic factors that influence the management of ranching operations. This research will provide data using approved methods for research. The format and writing style used in presenting data
attempts to reveal an accurate description of the environment in which the business of raising beef occurs, as well as present facts in a form acceptable for scholarly reporting. In this research, it is important that the reader be able to experience the rancher's environment through description. An attempt is made to weave data and the experience of the research process to assist learning.

4.2 Description of the Research Setting

Lake and Modoc Counties lie where the borders of California, Oregon, and Nevada converge; the state lines meeting in a perpendicular geometry. This particular geography gives few clues on the map as to its history, land, people, lifestyle, and economic base. There is no cartographic symbol for the way the high desert plateau country of Modoc and Lake counties are shrouded in mist in the late fall, swirling down the Warners from Bidwell Mountain, where the Northern Paiutes still live beneath its peak, covered now with first snow. Or the view from Sugar Hill, just below the Oregon border in Modoc County, where wild plumb brush provides cover for quail and flocking birds. Rye and oat hay fields have been cut. Their stubble provides a soup-kitchen cafeteria for visiting Canadian Geese, some of which will stay all winter, deciding it is not an undesirable place.

Creeks have risen with cooler weather. Their waters swirl black, wetting the rocks that once poked their heads from the stream floor in summer months. Thin layers of ice in the morning evidence the advance of winter to the high desert. Red willows crowd the water's edge, bare of their leaves. It has been a good grass year, and remaining stands along the creeks are flattened by frost, wind, and the annual metamorphosis into dormancy.

Sun is no stranger here in the fall, but plays tag with creature comfort zones, lingering less frequently and further away. It feels good inside a vehicle, the windows serving as solar collectors for the distant sun, retreating to warmer climates. Like the proverbial
glass of good wine, an uncertainty exists as to whether one's glass is either half full or half empty in the autumn time.

Unpaved roads are muddy from fall moisture. Paved surfaces still exhibit late summer growth between cracks, developed by freezing and warming extremes common to the region. A traveler once remarked to a local while driving on Highway 140 east towards the rural community of Adel, Oregon. "It looks as if people around here don't care about the way their roads look." The comment referred to late summer plants crowding the edges and springing forth from asphalt fissures. No response was returned; perhaps thoughts of the thick, sweet smell of yellow clover on a summer night dismissed further comment. Air conditioning is turned off while open windows invite the fragrance of such a night, dispelled by warm air and canyon winds seeking the valley. This variety of clover plant certainly isn't all bad; it holds the soil and has feed value. But, the random nature of its encroachment indicates a difference in philosophy of people; those who live by groomed highway standards and those who do not.

If rain comes in the fall, it's a welcome sight; soaking the ground before frost, bathing soil and plant roots as a protection during winter freezes. It comes in a rush against the windshield, accompanied by winds trying winter wings. As moisture hits the sage and juniper, a pungent tinge hits the nostrils; evoking some deep-seated, almost primordial need to fill one's body with the smell of it. Nature affects the senses in a subtle way in this place, which perhaps goes unnoticed by some. Virtual reality is not interpreted primarily in the technological sense, but in the perceptions of what happens outside every day. Mother Nature is ever-present; nudging and cautioning "pay attention." (Nature, in this document, will be designated as a female; referred to as Mother Nature, Her, or She.)

Day rain usually brings night frosts. Horse's breath rises slowly on these mornings, while the sound of weaned calves blaring in the lots raise mama cows' heads. Not for long, however. They go back to eating, resting, and enjoying this period free from
motherhood. Cattle trucks take to the roads, bringing the last of the fall gather home or hauling cattle to winter pasture elsewhere. The smell of diesel smoke mixed with manure is in the air while aluminum trailers sound their arrival, bouncing along unimproved roads. Smoke drifts from houses, although in its rising goes almost unnoticed, as moving mists consume it. On such a day it is easy to forget people live here.

Nature is the primary occupant in the rancher's environment, the commandant. They describe her as beautiful, unpredictable, an insatiable mistress, and the lady in charge. Some are in love with her, others fear her; seeking a partnership relentless and demanding, satisfying and challenging, always bigger and stronger than human effort can match. She remains just out of reach with no human entity the final winner. Nature is a changing, whimsical character in wielding her power with no master on earth. God, on certain days, has trouble with her. In pondering the gift of free will endowed to her persona, a knowing emerges—Nature's saving grace is in her honesty.
5.1 Physical Environment/Land Formations

Land areas total 8,231 square miles in Lake County and 4,092 square miles in Modoc County. A majority of the land in each of these counties is publicly owned. Ownership is designated as follows by the various agencies (Johnson, Weber, and Cheek 1995: 3; Rush 1978: 38).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bureau of Land Management</th>
<th>Lake</th>
<th>Modoc</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>USDA Forest Service</td>
<td>19.0%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Fish and Wildlife</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>.5%</td>
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This is high desert country, ranging in elevation from 8,446' on the highest mountain peaks to 4300' on the valley floors. Volcanic eruptions about 25 and 10 million years ago formed a high lava plateau, and is part of the Southern Columbia Plateau (Pease 1965:9). More recent volcanic action broke areas into blocks that moved up and down along faults, forming the mountains and valleys visible today (Alt and Hyndman 1978: 233). The terrain is one of broad surfaced uplands, lava platforms, and mountainous areas of block fault formations. Human activity is on the more level land. Geologic activity has produced a rugged variety of relief in forest, brushland, and grass environments (Alt and Hyndman 1978: 17).

The north-south escarpment of the Warner Mountain chain begins at the lower end of Modoc County, running into Oregon as far as Abert Rim, some 30 miles north of Lakeview, Oregon (Pease 1965: 5-32). The areas east of the Warners are
characteristically Great Basin topography both in Lake and Modoc Counties, receiving less than 10" annual rainfall (Pease 1965: 38).

Soil minerals accumulating on the valley floors after years of evaporation of ponded water form salty, alkaline soils in many areas of Lake and Modoc County. Although lowland lakes are fed by fresh water run-off from faults above, accumulated salts from the bottom taint their potential for use in recreation or agriculture. A string of shallow lakes such as Alkali Lake, Summer Lake, the Warner Lakes, and Goose Lake in Oregon are some of the larger bodies, exceeding 15 miles in length. These shallow lakes average from three to five feet in depth. The Surprise Valley Lakes in eastern Modoc County are similar examples. At first glance, they appear inviting, but are unsuitable for swimming and boating activities. Although fish inhabit their waters, their muddy taste does not appeal to most sport fishermen.

Abert Rim in Lake County is a spectacular example of fault block formation, has a clean lined appearance from little erosion, and fault debris is absent from its base. Hang gliders find it a grand place to catch air currents and feel the rush of motorless flight. The largest exposed earth fault in North America, it meanders for some 30 miles along Abert Lake, raising at a height of over 2,000 feet above the valley floor, near the rural community of Valley Falls, north of Lakeview, Oregon (Pacific Power and Light 1965:4).

Volcanic activity has produced a variety of interesting rock formations in both Lake and Modoc Counties. Fort Rock, in northern Lake County, is one such form, created when basalt magma rose from below the surface of a shallow Ice Age lake with a violent blast of steam and molten rock. Bits of basalt formed a ring around the vent, which geologists surmise involved a spectacular show of fireworks. Through time, as the Ice Age lake receded, the waters lapped around it; smoothing it's edges, cutting steep cliffs that make Fort Rock appear medieval and fortress-like. The imagination takes off at first
glance; a refuge for early people maybe—or in the moonlight, a phantom ship lost in a swell of sage.

Throughout these counties, volcanic activity created huge expanses of valley space pierced only by these basalt formations joined in curious, magnificent ways. As landmarks, they serve as milestones on a journey. Early peoples found shelter in their outcroppings and used the stone surfaces as tablets to record history in their art. Rock columns balance precariously with an odd stacking of blocks. Some lay in tipped-over fashion, like a hand of dice rolled by a long-ago giant. Acid green and orange-red lichen cling to basalt surfaces with a wash of "hard rock" color, backgrounded by expanses of blue sky that is part of the pollution-free environment sought by this small, clinging plant. There is room to look up in Modoc and Lake County; to see another mountain or rim and, always, the space of sky.

The "bigness" overhead is an ever-present part of the landscape. Lake County boasts the largest hotel in the world, the "Blue Sky Hotel," an outdoor accommodation originally founded on the Hart Mountain Antelope Refuge by the beneficent Order of the Antelope as the official edifice for their annual July retreat. Indoor plumbing for its rooms were portable and trucked in annually, guests brought their own towels, but its rooms were filled with the sweet smell of pine and juniper and mountain grasses. All the rooms had a view of the desert stretching for miles beyond, into California and east to Nevada. Unmatched by the Hilton or the Marriott, the view is unmarred for miles beyond Hart Mountain. Pressures from environmental groups have excluded camping and created roadless areas. Preservationist agendas have closed its doors, but it remains open in spirit. The Order of the Antelope currently holds its annual trek to the area on an 80 acre piece of private ground close by, ending years of tradition for the group. The Order of the Antelope was founded with the mission of wise use and conservation of natural resources of the area. They provide research scholarships and were instrumental in the original nomination of the area for National Wildlife Refuge status. Management policy
of the refuge turned with the passing of time, and the Order is prevented from holding
their annual meeting and workshops on the land they originally foresaw as a multiple use,
special, high desert environment.

Hills and rimrocks provide habitat for snakes, buzzards, owls, hawks, and various
other bird species such as chukkar and grouse. Recent introduction of wild turkey and
bighorn sheep to rocky ledges and canyons are successful projects of the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service. Elk, mule deer, pronghorn, pine and ground squirrels, kangaroo mice
and deer mice, sage grouse, geese, ducks, wild horses, cougar, bear, bobcat, coyotes, and
a variety of birds and insects inhabit areas in both counties.

5.2 Vegetation

This is shared space. Ranges are grazed by a variety of species, including cattle. Plant
life reflects the environment regarding elevation, soils, and water supply. At higher
elevations stands of timber including Ponderosa pine, western white pine, sugar pine,
lodgepole pine, incense cedar, and white fir have formed a source for major economic
activity. In areas of better soil and moisture, pine and fir reach heights of 80' (Pease

The juniper also is obvious, growing frequently in shallow soiled areas. It takes a toe-
hold anywhere it can, persistent in its will to survive. Tough old junipers don't flinch
much in the wind, outlasting almost everything since Columbus (Jackman 1964: 6).
Jackman writes, "Old timers swear that the posts have been known to wear out three sets
of post holes." They provide use in firewood, furniture, fence posts, and have taken their
turn as desert Christmas trees. The juniper finds its own shape, almost as a metaphoric
symbol for adapting to life in Lake and Modoc counties. It forms odd twists here and
there, dulls the saw cutting it, has a stickery hide, and makes lumber that is full of knots
and bound to warp. If ever tamed for use, the wood is a beautiful, creamy yellow with
rusty-red grain.
Aspen and willow grow where water is plentiful, often near meadow and stream areas. Water is key to the variety of plant growth as well as agricultural production in the counties.

Water is the life a this valley! Believe it! It's been pretty good for the last couple a years, but back in '91? I've never seen sagebrush burn up the way it did that year. It was crumbly! You just touched it and it just fell apart. (#951921)

Sagebrush, rabbit brush, and bitterbrush are evident in most areas. Sagebrush and perennial ryegrass are the most abundant vegetation (Pease 1965: 38). Idaho fescue, bluebunch wheatgrass, quackgrass, cheatgrass, and squirrel tail are other forage plants.

5.3 Water!

Precipitation ranges from 8" in lower basins, 12 - 16" in more moist valleys, to 16 - 25" in mountainous areas and forested uplands (LC Resource Atlas 1973: 2). The Cascade range in Oregon and California coastal mountains form a barrier to these eastern regions, creating dry, desert like conditions. High altitude compounds temperature extremes, ranging from an average of 28 degrees in winter months to 68 degrees in July (LC Resource Atlas 1973: 2). Drought is no stranger to the region, although the prolonged period of drought in the late 1980's and early 1990's appears to be abating with adequate moisture years since 1993. The climate is cold and semi-arid, characterized by freezing winters, warm summers, and a short growing season of 90 - 100 days (Resource Atlas 1973: 2; Pease 1965: 33). Frost may occur in any month.

I think somebody who can't deal with the weather shouldn't be out here or in this line of business. It can absolutely make you into a crazy person. You have to be able to accept these things. (#95196)

The vagaries of the weather always offer the option for creativity by human kind. If one resource doesn't always work, maybe it will be adaptable for another use.
Well, now I would like to have a garden. I bought me a couple a greenhouses and everything froze in the greenhouses so....(laughs) so anyway, that just kind of discouraged me. I had two, now I'm using one for a calving shed for the new calves out of the weather! So I'm going to move this one too! (laughs) Last winter the calves packed in there! I was wondering if I should put it out there with the other or over in the barn! (# 951929)

It is a dry place for the most part. Riparian areas stand out, providing the relief of shade, wildflowers, seclusion, and contrast from the gray-green of sage landscape. Riparian areas are usually less than 1% of any large Great Basin range pasture (Swanson 1987:1). Large lakes, although limited in use by alkaline content, relieve the eye and look like something they, indeed, are not. Geothermal activity is part of the underground water system in both of these counties. Steam rises from the sinks they create, emitting a strong sulfur smell. Cowboys, shepherders, and homesteaders bathed at these sites in earlier years. Recreationists and seekers are added to the list these days, searching for solitude far from the mainstream of traffic and people. This resource is under-used to date, although it provides heat for some homes, warm water livestock ponds, a commercial trout enterprise, and is currently being explored as a means of raising lobsters for the gourmet food market. Lake County is part of the Closed Lake drainage basin in Oregon. With no outflow to the sea, all stream flow not consumptively used dissipates by absorption or evaporation. The Pit River in Modoc County is their only water with open outlet, flowing west to join Lake Shasta, above Redding, California, as part of the watershed system forming the Sacramento River.

The predominant crop produced in Modoc and Lake counties is hay. Most of it is used on the same place it is grown, in feed consumption by cattle. Alfalfa flourishes where there is water and about 40% is sold as a diversification to cattle production (EC 917: 28). Native hay is also harvested as feed, but is not sold as a major cash crop. The Tulelake area of Modoc County produces a variety of grain crops. This area was reclaimed by draining swamp land in the 1920's and 1930's, and its climatic conditions
for production fit more classically into those of the Klamath County, Oregon agricultural basin. For the purpose of this study, this area of Modoc County is not considered as an economic variable.

Dry rangeland conditions, plant species, and climate lend to the suitability of cattle grazing. Early on, the native people subsisted on waterfowl and plants, often facing starvation. They were nomadic, living in small tule or willow matted houses that could be moved or improvised during their seasonal travels in search of food. During all kinds of weather, the lake areas could always be counted on for fish, waterfowl, marsh plants, and small game (Aikens and Couture 1991: 21). Their religious beliefs were centered on nature, believing all things possessed a spirit. All the world was one, and they lived in a close relationship with the earth.

5.4 Settlement Patterns/Economics

Eastern Oregon did not, at first, create a favorable impression for white man. An immigrant remarked, "This is a barren, God-forsaken country, fit for nothing but to receive the footprints of the savage and his universal associate, the coyote," --before the interior was penetrated by the discovery of gold in Oregon's Baker and Grant County in the 1860's (O'Donnell 1995-96: 394). Cattle came to feed the miners, and grain became a major crop in the eastern part of the state by 1880, with the event of rail transportation. Early explorers, such as Peter Skene Ogden, John C. Fremont, Peter Lassen and Captain W.H. Warner toughed their way here, journalizing the isolation, diversity of terrain and extremes of weather in their records. Most of these came for a look at Lake and Modoc Counties prior to 1850. Their travels to the region necessitated hardship, loneliness, and loss of life that was not sought immediately by others. In 1849, Captain W.H. Warner died at the head of the Pit River, killed by the Modoc Indians, while surveying northeastern California for the railroad (Cook 1971: 10). The Warner Mountain range was named in his memory.
In was not until the 1860's, when drought in California and development in the Willamette Valley of Oregon created a short supply of available grazing land, that the interior regions of the high desert began to see an influx of migration. (Oregon Blue Book 1995-96: 395) (Jordan 1993: 249-251). Severe drought occurred in California in 1862-65, causing ranchers to seek new grass in the Great Basin (Jordan 1993: 249). Gold had also been discovered in Oregon, establishing a need for meat for the miners. Interior regions provided space and feed for the raising of livestock, particularly cattle and sheep. Meadow grass, bunchgrass, wild rye, and other native grasses in abundance were the bases of the empires of such cattle barons as Miller and Lux, John Devine, and Peter French. Cattle towns, like Lakeview and Paisley, Oregon and Alturas, Cedarville, Likely, and Eagleville, California had their beginnings during this period. Gordon Dawes wrote by the 1880's: "Indians, for the white majority, were literally out of sight and out-of-mind, consigned to the fringe regions, unworthy in their impotence, even of hatred (Oregon Blue Book 1995-96: 398)." Most of the native Americans were disenfranchised by the U.S. government and were out of the way on reservations by the late 1860's, clearing the way for settlement and land development. However, Modoc County was the scene of two of the last major skirmishes between whites and natives; the Modoc Indian War in 1873 and the Little High Rock Canyon incident in 1911 (Cook 1971: 26).

Cattle ranching today is one of the top two economic activities, along with timber products. Tourism plays a part in economic activity, but is far from dominant in the economic picture (Obermiller 1994: 3). Isolation, climate, lack of services, and distance from major transportation routes inhibits rapid growth and a more diverse economic base.

5.5 Adapting to the High Desert

These physical and historical descriptions of geology, geography, climate, precipitation, soils, and plant and animal species are based on solid research data. But what is it like to stand on a slope in this vast high desert and be able to look as far as the
eye can see without obstruction? What is the hidden dimension that some describe as "great expanses of nothing" while others have stayed for over one hundred years? How does one learn to live here, overcome fear of its extremes in weather, isolation, and sparseness? Rancher-poet Linda Hussa of Surprise Valley in Modoc County says it well in the following from her book of poetry, Ride the Silence.

"WITHOUT USING HIS NAME"

The terrible thing about being in the desert is you risk meeting God. — a proverb

I ask you to stop step into the space and walk

walk from this home all arranged into the one that waits that does not invite but welcomes.

It will give you back but you will be changed it can not teach but you will learn small things.

Wander and sit awhile Sleep and wake to wander again. See in clear detail the outside become the inside of you and reach beyond your vision.

You pass time but time does not pass you.

Playful the spaces seems empty then all details become one image
one sound
one fragrance
one beat.

The pocket mouse
will show you the way.
The brush hawk will fly on ahead.
The wind knows
and so does the great silence.
(Hussa 1995: 78-79)

Those who have done it say you haven't really slept well until you have spent a night out underneath the desert stars. Nights are crisp nearly all year. Heaven is a more tangible place, and Van Gogh's masterpiece "Starry, Starry Night," although conceived in another place and time, is alive overhead. The wind blows a bit, rustles the grasses and leaves, and makes wooden fence posts and wire creak in a steady cant. The perspective of this particular horizontal viewpoint where the sage and grasses are taller than oneself gives a reminder of our size and importance in the world. The night speaks about the scheme of things, of all that is right with the order of creation, and bigger things than human effort can match.

To appreciate this country one must stay awhile to realize, as the architect Mies van de Rohr expressed, "less is more" (Jordan 1969: 331). Dawns and sunsets burst forth with soft, deep color, blessing the day at first light and giving glory when the sun's last rays fade. The winds blows most of the time, but there is always the blue sky and fresh, clean air. This is the stage for human antics like county fair, rodeo, horse shows, hang gliding, hangar hops, Fandango Days, the Mosquito Festival, the Annual Ground Squirrel War, and more community-volunteer based activities than can be imagined.

Many have written about desert space and its effect on those who inhabit it. Among those are Longfellow, Bryant, Lowell, and T.S. Eliot. Eliot writes "It is not necessarily those lands which are the most fertile or most favored in climate that seem to me the
happiest, but those in which a long struggle or adaptation between man and his environment has brought out the best qualities of both (Daggett 1995: 12)."

A native Lake County desert writer by the name of Reub Long puts it this way. "The desert gives something to each; big open country where you have to rely upon yourself makes differences in character and outlook. If a man is big enough, he becomes broader, more tolerant. A narrow, mean man draws inside, loses breadth, merely as self protection. So you find the widest and the narrowest; the expanding with the contracting; growing personalities and withering nobodies; great generosity and degrading meanness. Many men, in trying to change the desert, only change themselves -- often for the better" (Jackman and Long 1994: 11).
Chapter 6
The Ranching Culture

The cow is a four-legged mammal weighing from 800 pounds to 1200 or 1400 hundred pounds, depending on age, breed, and characteristics. Males of the species are even larger. It seems ironic that western mythology, movies, television, novels, music, advertising, and now this research, have devoted so much attention on the caretakers of this commonplace, four-stomached animal. Cattle were first domesticated about 8500 years ago; both in southeast Europe and southern Asia (Cupps 1996: Microsoft Encarta). Throughout time, cattle have served humankind as beasts of burden, providers of milk, meat and hide, indicators of economic status, and as a religious symbol of the sacredness of life. Cud-chewing, grass recycling, gas-passing, ornery, stubborn, wild, sometimes horned animals that not only produces a food product but sausage casings, gelatin, candies, margarine, candles, cellophane and ceramics from its fatty acids, crayons, cosmetics, linoleum, paint, pet foods, piano keys, leather goods, emery boards, glues, film, sheet rock, insulin, bone meal, heparin, and many other edible, household, and pharmaceutical wonders (American National Cattlewomen 1992: brochure When is a Cow More Than a Cow?).

Webster's Dictionary lists several derivatives from the bovine species in the form of nouns and adjectives: "Cow-eyed, cow hocked, cowbell, cowgirl, cowboy, cow college, cowhand, cowherd, cowpea, cowpoke, or cowpuncher." Or, from the male of the species: "bull-headed, bull-nosed, bullpen, bullseye, bullneck, bullshit, bull-session—all the way to bull market" (Webster's Dictionary 1995: 181, 314). Herded by tribespeople in Africa, milked in Switzerland and the Jersey Isles, legendary on the plains of the Americas, quoted in the Bible, and sacred in India, the bond between herders since the domestication of these animals centers on dealing with the nature of the cow-brute all around the world.
6.1 The People

Ranchers care for approximately 41,000 beef cows in Lake and 36,000 in Modoc County [(1996 Oregon County and State Ag Estimates: Jan 1, 1996 OSU Special Report 790) (1996 California State Ag Statistics: Jan 1, 1996)]. These businesspeople operate season to season in the high desert environment, as part of an industry that forms a major share of the economic base in this remote part of Oregon and northeastern California. There are 42 ranchers in this study, with an evenly split gender ratio of respondents. Males range in age from 32 to 74; females from age 32 to 89. Of the 42 ranchers interviewed, 93% own ranches having base units that support between 300 and 600 mother cows. All of the respondents interviewed live and work on the ranches described in this research. Of these ranchers in the survey, 74% rent government grazing leases, managed by the U. S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the States of Oregon and California, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies. Married participants constitute 76% of the survey, 5% are divorced, 14% of the males have never married, all females have been married, while 5% of the males are widowers and 21% of the females are widows.

The landscape is home to .9 people per square mile in Lake County, earning what American Demographics dubs as "frontier" status. Modoc County is home to 2.37 people per square mile. Interviews with participants were conducted in all areas of both counties, taking in a broad geographic spectrum of locations in each. Interview settings themselves ranged from the rural store, Lakeview's Indian Village Lounge, the Silver Lake Cafe, ranch offices, living rooms, and kitchens. What is common to all of these conversations is the expression of the ranch lifestyle; talk about ranching, cows, horses, dogs, drought, politics, environmentalists, economics, family, work, values, old times, ethics, freedom, and people they have known and loved.
6.2 Why a Rancher?—Male Response

How did these 42 ranchers choose the cattle business as their life work? Some married into it, but 71% of those in this survey were raised on ranches. When posed the question "why be a rancher?" answers came forth without hesitation. To facilitate the comparison of gender responses, the following are replies from males.

Well, I think the challenges are most satisfying about it. Every day there is a new challenge to cope with. I think that's what I like, to be challenged. (#951910)

Well, I guess I like that I'm my own boss. If I go out and work hard and see results it was because I did so. I like the type of work I do. I don't particularly like to build fence, but if that's the most important thing I got going at the time, well, I can even take pride in a fence that I know a cow's not going to go through. Whether it's just a corral or just a wire fence. It's hard to figure sometimes what is the most important thing to do because there are so many things. I like to see things grow. I like to see quality crops----I think it's the same way with the cattle. To look at the cattle and know that they are doing well and so many aspects of it. I don't consciously think about it --"this makes me feel good." But it does. Has to, or you wouldn't be able to put up with the rest of the business. (#95197)

I guess I probably inherited ranching as an occupation. My dad died when I was 10 years old. And uh, my mother if it hadn't a been for her I might not even be here, but she was a pretty brave lady to take two boys that was 15 and 10 and try to keep the ranch that we had at that time with a debt on it and everything. Anyway, she did and we just kept pluggin' along. Would I do it again? Yeah, oh ya! (#95208)

It is a hell of a good life. There are times when my wife and I go check some cows and just ride through 'em. Just do that, nothing we have to do. I love to just take salt out. I love having my kids and grandkids around. Because that is the way I grew up. You take it one day at a time, but you also have to think of long term projections. The risk is real high. (#952010)

I guess ranching must have been my childhood dream. You know. So I guess I was pursuing my childhood dream. I certainly knew I couldn't make the money--the monthly wage-from ranching that I could in industry. But I guess I was pursuing my childhood dream. I played at
ranch when I was a kid. Now, I would have to say I enjoy all phases of the business. I like working with the cattle, putting up the hay, feeding the cows in the wintertime. And the horses are sort of my hobby. My recreation. When we go out to buckaroo—that's just like a day off, you know. And I enjoy the horses. As far as the job goes, I enjoy it. As much as you enjoy slithering though the mud or that! But I like feeding the animals and I like putting up the hay. I don't like fixing the breakdowns! And I don't like the stress we sometimes have. (#961911)

Some days there isn't any appeal at all! (laughs) It seems totally unrewarding. But I guess you work outside. I can have a so-called office like this that looks horrible and I can be away from it most of the time. Fortunately, I have a good bookkeeper there that keeps track of stuff I don't really like doing. There's quite a variety of jobs. It's not repetitious most of the time. I think being self-employed, being your own boss is certainly a factor. And a big factor is it seems like a healthy way to raise kids. (#95196)

That's a dream that I suppose everybody—I had that dream myself. I wanted to be a wild cowboy. They all do. But, uh, they don't really realize what it is. If you—you have to love it or you better forget it. Because there's a lot of sweat and tears and hard work 'n bad luck and all of this like I said. If you really love it to the ground up. A lot of these young people do. It's all you can say about it. It's a good life. You can make it one way or another, but it can be pretty tough. If you have a steady job, it's a paycheck you can count on every month. But if you lose your calf crop and owe a lot a money, you may have lost it all. It's a big gamble. This ranchin' is all risk. It's just like goin' down to Reno and puttin' your money on the table. (#95192)

Incentives for being in the ranching business were not cited as monetary, but reasons were being able to accomplish work involving values and beliefs. Pride in one's work, doing a quality job, being one's own boss, working outdoors, fostering family values and a work ethic for children, pleasure in working with animals, the challenge and the risk of the difficult aspects were part of the satisfactions of ranching. Following the dream of being a cowboy, the freedom of open spaces, and the skills and individualism he represents are also elements.
6.3 Why A Rancher?—Female Response

And from the woman's viewpoint, they also have a set of beliefs, a mythology representative of the lifestyle. The respect for nature, the feeling of individual freedom and skill, and in their hopes for the future of their children.

I have often thought about this because of how the children are raised knowing that the work that they do contributes. And the work they do, they may plant the seed. They see the calf born and carry that calf through to its sale. They may be involved in farming so that they plant the seed and then they harvest the crop. They see the continuum. And they have to feel a pride about that. Well, in the urban areas maybe the kid doesn't even know what the dad really does. I have asked my own relatives "what does your dad do?" "Geez, I dunno. He goes to the office." You know, it may be a mining firm and they don't know what he really does. So how can they feel pride for that dollar he brings home? So, well, we just need to keep in touch with those things. That's where the ranching family has the benefit. Because they are raising their child with this every single day. And yet, there is pride. It has to be there. (#952027)

I just love the springtime when the fields are turnin' green. And like get some water? Out here in the fields and the geese all come in trompin' around! Eatin' our feed. I still like it. Ya sees all these animals and birds and whatever. I love to watch 'em. I still like to see balance. I do like to see Mother Nature at work! I like to see the spring and the deer in the fields. They're so pretty! And I like to run the swather, when I was really able. Like on a Sunday time before I lost my husband we'd just say "Oh, I made a big salad yesterday and I fried some chicken and we're throwin' in this that and we're goin' to the lake. You better come join us!" Maybe there'd be 25-30 of us by the time the day was over. And we'd say" if you wanna go, you're welcome." And we'd go like that and we'd uh, some of 'em maybe bring a little liquor and nobody got drunk or anything like that. And sometimes somebody'd throw in three or four chickens. All cut up, ready to cook. And we'd build a fire and cook the chickens an uh, we just had really nice weekends. (#952029)

I always wanted to be a cowboy's wife. (#952023)

I married my husband and he was a farmer. I was raised on a farm and it wasn't anything new. My husband was very interested in having a cattle ranch. That's why we're here. When we came here to look I was asked "Do you realize what you are getting into? Will you be happy here?" And I think coming from the generation I came from the husband made the decision and the wife backed him up. Our children were young--three to
nine. And there were no questions about was this good for me. It was what he wanted to do and that's why we are here. But, I don't think I could move back to the Valley. There are too many people. The mountains are beautiful, the valley here is beautiful. We have abundant wildlife that we get to enjoy every day. In one form or another. We have deer that come in at night that eat the fruit in the fall. We get to watch. And those are things if we had stayed—a lot of those things are gone now. (#952026)

I like being outside. I like the haying. You are your own boss. There are restrictions—I don't buy all the restrictions. Financial and environmental. It is a very satisfying way of life. I can remember days when my kids were little and they helped all one day. This was particularly satisfying. Got something accomplished and we could say "you did this today!" Or having a project no one wanted to do and getting it done. (#952021)

My dream was to live on a ranch. I grew up definitely wanting to live on a ranch. The animals, and riding, the cattle. The whole lifestyle. That's all I ever thought about. In fact, before we got married, that's how I got interested in my husband. Because he had horses. And I knew it. (#951921)

I always wanted to be a cowgirl. At one point, I wanted to be a vet. Then I let somebody talk me out of it. You don't have the grades or it will cost too much, or it takes too much schooling. So I didn't pursue that. But I always knew I wanted to be a rancher.....Seein' the new calves or havin' a calf that's sick and you pull it around. And he comes in the fall weighin' the best. Or in the top end of the herd. Or havin'—like when you're gatherin' cattle on shippin' day. And the cattle wanna go all different directions and you don't wanna have a big shrink. (Shrink-loss is defined as weight loss from cattle being jostled about, run this way and that, or withheld from food and water, as in shipping; stressed in some way that causes weight loss, and thus, less money for less pounds delivered.) Just knowin' where to be at the right place to prevent a big wreck. That gives you so much satisfaction. I don't know if it's a spiritual thing or not, but you are so glad to be there. And that you out-thought this challenge. Just out-thinkin' a cow. And I can do it without stressin' the cow. It is in her best welfare. I have figured a way. (#951928)

This is a spiritual way of life. I think God put us here to take care of those cattle, and I mean there's days that those cows are going to eat first and maybe our dinner is pretty darn late. Our animals come first. We get up in the morning and something is out.....we don't even eat breakfast. The other morning he said, "Oh my gosh. My horse is out." You don't even sit down and get a cup of coffee. Our life is taking care of those animals. I don't care if it's the horses, dogs, the cats, or the cows. I feel it's the good
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Samaritan type of thing. Taking care of animals. We are responsible for them. We are here to do it and this is our life. (#952023)

Women's reasons for being ranchers are similar to men's reactions. It is part of their dream, also. They enjoy the unrestricted freedom, working with animals, the pleasure of a job well done. They are proud of their families, and instilling a strong work ethic and a pride of what they accomplish is important work. They feel a close bond between nature and the lives they live, recognizing their role as contributors to the success of the operation and the family's well-being. The emphasis on the spiritual aspect is mentioned more readily by women than men, although males also affirm a certain spiritual bond in the work they are doing.

Women have joined the ranks of what is defined as rancher, cowpuncher, cowboy, buckaroo, and vaquero in the past 25 years. They often do the same work, put in long hours, and perhaps more hours, if actually measured. Women's role in ranching will be covered more in depth in Chapter 8, Section 1.

6.4 To Everything, A Season

The cycle of the seasons provides a variety of work that is never boring, giving variety to the days and different jobs during the year.

The job is very unique in that you don't have one single job on the ranch. You are constantly changing what you do from day to day. It's not the same old grind. Every season there are different jobs to do. In the summer months you are primarily concerned with getting the hay put up. And I don't think I enjoy putting up hay to tell you the truth. It's a lot of long hours. I do the baling on the ranch. I bale the hay and normally the dew will come on the hay about 1 or 2 A.M. So I get out nearly about 2 in the morning and I'll bale until 10 'til the dew burns off. (The dew is important to the quality of the hay. The proper amount is essential to binding the hay together and for proper curing.) Then I'll spend the rest of my afternoon and morning changing my water and irrigating my fields and maybe running the harrowbed and hauling some hay. Summer is probably our hardest working period on the ranch when we are putting up the hay. And from time to time going back out on the range to move the cattle.
around. Making sure they are in the proper allotment. And they are spread out good. But I enjoy the diversity of the work. Especially the fall is really nice 'cause things slow down. You are done haying. I have to do a little more riding. You gather the cows. I really enjoy going out on my horse on our permit ridin' up in the mountains lookin' for cattle. You spend a whole day up there on horseback lookin' for cows and there's not a phone or a person or anything in sight. I really love being out in the country and being out in the wide open spaces. And you are out there to do a job! Hunting for cattle. It's always nice to come over a ridge and find five or six pair of cattle. Winter is kind of a tough time too. There's not as long hours feeding the cows. But it has to be done every day of every week of every month. Regardless of what the weather is doing. It can be 30 below with a 30 mile an hour wind and you don't sit in the house and pray for the weather to get better. You go out and you feed the cows. It is just part of the business. But, again, you always see pretty country, new snow is a pretty sight to see. See the cows and calves eatin' hay. You see a lot of wildlife. I enjoy that. After winter is over, you are anxious for spring to come. You have to feed the cows up to the middle of April sometimes the first of May. By that time, you are sick and tired of feeding hay and you are looking forward to spring. Grass usually comes on about May 1st. Cows start eating more grass instead of the hay! They are tired of the hay too. The whole cycle starts over again. Turn the cattle back out on the range and start irrigatin' your fields and start haying again! It never seems to get old but it's a cycle that I enjoy. It's never the same thing twice! You take a lot of pride into watching something grow if you take care of it. Turns into tonnage. Makes you feel good if you have accomplished something. Makes you feel good if you can increase weaning weights or produce more hay. It's a business you can get a lot of joy out of if you can make improvements along the way. And of course, it's a tremendous challenge too. Regardless of the financial situation you are in, you always are trying to improve. If you can improve, you have accomplished a lot. Maintaining what you have and still staying in business. (#95204)

6.5 Mentors, Manners, Codes of Behavior

"Cow savvy" is what moved the cattle across the prairies, forming the cowboy's attitudes about themselves, their relationship to each other and the world at large. These attitudes can be traced back four generations to these early punchers, handed down through informal mentor relationships (Taylor and Marr 1983: 27). Groups of men, if they were to get the job done, were also privy to sets of rules in camp. Camp cooks that
got aggravated at rude behavior were likely to quit or sulk up and get grumpy; maybe, even refusing to cook for a few days. Trouble was unwelcome in isolated camps. It interfered with the task of taking care of cattle. A certain set of etiquette developed, and is still revered and respected among the ranch culture. Attitude and taking responsibility is important; sticking out the worst of situations, facing danger and risk because it is part of the job, and respect for your outfit and fellow human beings. Everyone has value in the job they do, and takes pride in it done well.

Those old guys was trainers.........they knew what to do. When they couldn't work much any more, 'specially. Like old Dollarhide, after he got real old he was there. And he'd drive around in his pickup and oversee what was goin' on you know, and everything was done right. When I was a kid there was a them old guys like that. If a kid wanted to learn, they had all the patience with ya atall, see. They was always, right then there was always a bunch a kids in the hayin' crew. The old guys used ta show 'em the ropes ya know. Like I said, if they wanted to learn, but if they didn't why they'd have no patience with 'em atall. I learned everything I know today--which is not much--(laughs) from them old guys. Like old Axel and all of 'em. Them ol' guys had a lot a fancy ropin' shots too, and you was always tryin' to imitate 'em. (#95192)

Those good ol' people are still out there. I think a lot today is we, uh, live in such a mechanized, crazy world. Those people are out there. They're just fewer and further between. Back then, there was no radio or television or nothin'. You might have an ol' battery radio for the Friday night fights or somethin'. The batteries didn't last very long. So when you got in from ridin' since three or four in the mornin', if ya didn't have ta shoe a horse or somethin' else, we just visited. Sit and visit with the old folks. But we had a whole different etiquette then. Not that there are bad people now, I wouldn't want anybody to misinterpret this. There was an etiquette, an unspoken etiquette. But it was never a challenged etiquette. You knew instantly--and this line of etiquette was pride. And that's what motivates most of us today--to be a law abiding citizen and be a good neighbor and be a good friend and be a good wife and a good husband. Whatever. It's pride. Take pride in it. That's what guides us--a beacon. And these ol' guys were so proud that they were a cook or a cowboy or whatever. Our people back then--now I sound like an old-timer! (laughs) But people were really proud to be the best they could be at what they were. They might not be a real good friend, but they were the BEST they could be. Today, it is an attitude and I know you've heard about it but it's
just --it's difficult to show up at 8 o'clock for your job and ya can't wait until five o'clock to spook out the door. And, the last thing in the world if heck is breakin' loose "I'm not gonna work Saturday and Sunday" and ya know there's --this is the mentality of where we're at today. Well, then, it was whatever it took to keep the ranch alive. So I can eat! And have a little money to buy Bull Durham with or buy a drink when I go to town or whatever. But there was this line and it was a plain line. And today this line is still here in our way of life. In the buckaroo way of life. This line is still there, but it's like a line that hasn't been painted for a long time in the road. It's gettin' fainter and people are steppin' over the line. When I was young growin' up you stepped over that line (slaps his hands together with a loud smack) you was instantly disciplined. Whether it was a romel between your ears or grab you by the arm and lift ya up and look ya right in the eye and "you just don't do that, young man!" And they weren't cruel, but they had a lot a fun. But you didn't cross that line. There was a lot more respect for authority. You just didn't bridge that gap. You knew where you were supposed to be, not that you didn't earn your way to get further. The opportunity was there. And you had a lot a help, a young man. Gosh, lord knows, I had a lot a help. To be where I am today. There's a lot a them ol' guys took a lot a time to explain things. But you didn't step over the line. (#95191)

Experience is the greatest teacher, especially around this country where it is different than where I was brought up. As far as ranching goes. When in Rome do as the Romans do. And I learned a lot of things just watchin' other people up here. (#952010)

Ya, those was the good days, all right, in my life. Younger days. At one time, I just had a dream of bein' a straight cowboy, and nothin' else. My stepfather was an ol' time cowboy. And he was a good one too. Oh, there was several used to go out to our camp and have a calf rodeer, somethin' like the MC used to. You know, the wagon and all. We never had a wagon, but we had a similar ride twice a year. Oh, I learned a lot from them. ( #95208)

From the yearly cycles of seasons, the work, and the interaction between man or woman, horses, and cows, is an emerging persona that Taylor and Marr call the "cowboy character (Taylor and Marr 1983: 27)." It is a particular attitude towards work, their fellow man, and the world at large. In documenting their definition, Taylor and Marr define the open-range cowboy of the late nineteenth century as somewhat of a maverick--first and foremost a romantic, a refugee from industrial civilization, passionate about
unrestricted personal freedom. The only way to achieve the guarantee of freedom was to become an expert at the job, obtained by observation of animal behavior and establishing a symbiosis. Cowboys began as part of all-male work groups and observed human behavior in all kinds of adverse situations. Out of the need to adapt to group behavior in range conditions, dealing with nature day-to-day, and the cattle entrusted to them, the outcome was the development of a dry wit that characterizes western humor. Calling attention to one's self was not recognized as a need, and humor was a way to lessen tension. Legends formed around this individualism, representing the cowboy as a whooping, gun-toting, show-off; riding across the plains in fancy clothing at full speed.

Taylor and Marr's description of the cowboy character still fits today, in that there is a love of freedom, individualism, and working with nature and animals. A high respect remains for skills that developed well over 100 years ago, by the early cowboys on the plains. Calling attention to oneself is not necessary. If one is skilled, others see these qualities in how well and it what manner the work is done. Their sense of humor still sets them apart, as a well-liked, fun-loving bunch. They enjoy one another's company and still like to play tricks on each other. Originally, this kind of fun started in camp, to alleviate boredom and lift spirits during the monotony on the trail.

The most fundamental characteristic of the cowboy never entered the myth that Hollywood film makers or novelists sensationalize. It's the empathy with cows and the understanding of cattle, known as "cow savvy," that is the mark of the best cattle people. Jane Kramer in The Last Cowboy cites a West Texas definition of "cowpuncher."

I'll tell you what a cowpuncher is.....It ain't ropin' and it ain't ridin' bronc and it ain't bein' smart, neither. It's thinkin' enough about a dumb animal to go out in the rain or snow to try to save that cow. Not for the guy who owns the cow but for the poor ol' cow and her calf. It's getting down in that bog—in the quicksand.....You tie up one leg, then the other. You tramp her out.....You see, this old cow, she don't know but what you're tryin' to kill her. But you drag her out, even if she's fightin' you, and then you ride a mile yonder and find another danged old cow bogged down the same way (Kramer 1977: 144-5).
6.6 Buckaroo Skills and Influence

The origin of ranching and cowboy skills can be traced historically to the expansion of California ranch holdings into the Great Basin areas. The vaquero was a herdsman with a high level of horse-cattle skills during the period of Spanish land grants in California. Large landowners from California moved into Oregon, along with their valued workers. From vaquero comes the derivation of the term 'buckaroo,' which is used to describe cowboys and cowgirls in Modoc and Lake Counties. Buckaroos can be male or female, and their work is known as 'buckarooing.' The term 'cowboy' is also used, but other meanings sometimes confuse the intent of the word's use, the word buckaroo is not as culturally loaded and is used in a more clear context. Examples of mixed messages associated with the word 'cowboy' are 'urban cowboy,' and 'drugstore cowboy.'

The true western American cowboy was influenced by an array of techniques, characterized in the language of the vaquero. They used the rawhide lasso, known as a reata, and were expert ropers winding the reata around the saddlehorn loop by loop with a technique known as dar la vuelta. They wore large roweled Spanish style spurs. Californians improvised on the equipment and vocabulary of the vaquero, and many of these modifications remain today. Their material culture can be traced to Sonora, Jalisco, and Guadalajara areas of Mexico. The Spanish style bit was modified in California to the hinged snaffle bit, still in use today (Jordan 1993: 167-169).

When cattlemen such as Peter French and Miller and Lux reached southeast Oregon, they brought the vaqueros with them. They were treated as equals with other cowboys employed to do similar work. Socializing and working together, these techniques spread throughout northern California and southeast Oregon. Spanish "loanwords" still used show evidence of the Spanish influence in both Modoc and Lake County. Words such as "buckaroo" from vaquero, "hackamore" from jaquima, "bosal," "romal," "cinch" from cincha, "mecarty" from mecate, "cavvy" from cavieda, "riata" from reata, "lass" from
lazo, "taps" from tapaderos, "cosinera" from cocinero, "leppy" from la pepita, "chinks" from chinquederos, "dally welters" from dar la vuelta (Jordan 1993: 256-257).

These are words of the trade used in each of the counties surveyed. Family influence is a strong indicator of where skills were learned, with a majority of respondents on ranches all their lives. The California-Vaquero herdsman leaves a legacy whose influence is still evident in this culture in the 1990's.

6.7 Education and Experience

If skills such as these are part of the experience needed to do the daily work of ranching what part does formal education play? Denzel Ferguson's statement in his book Sacred Cows at the Public Trough cites ranchers as "uncivilized people without much intelligence, living in small western towns governed by folks with even less intelligence (Russell 1993: 20)." This statement was not reflective of the participating ranchers. Of the total respondents, 42% had either technical training or one to three years of college after high school, while 14% had a baccalaureate degree. None of the respondents in this survey hold graduate degrees, and several cited an interruption in their education due to a death in the family with no one remaining to run the operation. Formal education is valued for developing management expertise, people skills, and a broad base of knowledge. Experience, however, is cited by the majority of the sample as the more practical, common-sensible tool required for dealing with the day-to-day occurrences in the ranching business.

When I got out of college, I went into the service. And probably would have stayed in if I hadn't wanted to come back and ranch. But, uh, as far as the education goes, it was only a broadening....sort of something to broaden your perspective a little bit. I think probably the most important thing was what I learned from my father. Practical experience. How to do things. Not so much how to fix a pickup or splice a fence. But the process how to approach things rather than the actual implementation of it. And the idea that you need to continue to be--I hate to use the word--
innovative. My purpose is to set things up so they can be done by one person. It's just a philosophy I have. (#95209)

The education I got was invaluable as far as working in today's environment. We have so many complicated issues we have to deal with that I don't think we survive without college experience. It was more than subject matter training in livestock. Appraisal and accounting, plant science, food science, psychology, all are interrelated to keep business viable. I learned how to interact with people s I know where to find answers to complicated issues. I did not anticipate the level of problems from the general public we have now. (#95203)

Q. Do you feel like you have gotten to put your ag resource economics degree to work?

Not really. In a way it was just time to grow for me. As far as actually learning in college I didn't learn that much. Hands-on experience. I guess the bookwork, I learned how to look up things and how to prepare myself to do research and figure out problems. But as far as knowledge about agriculture, I'd say that was all learned here. (#95195)

The formal college education, even the general ed stuff was real important. The general education helped me work with people. Specifically, the English part of it, the writing. Even the psychology classes. They had an influence on the way I approached people in dealing with the public and then going on in the ranching end of things. If you are going to be active in organizations or in your community, there's a right way and a wrong way to do things. I think education helps. (# 952010)

Yes, yes my education helps me in many ways. Actually, it led me into military service as an officer and a pilot for the Air Force so I used such things as leadership and management. Things I acquired through college training. College really did help a lot in management ideas. And how to work with people. (#951910)

We try to go to the seminars. We try to keep up on different things along that line. Mostly reading is our biggest way. And learning from our daughter in college. She's brought home a lot. (#951928)

Experience is the most valuable tool I got. There is no substitute for the experience. See, I'm fourth generation right here in this valley and there is no substitute for this experience. Even when we went broke in 1980 , with my dad, the experience I got out of it you know. Nobody can ever take that away from you, ya know. You learn a lot of things you never learn
unless you go through that. So ya, I mean experience is the number one thing. If you lose it all, they can't take that away from you. (#95205)

Although experience was cited as the best teacher in learning skills and savvy about ranching, the respondents cited various means of educating themselves on current trends and methods in the business. All reported reading a variety of industry periodicals such as *Western Livestock Journal, Farm Journal, Range, Cascade Cattleman, Capital Press, Livestock Market Digest, Nevada Rancher, and Beef*. Other periodicals such as *Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News and World Report* are frequently read for political news and viewpoints. A variety of publications regarding land use and management, such as environmental impact statements, grazing plans, riparian recovery plans, Farm Bureau and Extension Service publications also crowd dining room tables and living room shelves. Communication and information about the world outside of these isolated counties is important to ranchers. Reading industry publications, reading the paper, and watching television news are evening communication rituals. The periodicals beside a rancher's chair are off-limits to housekeeping. One ranch wife reported that the basement was stacked with a particular ranch magazine that her husband was adamant she not discard. "I'm going to read those someday!" Another reported that as long as she didn't throw away *Animal Health and Nutrition*, she could throw away any others if she just "couldn't stand it any longer." During conversations with other ranchers and the interviewer, world events are discussed frequently as well as social issues.

I keep files of stuff I tear out of magazines and things. Some of it is issues. Like grazing or endangered species where people are saying things in a way I wish I could say so I keep it so I can plagiarize it at some point. Some of it is cow related. I've got a box over there completely full, that isn't filed. I read it, decide I want to save it and tear it out. Some of that stuff is probably a couple years old.................................The size of those volumes kinda scare most farmers and ranchers off. It's not very interesting to read for one thing. It's formidable when you look at volumes like that (referring to various Environmental Impact Statement documents on California Spotted Owl, the Redband Trout, and Land and Resource Management Plans, etc.). And you have ten magazines that you subscribe
to that you are behind on. You have got an hour and a half before you fade into oblivion after dinner. At the most. And I think you could probably give a class on how to skim materials for best use.
(# 95209)

Reading also included historical novels, mysteries, and books like *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, *The Oregon Trail* by Francis Parkman, *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, and *Messages and Papers of the United States Presidents*. Western author Louis L'Amour finds his way into many ranchers' favorite reading spot in the winter evenings. Lack of time is a major constraint for reading. Coupled with the need to keep up on the changes in world view and society at large, being informed on business issues is a major concern, however. The ability to keep current was expressed with fear, uncertainty, and some thoughtful contemplation about the future of their businesses and the family.

### 6.8 Ranchers and the Community

The tangible reality of the daily ranch experience itself leaves little time for hobbies, socialization, and community service. Yet socialization and community service are recognized as part of one's responsibility in life. Hobbies are often part of ranch work, such as working with horses or leather work. Evenings are spent reading current literature or watching television. Television was cited as one of the deterrents from socializing, a change in the past 30 years. Although, television, with modern satellite technology, was also cited as a source of information; particularly news programs and documentaries on political policy in agriculture and perspectives from the environmental movement. Although freedom and independence and being one's own boss are primary values associated with staying in ranching, a sense of community and shared communication is a responsibility and a necessity to community and one's own well-being.
I can see the results of community service and it's satisfying. It's not as appreciated in most cases as it ought to be. But that's all right. That's not why you do it. My uncle told me years ago that when you live in the country and you work by yourself a lot and so on, you have to on a regular basis blow the cobwebs out of your braincells and that means you have to get away from someplace where you're at. For a day or two and you need to intermingle with people that are smarter than you are and know more about things than you do. Whether that be how to grow heavier calves or how to keep the Forest Service from screwing up the grazing allotment or whatever it may be. So I took that to heart. (#95209)

We have an obligation to our community. We certainly do. You can see it in everybody up and down this lakeshore, most of 'em. Involvement is what makes a community. We need our neighbors! You might not agree with one another but you get your strokes talkin' to your neighbor once in a while. What you want and what you need. Everyone in this community is very neighborly. They communicate well and get along well. We just seem to have time for each other. (#951910)

We're pretty committed to the ranch you know. Kinda spread out for time. But we do socialize. We're community involved. With 4-H, Cattlemen and Cattlewomen. I'm involved in the Chamber of Commerce. We socialize right here at our house. People are always here. We have friends over--dinner, drinks, you know. Visit. Rodeos. Have friends. Our brandings are a big social thing. Because we have our friends come, have a big branding, have a huge dinner and it's a big social. Everyone takes turns. We go to them, do the same thing. They come here, do the same thing.

I think everybody has a responsibility. Because you have to be responsible for your own personal development. And you have a family that participates in sports and 4-H. You have to put back in to teach them they have a responsibility. And even though it's basically helped them in the long run you put back in. Our community has really changed and there are those that don't feel that way. So you can't stop because others drop the ball. (#9520211)

I have done a lot a things in the community. I spent a tremendous amount of time on committees. I think a person has a responsibility to give to the community. It's awful easy to criticize. When you haven't helped it's pretty difficult to understand why things are done and what not. It is important for a person's own knowledge and well being. It makes you a better citizen and taxpayer. (#95197)
I do feel obligated to the community to different things. The other thing is the importance of issues that come up. Always, I try to support agriculture. When issues come up that affect not only me directly, but agriculture in general for our local agriculture. My dad always said "hey, if you can't stand up for what you believe in, then don't complain about it later." He's right. (#952010)

Rural communities throughout the west were built with rancher's help. They often provided land for schools and churches, or a place for the teacher to receive board and room. They formed early school boards and community councils. The sense of community remains important. These are expressions of the ranchers' own mythology.

6.9 Neighboring

If there is an obligation to community, what is their responsibility to one another? Often, talk turns to the city, the urban people who live there, daily crime, too little space, and the perceived lack of connection of urban people to each other. At home, neighbors can be miles apart or within sight of the ranch. There is the notion that rural people amuse themselves by knowing other people's business, but neighborliness goes much beyond that. Neighbors report cows that get out, carpool kids to town, share business advice, assist with veterinary practices, help brand, provide a pull out of the snow or mud, fix fence, and provide food and support for graduations, weddings, and funerals.

Word about an unethical neighbor, however, travels fast. If he's suspected as a thief of cattle, feed, or water, everybody soon knows. This neighbor is not shunned from the community, but "everybody watches their back a little closer." Cattle thieving is considered one of the worst breaches of ethics; and evidence of a major flaw in character.

Robert Frost writes that "good fences make good neighbors." There is more to being a good neighbor, though, than having good fences, although a good fence is certainly appreciated. The cost of other people's cows eating valuable feed due to lack of repairs or mismanagement aggravates most ranchers who try to keep up with their own day to day
Well, out here you notice what your neighbors are doing. You know them all personally. In the city, you just don't know that many people around you and you don't want to know. This is a story we tell everybody. When our son was ill we spent 31 days with him in Dornbecker Hospital in Portland. And we stayed in the Ronald McDonald House. It was half a block from the hospital. We wanted to be with him every minute so we took turns. One would go back and sleep while the other one stayed with him. I was going back anytime of the night—two o'clock or three or four the morning. The nurses found this out and said "Don't do that!" I said, "It's only a block away." They said "Don't walk the street in the middle of the night." So my husband said "Take the car." Well, that was even more spooky to park in the parking lots and get into the hospital. Those underground jungles? It was even scarier. The nurses suggested I call security and have them take me if it was nighttime. From the front door of the hospital to Ronald McDonald House not even a block away! I asked the security guard "is this really necessary?" He said "Absolutely. Hospitals are easy prey." Even though I walked right by the security office, he said he would never have seen anything. I told my husband I would never live that way. I could not live in that much fear. We were there 31 days. And when we came home we turned down this road and I could see something bright out in front of our house. And we got here and here were all these balloons on the fence and a great big banner that said "welcome home." And I just got out and cried like a baby. I came in here and there was food all over the table and the refrigerator was full. This was all of our neighbors. And our neighbors brought up our mail to us in Portland. I paid bills from up there. I sold Avon then. A neighbor took over my route and sold Avon for me. Took my orders, did the deliveries. This is a special little community. We had a big hay fire about 15 years ago. Day before Thanksgiving. We didn't lose it all but the haystack was all in one stack. 400 ton plus hay. And it caught on fire. All the neighbors come and helped us bale and sort out that mess. On Thanksgiving Day. Here we had all the neighbors straightening out that mess. And an neighbor (in his eighties) came here and we were really worried because it was right south of the house. There was this big huge mountain of embers where the hay was. We were scared to death that the south wind would come up and set everything on fire. Blow burning embers everywhere. So they would go out and check on it. And he slept here on our couch. Every two hours his mental clock woke him up and he alternated with my husband. He was a good neighbor. (#951930)
Well..........this, this valley.....uhm, most people kinda tend to themselves, more or less. Always have. And I'll tell ya what, if anybody has any kind a trouble whatsoever.....I mean they bust butt to jump in and help, wherever you could possibly ask for. That's never gonna change, I don't think! Not in my lifetime, anyway. But uhm...like I say.....these people have never been much for visitin' around. They'll welcome you with open arms if you you wanna go visit, you know. Or, if they happen to need somethin' or that way, they'll come by. Our little Christmas thing we have up here, that's about the it of it. Then we all get to visit! 'Cause everybody shows up for that thing (laughs)! (# 951921)

We just had a wedding reception for a neighbor. In fact, we helped give it last night. Just had a big pot-luck you know, and they were married a couple weeks ago. Like helping out with this reception? His folks didn't really want to do it. And so the neighbors kinda went ahead and did it. And uh, felt that we should do something. And it was just a big neighborhood potluck. And it's not like you go there and you are afraid to eat this or that like you don't know who fixed it. Everyone had such a good time. Visited and visited. That's kinda what we like to do--that sort of thing. (#952023)

6.10 The Home Corral

As ranch visits for interviews move into early winter, days become shorter. The wind changes it's pitch and tone, with travel toward home by moonlight. The moon is loosing it's post-harvest brilliance, now alabaster cool, hiding behind dark, moving clouds. The deer are wary, their glance is more guarded, sniffing the ground as they step forward, as if the olfactory sense might provide a warning or sign of what is to come. Ranchers visited during the day also reflect this unconscious, heedful awareness. Woodpiles have appeared, storm windows lean against the house waiting for hanging, and haystacks have lost their outer green appearance. Stems have dried and browned with frost, blending into the brown of fields, hills, and canyons. When greeted in ranch yards or at the ranch house door, occupants share the same hesitant look toward the distance that the deer has, as if expecting something; a brief glance lasting but a moment. Even the ranch dogs sniff the ground and repeat this silent gesture, and look to their owners momentarily for
an answer. Changes will come. Will it snow tonight? Will it rain? Will we feed tomorrow? How long will the pasture last before snow and winter feeding? Will we have enough hay if it snows? These unstated questions go unanswered for now, the present tense returns. These non-verbal signs of communication and observations are recorded as field notes at the end of the day.

A friendly command to step inside follows this brief exchange between interviewer, rancher, dog, and nature. Sometimes it's lunch or dinner time, with an offer to set a plate. And, always, the coffee pot is on the stove. Most homes have a wood stove of some type, whether it be a trash burner in the kitchen, or a wood stove elsewhere. A fire warms the cool spaces as the calendar moves into late fall-early winter.

Ranch architecture varies from the two story white frame house of the home place to mobile homes. Some dwellings are built in the 1950's or 1960's. Several are remodeled. Only one ranch family has a new home, built five years ago after the family had lived in a double wide mobile for 25 years.

The screened back porch serves an important role in the enterprise. For most ranch houses, it's the main access to the house, even though a front entrance exists. It's an interesting place, the back porch. Hooks to hang coats or a closet which is in use for the jackets and hats which have appeared again, chest freezers, an older refrigerator for the vet medicine, milk replacer and calf bottles, halters, boots and boot jacks, harness, plants, an old sewing machine, the washer, dryer and laundry, the dog, bags of pet food, and even a new screen door are reflections of rural ranching life. The back porch is used often and is a housekeeper's nightmare. Mud, hay, corral manure, dogs, and weak or sick calves inevitably find their way here; mostly when the banker or the newly arrived couple from southern California drop by to visit.

The kitchen has not only the required equipment that describe it as a kitchen, but usually a pile of mail, industry publications, the newspaper, a few spare parts and bolts, and a project or two for hobby or repair. Sometimes it is the ranch office with phone and
a list of numbers for neighbors, the vet, and the brand inspector on the wall. If there is a resident cat, they've found the kitchen to be the warmest spot in the house and sit smugly with their paws curled under them. With no look of wariness at all, they are content in their ability to have outsmarted both the canine and human inhabitants of the place.

Houses are clean and neat, without excess ornamentation other than photographs or items that were once used on the ranch—the ranch antiquities. Saddles, and bits, bridles, fancy gear, chaps, Navajo blankets, and silver work. Ranch homes are where decorator trends using western themes originated. However, items that have come inside the house are there because a rancher admired the work exhibited in a saddle, for example; or because it is significant in their life; such as belonging to an older family member or good friend. Although they appear to be decorator items, they also reflect what ranchers value as important.

Photographs of horses, kids and horses, women and horses, men and horses, fields of cattle, 4-H steers, bulls, branding crews, barns, graduation pictures, and photos of grandpa, grandma, neighbors, family, friends. These items of material culture are intimate revelations of who they are and what they love, affirmations of daily life.

The living room appears to be the room least used, the kitchen and back porch the most. Bachelor's places have more mail, newspapers, and extra bolts, and in one, the smell of scorched cornbread coming from a finicky oven. Ranch houses are comfortable, showplaces for their culture, if not the "slick" magazine trade. Home is place to relax, rest, or restore; but also serves as an extension of the bigger job—the business outside.
Chapter 7
A Business and A Lifestyle

What are the parameters and the reality of the business? Experience is beneficial, along with skills learned from older family members or older men and women mentoring those with the same passion for cattle tending. This occupation requires long hours, physical and mental challenges, and hard work--in exchange for what ranchers define as freedom; freedom to be one's own boss and freedom of space on the land. Ranchers have a relationship with nature, the cycle of seasons, people, and animals. Community life springs from shared philosophy, the feeling of duty to one's fellow human beings, and the need for human company as a respite from the solitary aspects of ranch work. The job environment is outdoors; the high desert a venue for these artisans and laborers who rendezvous with each season; partners in life and death, the good and bad, to profit or loss in the business of raising beef for food consumption.

It is difficult to describe the business of ranching without the inclusion of lifestyle. It is a round-the-clock enterprise interwoven and cross-laced with the colorful history, language, and skills of earlier men and women who possessed the savvy of horses and cows required in the livestock industry that has evolved into a particular culture. These things are evident in their social life, use of free time, reading materials, reverence for expertise and hard work, and their talk among themselves. Myth itself is strong within the ranching culture in Modoc and Lake; stories of old days, old men and women and hard work, remembered heroes.

However, the concept of cultural characteristics versus business has created controversy, misunderstandings, confusion, and dissension for the rancher in the late 1990's, as referred to earlier in the literature review. When queried about the reasons ranchers were targeted as somehow being immoral for land ownership or use of public lands for grazing rights, it was sometimes difficult for respondents to answer. Only one
respondent provided the following comment as response to business versus lifestyle, terming it "livelihood."

Q. Why is there more apparent criticism of ranchers who succeed than perhaps, someone who owns a successful shoe store?

Maybe we have done it a little bit to ourselves. We keep talking about preserving our lifestyle and I know as a kid growing up we never considered it a lifestyle. It was a business. We had to make a living off of it, so we had to handle it like a business. So maybe we have shot ourselves in the foot a little bit when we say we want to protect our lifestyle. What we are really saying is we want to protect our livelihood. Which, makes it a business. (#951924)

The remaining 41 people in the survey referred to their enterprise as a business, but philosophical references to "the lifestyle" are also included. It is the lifestyle that is the basis of perceptions creating the myth of rancher and cowboy which includes wide spaces, clean air, the legendary risks in working with wild cattle and horses, the dress, and a specialized vocabulary and philosophy. Also, the term "lifestyle" incorporates a set of values, or perceived values. In this chapter, an examination of the current ranching lifestyle provides not only an analysis revealed by this culture itself, but one that is key to understanding the nature of doing business in the 1990's.

7.1 New Attitudes, Philosophies, and Changing Work Environments

Rapid social, cultural, and technological change, concerns for global air and water quality, and land use are major issues, particularly in crowded urban areas. Preservation of large, open spaces and their natural biodiversity has become the mission of preservationists. Pesticide use, animal rights, and toxic waste occupy mega-column inches in newspapers. Pollution, water and soil quality, population growth, new philosophies regarding environmental awareness, and laws such as the Endangered Species Act pose questions regarding land use rights. Stereotypes stemming from ranching myths and the nature of the land used to raise cattle in the high desert lead to
scrutiny of business practices. In the environment described in this survey, a cow-calf pair can require a hundred acres or more of range land per season for subsistence. Desert pastures are large, but low in production due to poor, rocky, shallow soils, lack of water, and extremes in temperatures.

The environment, the technology and skills required for the job, and the full time commitment necessary, make ranching somewhat of an anachronism when compared with other businesses that provide generous benefit packages to employees, create disposable income for owners, operate and depend on computers and other sophisticated technology, have pre-determined hours of operation, regularly schedule upgrades for capital improvements, and provide staff development opportunities for improved production. To a ranch employee, a "staff development opportunity" might mean anything from milking out the meanest cow on the outfit so her tiny calf can nurse or doctoring the snortiest bull for a sore foot. It is safe to say that Steven Covey didn't include either of these tasks in The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People.

The cyclical nature of the cattle economy is an accepted part of the business, but a major area of change for ranchers is dealing with requirements in management, particularly in riparian areas and use of grazing allotments. Collaboration with affected interests and agencies regarding use of both public and private land and water is a new area of communication. Time away from the job for participation in working groups and water and grazing committees is a concern. Operations in this study rely on the owners themselves, spouses, or children to complete the necessary daily work. Primarily, hired employees are seasonal workers. Meetings with government agencies and affected interests, such as environmental groups, require preparation in reading and study of legal terminology. Often, meetings interfere with irrigating, haying, gathering time, or calving requiring round-the-clock commitment in hours. It is difficult to leave the ranch when weather or specialized duties require constant vigilance. Although family members realize the importance of participation in the development of management plans or other
collaborative efforts, friction and strain occur regarding responsibility for the family, ranch work, and community and parental obligations. Ranchers get physically tired and are ready to get to bed early, since days begin at five or six A.M. and go on until dusk. Giving input where issues affecting business are involved is viewed as necessary and worthwhile, but difficult to balance in terms of time and commitment.

One of the biggest changes is keeping up with the affected interests and management side of our allotment. I felt it was very important to be involved in grazing committees. My partner stayed home and did the work when I was gone. We had been in business for many, many years. We got so we didn't see eye to eye. He resented the fact I was involved and he left the ranch. We put the place up for sale. It was time. He was in bad health, and a partnership over all those years, it was hard. It was hard! I got very depressed and I thought my heart had been cut out when we sold. I bought this place here after the sale........ya gotta look down the road ahead. And a lot a people can't do that. (#95208)

There is one thing more I want to say. The city people seem to be really envious of what we are and what we have. Being the cowboy and the ranching. And it's really hard when they come up and they say "Oh, you are really lucky you get to ride your horses and you have all this pretty property." They don't realize the stress behind it. They don't realize the commitment and the financial problem you know. I wish we could get out of it for just a second and look back at what we have and appreciate it. But our work load and our stress load and our constant hustle, hustle to work to make things go overbears the enjoyment of it. (respondent #952025)

7.2 Ranching and Risk

Lack of time was mentioned by everyone interviewed, but one consideration that participants did not mention was physical danger and risk. The fear of accidents, permanent injury, or death was not verbalized as a deterrent in the choice to continue to do business for either male or female respondents. A general attitude of doing what you have to and going on exists with an almost casual irreverence to the threat of dangerous situations. The stories that make the local papers about local disasters weren't cited in the interviews. A tractor slips out of neutral while a rancher steps behind a wagonload of hay
to fasten check a hitch to a second trailer full of hay. A tractor and trailer rolling backward with 30 tons of hay catches the brim of his soiled cowboy hat before the impact. It's 75 miles to town and luckily there's a radio to report the accident; a man down, smashed between the loads, with multiple head injuries. A local doctor flies to a ribbon of highway that becomes a desert landing strip, administers life sustaining procedures and evacuates the patient in the aircraft to a major medical facility 150 miles distant. Life hangs in the balance for several months in the hospital, but luck is with him this time around and he's back ranching. He still wears the lucky hat; it's grease, sweat, and dust forming a protective helmet effective enough to barely cheat death.

Bucking saddle horses have produced both split and broken pelvis', broken legs, wrists, necks, and backs. The hurried wrap of a roping dally leaves a mark for life; catching the thumb and jerking it off. Pickups fall from jacks. Sickles cut the fingers and hands. Clothing can catch in the power take-off shaft of a tractor and mangle the body when pulled in by the power of the mechanism. Tractors overturn while loading hay.

Mad cow disease does not necessarily fall into the definition that destroyed the English beef market; known as BSE. Cows and bulls become insane with fear or pain, stomping whatever is in their path. Badger and squirrel holes trip a horse and rider at full gallop, sub-zero weather freezes feet, hands, and face, heart attack can strike miles from home while fencing allotments or checking waterholes on remote range. Rattlesnakes and ticks and rodents carrying hantavirus and bubonic plague live here too. Even careful avoidance doesn't prevent exposure. Fear or a conscious recognition of danger or physical risk was not mentioned by the respondents during interviews. The subject came up in reference to why another job couldn't be accomplished but not as a suggestion for sympathy or as the primary objective in relating a story.

Ranchers, instead, identify one of the most difficult risks in ranching is economic uncertainty. The up and down cycles of the market, the decrease in consumption of beef, media attention citing red meat as a factor in dietary health concerns, environmental
pressures regarding land use, and the banking industry's fragmented policies regarding agricultural lending philosophy and policies.

There are a lot of disappointments. It seems like you are disappointed if you don't reach the goals you want. The number of calves you want or the weights. Sometimes we make poor judgments in marketing and I guess my biggest disappointment is the way we have sold our cattle. For years we have taken, more or less, what they had to offer and that's it. We didn't seem to think we had any other options. We are trying to overcome that. I had to think of a new way and we've worked very hard at trying to get our calf crop even. We don't have a calf sucking a cow here now (December). We are trying to hit markets that are non-traditional for most operations to avoid the glut that normally happens. (#951910)

I think the financial part of ranching is the most difficult part of ranching. You have to be very much aware of what the market is doing—very much aware of all of your expenses. Maintain the equipment, maybe make some improvements. The market now is 25% less revenue being generated from the same number of cattle we have than was generated two years ago. Anything we do is the basics. Pay your insurance. Pay your wages, pay your electrical and fuel costs and then cut everything back you possibly can. Everyone in this family is very much aware of the finances it takes to make this place work. We aren't going to make a tremendous income off this place. We are here because we enjoy it and like the lifestyle. We like the freedom we have. That's the biggest asset. (#95204)

You better establish a personal relationship with your banker. (#95201)

The most difficult thing to me is when you work all year and at the end you just barely broke even. I mean your motivation as far as money goes is zero. I guess when you see people making a fine living and you are working your tail off and depending on the prices which you have nothing to do with, you may make a little or barely survive. Like now, you are just barely paying the bills.............I keep doing this because it's a way of life. I couldn't picture myself doing anything else. I am happy waking up in the morning. But this is a very high risk business. Every product that is sold, we make 2 or 3 cents. So many variables--like Mother Nature. The weather, disease, fire. The economy. (#95195)

For all the talk of the business, the description of lifestyle cannot be separated from the conversation. Closing the door to the enterprise at the end of the day is not part of the
ranching business. If the market is bad, there is still the responsibility to care for animal life. Baxter Black, a cowboy humorist and writer, describes the Best and Worst of Times.

It is the best of times. Calving at it's finest. The calling of those chosen to tend God's creatures. To take part in simple miracles. To alter the balance of life on earth by one small addition.

It is the worst of times. Calving in the midst of a winter when one needs a depth finder to see the top of the market. When it is less worrisome to lose self in the task of daily responsibility easing the burden of birth than it is thinking about the price of next fall's over crowded weaner crop. A dilemma, some would say. But does knowing the decreased value of beef make a cowman think less of that heifer in trouble? Or that new calf layin' in the straw? Does her dollar price somehow affect her value as a creation? As a work of art. Planned, worked for and created by a cowman, a cow, and God? Does the price of a first calf heifer affect a cowman's responsibility to her well-being? Does his effort, concentration, and skill decrease when she's calving in a falling market? Does he try harder to get a live calf if she's worth more at the sale? These questions are best answered, not philosophically or hypothetically, but in reality. At three A.M. when you hook the chains to newborn feet and start to pull, does cost cross your mind? When you rub the calf down and push him under her flank do you see dollar signs? When you gaze at the turn-out field and see cows grazing contentedly while calves chase each other around 'em, do you get a good feeling? Smile, relax for a moment thankful all is well. Or are you too occupied with their price to appreciate what you're seeing? The dilemma I'm presenting really isn't much of a problem for most cow people I know. The calving barn is a long way in time and miles and thought from the auction ring. After all, we tend to our flocks in bad weather, hard times, illness, chapped hands, achin' backs, mad patients, and yes, bad markets. I think when we lay down in the straw or mud behind a heifer needin' help, the price per pound is the farthest thing from our mind. So, in spite of all the well meaning (and correct) consultants who keep reminding us that what we do is a business, it is also, beyond any doubt, a way of life (Black 1997: 12).

A comparison of prices received for calves from 1960 through 1994 reveals trends for the product produced by the rancher during a thirty five year period. Using 1992 as a base index year, it is interesting to note that the highest prices overall were received
during the 1970's, as well as the lowest while cattle numbers remained fairly constant. In 1970, calves averaged $1.07 per pound in 1992 dollars, peaking in 1973 at $1.48 per pound which was the highest price calculated in the years indicated. [President Nixon's freeze on retail beef prices in 1973 led to a jump in prices (Kiplinger 1994: 15).] Just two years later, prices fell to the lowest in the thirty-five year span at $.60 per pound. Current 1995 prices are close to this all time low since 1960, averaging $.62 per pound, adjusted for inflation in 1992 dollars. The ten year cycle of the cattle business was evident throughout the calculation. 1990 prices have not yet reached the levels achieved during the 1970's for their high, but come close to the low for that period. The following figures indicate the fluctuations between the highest and lowest prices received during ten year increments from 1960 to 1989, and using available data for the years 1990 to 1995. Although not yet complete, prices for the decade 1990 through 1999 have not reached highs attained in earlier periods, but lows are comparable.

**Beef Calf Prices/1992 Base Index**

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High prices keep the cattle people optimistic for the period of lows that follow. The agricultural credit crunch of the 1980's forced many out of business; caused by low prices and debt load from highly leveraged assets financed during a period of high prices.

7.3 Outside Investors: A Piece of the Dream

The 1980's were also a time of outside investment by capitalists without experience in the cattle business. Many respondents stated their feeling about investors purchasing large ranches in Lake and Modoc Counties, running their operations with capital obtained from outside sources such as car dealerships, lumber companies, cement plants, insurance companies, or professional practice. Many of these landowners have a different mission; most without the long term commitment of those vested in ranching for the long haul. Money or wealth is not a replacement for hard work or time on the land. Ranchers value sweat equity and those who "prove up," by weathering the ten-year economic cycle for better or worse, the bad weather, drought, and who commit themselves to community. A ranch is not a plaything, but serious business and a serious lifestyle. Money and land are not wasted, stewardship matters in business and community life. Investor ranches become trade items, sold, neglected, and get-aways for outside owners who also have their reasons for a piece of the ranching dream; their own mythology surfacing amongst the traditions of local ranchers.

Ranchers expressed their fear regarding a ranching future for their children with land prices begin driven up by outside investors. Modoc County, California participants, although separated by only a boundary line from Lake County, Oregon, had more comment about outside investment in ranching than Oregon respondents in this research.

I don't see a future here for my kids. Costs outweigh production. A lot of what is happening is people with a lot of money are starting to buy up the land. They become hobby farms to 'em. Some of them run a pretty good outfit, but they are not making their living off of it. The primary income comes from someplace else. They have come up from Reno and just use the places to get away. One guy owns a garbage deal. (#95205)
A ranch is a business. I learned a lesson working in Nevada. Worked for an absentee owner, who in three years we were there was on the ranch once or twice. We were well paid, I learned a lot a things. I wanted it clearer how we were going to manage this thing. In management, you gotta have some personal pride or don't even attempt it. I did everything they wanted, they just wouldn't set up any plan. They just lost all contact with the place. That one winter permit, they didn't have a clue to what was going on out there, where the mines were. The mines covered up all the winter permit. Then they expected me to go out there and run cattle where they hadn't run cattle for 10 years. I pointed it out--you don't have anything left! The BLM didn't adjust it--what are you going to do? You don't have a permit there anymore. The thing was, BLM didn't say they couldn't run 700 head there for five months, or whatever. But the mines covered it up. What are you going to do--the mines covered it up. There's not anything there. He never looked at the cattle. The place used to run 22,000 head of mother cows. It probably ran while we were there, 700 head. It was sad......It was sad. After that was over, we was determined to put a little deal together for ourselves. And get our pride back.

We are getting a lot of people that come in here and buy ranches that have car lots in San Jose or money elsewhere. They hire managers. 'Cause this one particular guy has no idea up from down, you know. And hardly knows a cow from a bull. But he has a real good manager. Without him, he could never run it. They are just mostly new people come in here and they buy up ranches. But they do have a job or something--just kinda their hobby up here with cattle. It's great to come out of the city and see how their ranch is doing and see their cattle. They like numbers, lots of cattle you know. They like numbers so they can brag on all the land, acreage and cattle. And half of 'em don't take care of their cattle with a good veterinary program. And so, they come up with half the cows open and they don't produce that way. (Open cows are unbred animals which do not produce offspring the following year; and subsequently, do not provide a return on investment.)

So many of the places have changed hands. And a lot of outside money and absentee owners and more and more. One of the major ranches in Eagleville is owned by a guy in Reno. And of course, the Bare Ranch. One right after the other the money is leaving. The ranch we were involved with on the desert--a guy from Salinas bought it. It broke up, changed in size. Two more in Fort Bidwell, and one in Lake City. They don't feel compelled to feed the community. Their employees work here and they are involved, but the owners are not. They keep a very different kind of profile in that they are anonymous to the community. Their taxes
come here, and that sort of thing. But I would guess most of their supplies are bought outside of this valley. (#95207)

And in response to reasons why investors purchase ranches:

Q. Why would somebody want to buy a ranch instead of a corn farm?

More romantic. It's--I mean they watched Gene Autry as a kid. Well, nobody watched--I mean there wasn't a weekday TV show about a farmer. You know, it was about a cowboy. (#95209)

Ranchers understand that mythology has contributed to investor's desire to own a ranch. They feel a threat to their own well-being, however, in that there appears to be plenty of money derived from sources other than agriculture to drive up the price of land. Agricultural land purchases must "pencil-out" in terms of production, or be able to pay for themselves. One rancher's comment about leaving a ranch that they managed for an outside owner is expressed in terms of "getting their pride back." There remains in ranching a bit of America's puritan ethic; in using something wisely, without wasting, or being frivolous about it. The fear that future generations will not have ranching available to them as a career opportunity because of high land prices is a very real threat.

7.4 Defining Wealth and Success

In "Addicted to Work" author Linda Hasselstrom writes that most Americans regard work and play as separate activities, with work as something unpleasant to do to get money. Although we preach that life's work should be something one loves to do, young people are taught that following certain careers such as medical specialties, law, computer programming or the technical fields is where the money is. Early in life we encourage them to make all the money they can so they can then enjoy life. We equate success and smartness with occupations that pay more (Hasselstrom 1991: 45-51). Ranchers share their views on wealth and success.
Q. What, in your view, is being wealthy?

Bein' happy. People don't get their priorities right in life. You can lose sight of a lot a things. By wantin' too much money. (#95208)

Take athletes like Michael Jordan. They are wealthy. That's not the kind of wealth I want. In another way I think the closeness to nature, home, and family is wealth of another type. Home, family, health. Being close to nature, being close to God. I think that is another type of wealth. But, (laughs) it would be nice to have a little bit of it though! (#961911)

We are wealthy because we are together, doing what we want to. (#951927)

To be wealthy? The obvious answer is financial. It's way beyond stability though. Be free to be able to do almost whatever you want to do. Without the worry of some change in the weather wiping you out or some catastrophe you can't get through. Wealthy is some sort of negative connotation. I wouldn't want to get in the position of calling myself wealthy. I don't want to be associated with that kind of term. (#95196)

I wish I could just be in a position to be able to pay my one employee like he deserves and provide him and his family with health insurance. (#95205)

It does involve dollars somewhat. Just being happy. And security. That doesn't mean lots of material things. Loved for who you are, in spite of who you are. (#952011)

Doin' what you enjoy doin'. (#951928)

The bank is paid off, and you don't have to borrow money to run from year to year. That to me is being wealthy. (#952026)

Well, I would say that as long as a person is doing what they like and are capable of doing a good job and that their health is good. To me, that is most important. (#951929)

I guess if you have wealth you wouldn't be near as happy. And most of the people that do have money aren't near as happy as we are. You know. You hate having to scrimp every penny here and there, but we're still happy. Money doesn't make you happy. (#951925)
My view of being wealthy doesn't necessarily involve money. To me, if I were wealthy I'd own my own ranch and not have any debts against it. And be able to pay my bills with the operation of the ranch. I don't have any big desire to do anything else. I like to travel, but to have money to do nothing but travel would drive me nuts. I love to see agricultural country, ranch country. Part of wealth is to have your family enjoy it. Not to have the financial worries all the time. Not to have my wife work. That would be great. She could be home when she wanted to be. If she wanted to go with me she could. I would like to be in the position where I would be paying no interest during the year. None! No interest. Wealthy ranchers are those making money in other ways, like owning a casino. It's a plaything to them. They can buy equipment, where the average rancher has to really think about it. (#952010)

Perhaps other occupations might answer similarly, in that wealth is more than just money and creature comfort. One older rancher commented that "real success is just being alive and well enough to show up the next day." He meant every word.

7.5 Rising Costs: Challenge to Sustainability

Ranchers in this survey rated cost of upgrading equipment and the repair of existing machinery along with expenses for feed and leases as the top two budget items. Escalating costs of doing business keep ranchers teetering on the edge of breaking even yearly and keeping tired machinery working for another year. Farm and Food Facts, produced by the editors of The Kiplinger Agricultural Letter, states that farmers, nationwide, are volume buyers of goods produced by other industries. The following expenditures cited are tractors, machinery, cars, and trucks, between $10 and $11 billion a year; another $13 billion a year to fuel, lubricate, and maintain them and operate their farms. Additional outlays include $25 billion for feed and seed, $14 billion for labor, and $11 billion in interest charges for long and short term financing (1994: 1).

While the cost of work boots can easily run upwards of $150 per pair, and a summer straw hat from $30 to $60, a rancher isn't paid that well for his product. The producer's share of every dollar spent at the grocery store is about 27 cents, and at fast food eateries, about 15 cents. Averaged together, farmers keep only 22 cents of every dollar spent on
food; years ago—a nickel more; twenty years ago—37 cents; and forty years, 42 cents (Kiplinger 1994: 2). Abundant productivity that produces a cheap food policy for Americans keep prices down as well as changes in dietary habits from less red meat consumption, especially beef. In 1970, individuals consumed an average of 79.1 pounds annually, falling to 62.8 pounds in 1992 (Kiplinger 1994: 31).

Low beef prices in 1995 and 1996 were balanced somewhat by diversification of income in hay sales. Beef production in Oregon was 1% lower in 1995 than in 1994, yet value of production dropped 18% overall with the decrease in the price of beef (ODA 1996: 63). Hay prices remain high as this is written, and many ranchers are able to make the ledger balance and keep the banker happy with hay sales. Cow dispersal and sale of heifer calves free more available hay for sale.

While ranchers are the object of jokes regarding duct tape and baling wire as the mainstay of repairs, it isn't all that far from the truth. Ranchers that succeed develop a keen sense of business and keep a good handle on their expenses. The following story reflects the creativity in overcoming adversity by ranchers.

A rancher was on his way from Lakeview one Saturday morning—headed for the auction in Alturas, California with a load of cows on an older 2-ton truck. Although a hole in the muffler produced a little noise, it was not a preventative for getting a load down for the sale. Loading his wife, their married daughter and her two young children in the cab, they headed south. Once in Modoc County, the climb up Sugar Hill begins, the road winding its way uphill overlooking Goose Lake. During the assent, exhaust from the hole in the muffler burned the vacuum line in two, severing control of the two-speed differential action of the truck's shifting mechanism. With the break in the line, the truck was stuck in neither high speed or low, refusing to run another foot. Pulling off to the side of the road, the rancher unloaded the kids, wife, and daughter for a look-see under the truck. Some time went by, an hour or so in fact. Traffic streamed past while the kids looked for ways to entertain themselves in the sagebrush. From under the truck a
call came forth for the daughter, above the sound of stomping, shuffling, bellowing cows—"look around in the cab and see if you can me find a straw." The search, completed from among a variety of objects behind the seat, yielded a used paper Pepsi cup and drinking straw. The rancher inserted the plastic straw between the severed line, binding them together with two band-aids from his wallet. The truck started, the family loaded, and they arrived only a few minutes late for the sale. When asked if he stopped at the parts house in Alturas on his way home—"Nope. It's workin' now."

Some are forced by individual circumstance to make some difficult decisions regarding their perpetuity in ranching. When questioned about alternative occupations for those unable to stay in business, respondents relayed anecdotes about neighbors that left ranching. Most of these stay in related occupations; such as cattle or hay trucking, equipment repair, welding, ranch management, ranch day work, auction yard employment, irrigators, or custom hay operators. It is difficult to leave the culture and most do not gain employment too far from the spectrum of ranching.

7.6 Public Land Use

Of those interviewed in Modoc and Lake Counties, 74% of the total respondents use public lands to supplement their private lands for grazing cattle. Perhaps a brief review of the history of public lands grazing will provide background for what the media terms "the public lands debate."

The Taylor Grazing Act was passed into legislation in 1934, bringing grazing on public lands under the federal government's supervision (White 1991: 479). The act came into being as a conservation measure during the Great Depression, when itinerant stockmen roamed the western states with both sheep and cattle in search of feed. Both drought and hard times created intense pressure on range use, particularly from sheep. Senator Edward Taylor wrote the bill, pushing it through Congress as a protective measure for local stockgrowers in his native state of Colorado (Athearn 1986: 97, 201).
Originally, the Grazing Service was formed as a joint partnership with livestock owners to administer lands by local advisory boards comprised of agency representative and stockgrowers. Grazing on the national forests was administered in similar fashion. The Grazing Service was replaced by the formation of the BLM in 1946 by President Truman (White 1991: 531). Until the 1960's, stockraisers had a great deal of input into the management of their public land allotments.

After 1960, however, both the Forest Service and the BLM were under pressure to reduce stocking rates on the public lands and increase fees. In 1960, the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act was passed to reconcile demands on national lands (White 1991: 531). In the act, no one use was given priority. In the years following the 1960's, environmental groups began their attack on public land policies regarding use and management. Both the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management agencies changed in organizational structure, adding professional administrators, range scientists, biologists, and recreational specialists as a way of reinforcing the policies of multiple use. One informant described the changes in the policy of the federal agencies this way.

Public land use was encouraged to the rancher back then when we started with it. They were in the business of raising grass and dividing that resource for the livestock industry. Today they don't look at it the same way, of course. But at that time it was for their own jobs. The Forest Rangers were on horseback and helping the rancher develop a grazing program and right out there on the ground with us. Same way with BLM. They had very few employees. But, the manager was out there too, encouraging the utilization of grass. (#951910)

Even with reduction of numbers and increases in grazing fees, many people see the fees as a substantial subsidy to ranchers because they are far less than those paid for private lands grazing. Concern has been expressed in Congress that public land fees are artificially low, allowing the rancher competitive advantage over those who purchase all their feed and forage in the private market (Greer 1994: 1). In 1992, Congressman Mike
Synar of Oklahoma led efforts to raise grazing fees by legislation. Major increases have not yet been incorporated to date.

Dr. Greer in *The Nature of Federal Land Grazing Permits and Seasonal Grazing Dependencies in Southeastern Oregon* further states that very little credible information is available to describe the nature of public lands grazing. Dr. Fred Obermiller reports in *Costs Incurred by Permittees in Grazing Cattle on Public and Private Pastures in Eastern Oregon* that, since 1966, it may have become relatively more costly to graze livestock on federal versus private pastures and rangelands in Eastern Oregon and possibly, the western United States. Obermiller cites changes in federal grazing policies and regulations as part of the increased cost factor. The nature of federal lands in Modoc and Lake Counties must be considered. They are marginal, affected by drought and other conditions; such as soils, water, and amount of available feed. Failure to realize that permits are 'site specific' as reported in a survey by the National Research Council, points to the question regarding the lack of credible information available on the health of rangelands. In the 1994 publication *Rangeland Health,* the Committee for Rangeland Classification sought new methods to classify, inventory and monitor rangelands. In Dr. Obermiller's research, he states that his "results offered no evidence that the permittees surveyed uniformly enjoyed a lower cost of grazing on their federal grazing allotments than they did on their private holdings." Keeping 'site specificity' in mind, allotments differ according to productivity, topography, accessibility, and so on (Obermiller 1994: 30). Participants in this survey give various accountings of how costs compare to private land grazing figures and their reaction to being called "welfare ranchers."

It's not the cheap deal like it sounds. The time hours and the mileage and horses, and everything else. It's the initial expense of buying your permit with the ranch. By the time we get through moving our cattle and checking on 'em all summer I bet it's at least $10 dollars ($10. refers to the cost of sustaining a cow-calf pair for one month, or per A.U.M. basis.) Keeping up the fences, salting the cows. We go around all the fences every year. Last year, because we were so short on water up there, we
rode 57 days moving cows to water. We also have what is called a *possessorary tax*. Ours went up 300% this year. It's because we signed our ten year term permit so they reassessed it. (#95202)

I have very strong feelings that public land grazing is a *very* expensive way to run cattle. If I could get out of it, I would. But obviously, you can't in this country because of 75% of it is federal land. I think we are contributing a lot to the welfare of public lands and they need to recognize that. As part of the cost of doing business. We are pretty involved in public land issues. We are changing, all of us. We are doing a good job on the range. We don't need to be ashamed of what we are doing there at all. (#951910)

I don't consider it welfare in any sense of the word. One of the things I notice is the government spends millions of dollars trying to encourage businesses either to start up or function in some form to provide jobs. There's all kinds of tax incentives and offsets. All kinds of programs to get business to locate. I see ranching as a stability to rural communities. Employment. Historically, out here, it was ranching. I don't know how these communities would have survived. They wouldn't be here without the combination of the private and public land grazing. I don't know of hardly any operations that could survive on only private land. (#95196)

Being called a welfare rancher because of the price on public land grazing is not a true picture. You have to fix the fences, salt the cows, and keep the cows outta here and into there. Next year we are going to have to have someone up there all the time. So that's an extra employee. We run more bulls, because the cattle spread out more. This is a cost. We have quite a bit of coyote problems too. The cost of gathering is extensive also—the cows are hard to find." (#951926)

If they think we are on welfare, they haven't been there. The grazing fee is one of the smallest considerations because we are so active in public land battles. We spend an enormous amount of time and energy working with the federal agencies. We have a really good relationship with them here. Idaho or where they are really radical, they are wanting to turn a cow out for a half a day or something like that. We are in consultation over the short-nosed sucker concerning grazing on the forest. Plus, we do the environmental assessment for our allotment for the last five years. Change of personnel causes a lot of change of direction. There is a bill out of Washington right now that says they will re-authorize permits whether a NEPA analysis is done—which they were forbidden to do before by a lawsuit from ONRC. That said you can't make a major federal action, such as renewing a permit, without the proper environmental assessments in place. To do a full environmental assessment is not cost effective, like I
mentioned the five years. But, it goes back to the power. They are playing internal politics. Right now we have ecosystem restoration money for a project and we can't spend any of it because the archaeologist won't clear the project. So we had to go to the State Historic Preservation Office and get a re-interpretation of our local F.S. decision. So we spent hours getting the right people together. The Forest Service kicked and bit all the way. (#95203)

Comparing private lands to public is like apples to oranges. There is no comparison. You have a 50 pound weight difference, private over public. The labor on public lands is real high. Fences, salt, remoteness. As far as getting the cows bred, I figure 95% conception rates on private lands. And then out on the desert the best you can expect is 80-85%. More bulls, too. Lotta hidden costs. (#95195)

A lot of people see the $1.61 per A.U.M. and don't see the other costs involved. I have to transport my cattle to the Forest Service allotment. I have to maintain the water sources. I salt 'em, ride the range in the summer months to move the cattle around. These are my costs, not the government's. Anywhere between $10 and $20 (per A.U.M. including feed, care, and maintenance) to run there, depending on the year. We are right in the ballpark with private leasing figures. It's just a misconception by the public. The aspect that ranchers are on welfare is just untrue. (#95204)

I got a reaction to that statement! Well, if they add up all the travel expense upkeep your costs are right around $12. A hundred mile trip in that kinda country is a hundred dollar bill. I just spent a couple days there puttin' up a tank. The waterholes and the wildlife and the people all benefit, but they never pay any of the cost, basically. (#95205)

I feel we pay just about as much as it is actually worth. The biggest problem we have right now is people goin' out there and leavin' the gate open so our cattle are not stayin' where they're supposed to be. We are responsible for the upkeep on the fencing. We have a lot a wild horses on the permit too, about 300. Our allotment is fenced off separate. But we still got some problems with poison plants? We lose a lot a cattle to a certain plant, but nobody can figure out what it is. We are careful there. We developed a management plan early. (#952029)

Who manages and dictates use of the public lands? When ranchers state their confusion regarding the new organizational structures of the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, the State of California, the State of Oregon, and the U.S. Fish and
Wildlife Service, agency employees also state their confusion about policy. Washington, D.C. may dictate policy, but an extensive and diverse staff may disagree internally on land management. These are giant organizations, with large staffs, each with their own ideas regarding duty to public lands. Theories of management are as numerous as management personnel. Recreation, habitat restoration, riparian development and protection, water quality, use of the environment by fish and other wildlife species are criteria challenging the multiple use concept. Ranchers using public land areas within the designation of multiple use, often do not find themselves equal partners; but are part of a pecking order driven by politics and public pressure. Road closures, fencing of waterholes and streams, threatened and endangered designations of plant and animal species make ranching much more management intensive. Thus, more costly and time consuming.

We hired a retired Forest Service man who was our past range con (conservationist) to help us monitor in '94 and '95. We picked 6 spots and I went with him most of the time. We paid him in addition to our regular expenses. He did all the paper work, and did a beautiful job. We'll have a real good record in the F.S. files of the use of the permit. This is one of the things people have told us to do--get a good record on the use of your permit. A photographic history of how we take care of it. I've seen some of them and what it looks like now and what it was 35 or 40 years ago. And it didn't look that bad before the F.S. started doing all the improvements and intensive management. It's just a big story to get money when they tell us how bad everything is. You know how to raise money! You go and tell everybody how terrible anything is and then they send money. (#952026)

We have an allotment on the head of the river, which is designated as wild and scenic. Very beautiful area, very sensitive. People are watching it very closely. It's a bull trout habitat. Our daughter-in-law is up there riding every day during the season riding. To make sure we don't have cattle there loafing around on that river. And we have been able to keep away from fencing that off so far. The point I want to make with that area—that has been used by our family since the turn of the century or longer. It is our favorite place to recreate, to fish, to camp. We've taken real good care of it. And it looks good. It means more to us than anybody in the world. And a lot of these folks don't realize that. How
much it means to us. And it's public land, it's not ours. And yet we want that to stay pristine and beautiful. Yet, we see more and more campers comin' in there all the time. The roads are thicker. Now they have paved 'em going in there. We are not the only ones using it. We don't mind the multiple use concept. But the people tracks are making a bigger impact than the cows. (951910)

7.7 Educating the Public; Changing Misconceptions

What about the opposite end of the spectrum, which states that ranchers participate in the widespread destruction of the public lands? In Beyond the Mythic West, Wilkerson states that "cattle have pounded down the upland areas, driving out many of the native plants and battering the soil and ground cover, destroying their ability to absorb water. Unaccountable hundreds of millions of tons of soil run off the federal grazing land each year" (1990: 83). Fradkin states that "the impact of countless hooves and mouths over the years has done more to alter the type of vegetation and landforms of the West than all the water projects, strip mines, power plants, freeways, and subdivision developments combined. The changes, in most cases, are irrevocable (1993: 182)." In Last Refuge, Jim Robbins states that "Cattlepeople are caught in the middle of a fundamental shift in society and are ill-prepared to do business in any other way than their grandfathers did. It's the John Wayne mentality—the head-on, two-fisted approach (1993: 91)."

To use a colloquial expression, cattle people have "gotten themselves sideways" with environmentalists and others who object to the way they do business. How are Lake and Modoc County ranchers combating this negative image and what is their responsibility to educate? Answers from ranchers ranged from local to national involvement in educational efforts. All respondents strongly felt it was their responsibility to do some means of educating the public on the realities of how they currently conduct business on the land. This question produced 100% agreement in the rancher's responsibility to educate those who misunderstand rancher's way of doing business and beef as a food product.
Right here in Modoc County we are starting with the Kindergarten and first graders. The teachers are real excited about this program that we sponsor on our ranch with the Cattlewomen. We had ten stations that included all sorts of ranch jobs. Weighing the cattle, a farrier showing how to shoe horses, my husband with his saddle horse giving rides, giving inoculations. We also have a museum here on the ranch that has lots of old stuff in there we show the kids. We do some beef promotion and serve beef hot dogs for lunch. The teachers even get excited. Sometimes they go away with new knowledge too. In California, we have this program called "Ag in the Classroom." Teachers can come out and learn for credit. I also do a beef cooking contest at the high school, although one teacher is a vegetarian and won't let us come to her classroom with a meat demonstration. (#952023)

I think it is terribly important! We give a lot of California relatives tours. (#951930)

Every year our educational programs with the school get bigger and bigger. They are well praised by the schools. We distribute ag packs and they learn. (#952025)

I think if we are ever to get ahead of this thing we better attempt to educate, because the majority of our people are in the Metropolitan areas now. Even here our area, it's about as far out from the city as you can get. Still we have teachers in our schools who are environmentalists who don't understand our way. Whether it be the Farm Bureau or the Cattlemen, they better hire people just to do marketing specifically. Somebody that can write and get things down. Somebody just to keep information going and distributed. (#95199)

It's everybody's responsibility to do some kind of education. It is. It really is. All of us can do something. Backing of money does help. I still don't think there are enough of us yet who realize that we have this job to do. People are very busy, it's hard to do. I don't think ranching is going to be much longer if people don't get involved. The economy is bad enough, but the public pressure. Ignorance is your worst enemy! (#952011)

Right now the only effective avenue to educate is legislative. And you have to get your elective people out here and show 'em. We don't have enough money to do a media campaign. The only way in my opinion you are ever going to change this is to have an environmental check-off dollar. We actually did something to the perception of meat to the American public with a 70 million dollar a year budget. If you had 140 million you
could do more. Until the industry is committed or there is enough money out there for us to advertise like on a Superbowl and do what we did we're never going to turn around the public perception of what we do. Watch some of these timber companies that have a little money and they have some really powerful ads. But we don't have that kind of money in the beef industry. You can't waste your time advertising to everybody in your own community. That's the number one mistake cattle men always make. They go and get the Herald & News (a Klamath Falls, Oregon daily) or the Reno Times to get somebody to get a good article out. But you can go to New York or somewhere and do some good. But that takes big bucks. If you listen to the National Cattlemen people when they put in an ad, it's in the New York Times, Washington Post, or the USA Today. Those are the three with something in their columns, or if they really want to make a statement they put it in those types of papers. (#95202)

The change to public policy issues and education is the change I like the least of anything. I guess one of the nicest things about ranching is you are by yourself and you can do your own thing. But now people are invading your space and you have to say something or it will be taken from you. You have to do it or 10 years it might not be here. Guess it's fighting for your business. Not that you want to, you have to now. We have no experience from which to draw. Our parents did not do this. We were never taught to do this. We could learn a lot more in this. It's very important. (#95195)

I dunno. I think people in the cattle industry--I love 'em to death—but we are an awful hard headed bunch. If we don't get involved and we don't want to recognize there are other people out there whether we agree with their views or not, that we've got to deal with them. There are fortunately enough people beginning to recognize "okay, let's deal with these other folks." We have a local working group of ranchers, environmentalists, agency folks. (#95201)

We're aiming towards education. It will involve the ranch in wildlife viewing and geology. We have affiliations with a University group that are doing different study and research programs. We have a non-profit status. It will take time away from our ranch operation, but we feel we have to do it. It's a way to introduce people to life in the Great Basin. They will get a chance to see the operation and it's in their heads. That it is reality and it's not Bonanza. It's the reality that less than 2% of the population of this country is producing the food for the rest. We have more people in urban areas now than in rural. The statistics now tell me that we have lost touch with the value of the land and the rural experience. And yet, a film like "Forest Gump" which was a runaway success, and what is it all speaking to? It's speaking about the purity of lifestyle, the
simplesness of a lifestyle. The relating of a story. I mean, he sits at a bus stop and everyone who comes to get on the bus he tells the story of his life to. An extended story, that just continues on and on about his life. And the people don't want to get on the bus when the bus comes, because they want to hear the rest of the story. People are hungry to find out about the human experience. And reconnect with those roots that we have to this country. And it's not being found in an urban environment. It's being found in a rural environment. (#952027)

I think everyone needs to get involved. That seems to be the problem with our industry. There are always just a few people that are carrying the largest load of getting active in their community and the politics of running a county government. The associations are real important. That's our tie to Sacramento and Washington. There is a small percent of ranchers that don't believe that the Cattlemen's organization is doing a good job for ranchers. It is hard to get them signed up as memberships. We can't fight these battles alone. (#95204)

The small percentage of people who are ranchers raising beef in the United States are aware of the need for education for the public regarding their policies and product. Although opinions regarding the methods and the target audience for educational efforts varied, each interview revealed the necessity of some type of educational action. The National Cattlemen's Beef Association, elected officials, and representatives also have a responsibility to their membership and constituents. In the following sections, respondents with refer to the "National Cattlemen's Beef Association," or "NCBA," or "The Cattlemen's Association."

7.8 Industry and Political Representation

Respondents were queried as to the effectiveness of both industry organizations and politicians who were helpful in promoting education and information as well as legislating for landowner rights for the continuation of the business. When asked to compare the effectiveness of two industry groups, the Cattlemen's Association and the Farm Bureau, an interesting variety of responses was heard. Women's answers did not
differ significantly from men in the survey. Of the 42 respondents, 12 of them supported the work of the Cattlemen's Association and were involved in their activities at the local, state, or national level. Others had definite feelings about the organization.

The Cattlemen's is a very narrow, one-sided organization. There are a lot of people who run only 50 cows. To snub your nose at people who aren't full time is not necessary. That is what I see in some of the Cattlemen's business. In the Farm Bureau, even though I am a Cattleman myself, you have to be cognizant of other agricultural activities. So they look at all aspects of agriculture, and what the membership is. Directors are representative of many aspects. And the Cattlemen almost take the attitude of "gee, that person doesn't have too much importance in the industry so we don't want to consider him for a director." You know, that type of thing. The meetings down there go on until 11, 12 o'clock at night with the Cattlemen. The same issue if solved at the Farm Bureau meeting by nine o'clock. I support the Cattlemen's Association, but I think they could be a lot more effective than what they are. Some of this environmental stuff is going to come back and bite 'em if they don't watch the direction their organization is going. (#952010)

I belong to both organizations. But if I am going to give any P.A.C. money, it's going to be to the Farm Bureau. They are doing a great job for the Cattlemen, too. I can see the Cattlemen going by the wayside if they don't improve the job they do. They offer very little to me. (#95197)

I am prejudiced toward the Farm Bureau. Their members are a lot more open-minded and progressive. They are more willing to work with people for the cattlemen's side. There is a lot of status involved in the Cattlemen's Association. A lot of who is who. Cliquish-ness. (#952011)

The Farm Bureau does the most for me. The Cattlemen operate more traditionally politically, legislatively, and socially through the good ol' boys network. They are just coming to grips with the fact that this doesn't work anymore. Agencies and the legislature have different structures now. The old politics just don't work. Leaving your boots and hat at home when you go to deal is a good idea. Or else, they think you are J.R. Ewing. There may be some third or fourth generation ranchers in the business that represent this image, but it certainly isn't me. (#95209)

I think the Farm Bureau is great legislatively. I think they do a fantastic job. Stockgrowers could improve, learn a lesson from the Farm Bureau. By the same token on public relations or just one on one, the Cattlemen do better. In beef promotion and education. (#951928)
We don't belong to the Cattlemen's Association. I don't think it's equal. I don't know that they are doing much for the cattlemen. Maybe big parties for the ones that are in it is all I can see out of it. (#951925)

The Cattlemen's Association needs to do what a lot of other commodity organizations do. Concentrate on their own commodity and let the broader issues be handled up front by organizations like Farm Bureau. They have an incredibly small number of members. To try to maintain a staff at the state level and the national level that's going to have hands-on work with endangered species, with water, with property rights, with all of these broad issues. One of the reasons the dues are $400 dollars instead of $70 dollars is because they try to do all that stuff. And that's why they don't have any members. They need to concentrate on their own product and let an umbrella organization with three million members do endangered species, and so on. They have more resources to be the point people for that. (#95209)

One person interviewed attended a national function in Washington, D.C. After what they felt was an appropriate presentation of issues and ideas, a positive, emotional response was evident in the audience. The president of the National Cattlemen's Association, at the time, stood to speak, failing to pick up the cue.

He began to lobby the group! He was a jerk! We had smoozed these legislators and influential people and were on the verge of a beginning; a closing of the gap between rural and urban people. The essence of life on the land? The harsh realities? And he blew it! He was arrogant and patronizing. To us. He completely, without regret, respect, or awareness of what could have been possible, destroyed what we set out to do. (#952027)

There is another thing that has made it tough on the Cattlemen. There was a guy (east of us) said it as good as anybody. You have your convention at the Hilton in Portland. He said that's the most expensive hotel in town. And the few Cattlemen that can afford to go drive in in a Cadillac. And puttin' on airs! Then you try to tell everybody you're poor! The two don't go together. I think there is some real merit to what he was saying! (#95199)

Ranchers who support the organization give opposing viewpoints crediting the Association's efforts in public lands issues as very important nationally. "It's a must
for anybody in the cattle business (#951910)." The Cattlemen's Association, now called the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, struggles to retain it's political alliances, fight misconceptions regarding beef as a safe food product, and finds itself heavily involved in world trade issues.

During the 1997 National Public Policy Education Forum, a discussion ensued regarding the move from a rural society to an urban society. The "farm vote," once a well-known, powerful, politically charged term, is no longer a reality. Agricultural policy decisions by lawmakers are finessed through a network of communication, personal contacts, and research based information. U.S. agriculture no longer receives the solid endorsement nationally that once provided large contracts and generous agreements, and a solid stamp of approval that was akin to 'motherhood and apple pie' for food producers in the United States. The national agenda is a thin slivered, multi-pieced pie, with a multitude of bidders for their slice.

The advice "get to know your legislator personally" is a seriously given recommendation. One producer invites his representatives on ranch tours, to luncheons and dinners, and schedules personal interviews in Sacramento during legislative sessions. Forty years ago and more, party platforms drew popular support. Currently, politicians within a party have strong agendas, building a reputation of their own.

Representatives who help the rancher are well known, and producers speak highly of several in both Oregon and California, as well as other western states. Local politicians are categorized also, by their voting records and initiatives. Ranchers keep informed of issues in the nightly paper, and politics is part of conversation. During interviews, names of respected representatives surfaced many times. In the west, Ben Nighthorse Campbell, Paul Laxault of Nevada, Pete Dominici, are familiar supporters. Oregon interviews produced names like Bob Smith, Denny Jones, Gene Timms, Lynn Lundquist, Gordon Smith, and former Lake County Commissioner Jeremiah O'Leary. California ranchers
also named Bob Smith of Oregon, along with representatives George P. Radanovich, John Doolittle, and Calvin Dooley.

Also having an effective voice for ranchers is C.J. Hadley, editor of *Range* magazine and Lee Pitts, a satirist and writer with the *Livestock Market Digest*. The cowboy poets of the world were mentioned as spokespersons who give succinct and creative messages to audiences about the ranching life in a heartfelt, non-threatening way.

Support at the national executive level is viewed as non-existent, without any question or reservations. Answers were strong and direct when asked the following question.

*Q. How about support at the highest national level?*

None of 'em. (#951929)

Bill Clinton? He's one I don't like. (#951925)

The west is such a minority compared to the eastern states. The states with public lands are so outnumbered by those without public lands. (#951928)

Bill Clinton and Al Gore are preservationists who want to shut us down. (#95204)

I don't approve of President Clinton's values and standards. The liberal trend. (#95206)

I think Clinton and Gore get all the criticism they deserve and perhaps more. (95198)

Clinton, in my way of thinking, is the worst thing that has happened to ag in a long time. Not only in agriculture, but the country in general. I think he looks bad world-wide. I am a Democrat. I never voted for Bill Clinton. I wouldn't vote for Bill Clinton. I am thinking of changing my affiliation. I am totally disgusted with the Democratic party and have been for a long time. (#952010)

Clinton is not a good leader, but there are good people in Washington. (#95205)

Ohhh! 100% environmentalist! They'd have us out! (#95208)
I think they are trying to get us out. Oh, you bet. From the national on
down. From the top man, starting with Mr. C. (#952023)

Frustration is evident on how to gain synergy for political support, respond to
criticism regarding business practices and lifestyle, and clarify unreal, mythical notions
that are part of the past. The independence that produces the freedom-loving individual
that Madison Avenue and Hollywood mystifies, also includes pride in their diversity. An
indirect quotient of all of this is a lack of unity, which is difficult to synthesize.

The downside is you're never gonna get 'em to agree. I have been all over
the west. There was a meeting in Reno today with all the little groups
going in different directions. Stewards of the Range, the Cattlemen, Farm
Bureau, and probably 15 little organizations. And the county has their
own. They are never going to agree and if you think they are, you're
crazy! (#95203)
Chapter 8
Myth and Stereotype

8.1 Women's Role: Beyond the Myth

If "cowboy" personifies a freedom loving, hard working, and independent caretaker of cattle who faces the elements in a risky work environment every day of the year, how are women perceived? In the mythology of the West, women have been stereotyped in various roles. Television and movies portray her as either a work-weary drudge, tired, forlorn, and damaged by frontier life, or as a vicarious, wickedly bad woman such as Belle Starr. Depending on the role, she could be a strong heroine such as in television's The Big Valley. Barbara Stanwyck stands on her pillared verandah, hands on the hips of her split leather skirt, eyes shaded by a drover's hat squinting into the distance to survey her vast domain of land. Land which, incidentally, was the space of an empire. Daughter Linda Evans was the vulnerable prairie princess, whose beauty offset Stanwyck's matriarchal style. The Big Valley symbolized a monarchy, insulated by a vast domain of space and, certainly, solid wealth. Novels sport the common theme of the cowboy who wins the "prettiest girl in town" or the "honorable woman." Owen Wister first penned this theme in The Virginian in 1902, a theme still imitated in western novels.

Writer Theresa Jordan is one of the few writers seeking to clarify women's roles on the ranch in Cowgirls, a collection of ranch women's stories written in 1982, from personal interviews from throughout the west. She addresses the lack of research and information regarding women's role as an important part of missing folklore in the ranching mythology.

Cowgirls. I hesitate to use the word at all because it seems so frivolous. It makes us think of little girls in fringed felt skirts or big-eyed sweeties in tight jeans and high-heeled boots. But the term is a valid one that should carry more weight. "Women on ranches and in the rodeo" is, after all, a clumsy phrase. But more significantly, cowboys hold a place dear to our hearts. Their independence, self-assurance, and pragmatic savvy endear
them to us as heroes. The women in this book share these qualities. I like
to think they deserve an equal canonization. (Jordan 1982: xxii)

Jordan is correct in her assumptions about the word 'cowgirl.' It is rarely used by
ranch women. In describing day work or a job with cattle they use instead 'buckarooping,'
a term that can be used without gender designation. The term 'buckaroo' is a culture-
distinctive word, used by ranchers in the west; especially in eastern Oregon, Idaho,
Nevada, and parts of California. Carol M. Eastman, in a journal article entitled
"Establishing Social Identity Through Language Use," writes that language is used for
social identity. According to Eastman, the word 'buckaroo' fits the norms of "group talk,"
which includes culturally specific vocabulary, context, and shared attitudes (Eastman
1985: 1).

In a book by Alice Marriott, written in 1953 prior to Jordan's, the fly leaf quotes an
unidentified cowman's thoughts. "The cow business is a damn fine business for men and
mules, but it's hell on horses and women (Marriott 1953: fly leaf)." Women on ranches in
Lake and Modoc counties don't describe themselves as living hellish lives at all. These
females are independent, hard-working, love the life and wouldn't be anywhere else.
They are wives of cowmen, and some are solely responsible for operations without a man
sharing management responsibilities. In the survey, seven of twenty-one women have
run ranches on their own, either as sole owner/operators or managers outside of their own
operations. Although a statistic was not found on the number of women that are
operators of ranches nationally, the American Farm Bureau Federation lumps them into
one category, stating that there are 145,156 farms operated by females in the United
States (Farm Facts 1995: 26). Ranch women in the two counties are owners, managers,
horse trainers, rancher's daughters, mothers, employees, wives, and owners of other
small businesses.

While 57% of the women in this survey have lifelong experience, others married into
the business. Of the women interviewed, 10% have been on their current ranch all their
lives; 15% have been in the same location for over 50 years; 29% percent have called
the same place home 20-30 years, 22% for 30-50 years, 19% from 10-20 years, and only
5% less than 10 years. Only one of the women is divorced, and four are widows. None
of the women surveyed had a baccalaureate degree, but 47.5% had from one to three
years of education beyond high school. Five worked at outside jobs, and five have
developed businesses of their own, aside from the ranch income. Numbers of children
produced by these women were from zero (by choice) to five offspring.

More freedom for women outside of their traditional roles as mother, housekeeper,
and cook developed after World War II and even more so in the 1970's. Several
respondents explained that gender roles have changed since they were young girls, and
even expressed some regret that they were not encouraged earlier to develop their talents
outside the traditional female role of wife and mother.

Q. What did you think you would like to do when you grew up?

I was a good runner. A very good runner in grade school. Now, I could
have competed in high school and probably have gotten a scholarship to
go to college. And I think what a good opportunity that would have been.
Because I was very good! Now young women have that opportunity. In
high school we had P.E., but the girls didn't compete. But the boys
did......................Coming from the generation I did, there were no questions
when we moved here if this was good for me. It was what he wanted to do
and that's why we are here. If I were a young woman now, I would have a
lot more input and say in it. But yes, oh yes, I have come to enjoy the life.
(#952026)

Q. When you first got married were women employees on ranches?

No, hardly ever. The first time I started doing anything outside on the
ranch was during WW II. And we couldn't get any help. So I went out in
the field and learned to drive the horse drawn mower. Before that, women
raised the kids and kept the garden and canned. I think most of the
ranches hire women now. Like the ZX in Paisley, they hire women to run
their machinery. We have hired some for the swathers. I think they are a
lot better than the boys, really! (#951926)
We weren't allowed to rope when I was growing up. But we all buckarooed. I guess that wasn't what a girl was supposed to do—rope. (951927)

Q. I am interested in what you think women's role on the ranch is.

I think the business runs a lot more efficiently if both people know about it. I don't think most ranches could do it anymore, without the women helpin' out in some way, either on the ranch or workin' in town. (#952023)

I would say there is a change. Society has accepted many roles for women that were not there when I grew up. Pretty much a girl could be a nurse, a teacher, or a secretary. And that was kind of the end of it. If she was real brave, she might go into law. But agriculture was pretty much not there for a young woman. But—it wasn't that farm women weren't working on the farms and ranches, because when I was a teenager during WW II, I worked on our dairy and row crop farm. I did my share of it—but mom wasn't really pleased that I had to work out on the farm. Today it's no big deal for a woman to go out and be a rancher and a farmer. The line has definitely been crossed. (#951924)

There's a lot a them town women wouldn't be able to cut it. They say it must be a lot of fun and how nice it is. Until they experience the calvin' and the mud and the cold and the hours. It was a whole different ballgame for one that came out from town. We had to bring them cold calves in the house. They start gettin' up and makin' messes on the floor. We left her while we went out to check the rest of the cows at daylight. When we came back she was a loadin' them calves in the back of the pickup. They are outta here! She didn't like the mess. If you are going to be out here, you gotta love the life. You really do...............I never considered myself a woman's libber. I was raised—that's what you did. If somebody says I shouldn't be out there, then I'm ready to defend it. After we got married, I wanted to go with him. And I was willing to do it without being paid. As far as I can remember, no other women did that. In the hay field, yes. But no women buckarooos. There's men out there don't like that and I really have a problem with that. Mainly their problem is that they are going to get showed up. One winter, my husband was gone. I was calvin' out the cows. I fed 'em, I calved 'em. I got their respect because I could do it. And I never would have asked for their help, either. And then _______ and I have worked down here on the ______. We never had any trouble with any of the guys there. But we didn't take no guff off of 'em either. (#951925)

Relationships in ranching are hard. The life is hard and demanding. Sometimes the frustrations get taken out on me. I do like the life, but it's rewards are unpredictable. I would change a lot of things. If you had
another kind of business you could lock the door on the business at five o'clock. You don't have to get up in the night to change water or check cows. You can reward yourself after an eight hour day. It's a reward that's predictable. I don't think the ranch should always come first. My husband has a relationship with the ranch life. It's his first love. (#952011)

I went to the Cattlemen's meeting in the '70's and they said they were presenting the Cattlemen of the Year award. And I said "I'm not understanding why you aren't putting up one of your women in this"--for the chance to be Cattleperson of the Year. Because they had several women in Modoc County that were running their own ranches at that time because of death of someone or divorce or whatever reason. And why weren't they being considered? Well, I might as well have jerked my bra off and set fire to it right in front of 'em! The women themselves acted like I had not said anything! And turned from me back to their business meeting. So that was the last time I went and, two years ago they chose the woman I had in mind! Now that took them 20 years to get around to it! Now I don't understand that! I'm not so enlightened that I was 20 years ahead of my time. So where were they? (#952027)

Ranch women in the research love the lifestyle without question. Philosophies are as different as the women who comprise the survey. Some have grown up with the life, some married into it, all say they would choose the lifestyle again. Some have adapted to the life because their partners love it. Age differences in answering the question about role differentiation parallels changes in societal attitudes about women's work. There was, however, the overwhelming suspicion that these women could not easily convince the men in their lives of an alternative way of life, and thus, have adapted because it was either their choice, expected of them as part of marriage, or futile. This is still a male dominated culture, and as one male rancher unwittingly described those who are in the cow business, "we are cowmen." Although in the conversation preceding his declaration of "cowmen," he stated that women have equal rights and his own wife could not be replaced at any price.
THAT HARLOT SKY

At best you'll be
His wife...but he
Will have his mistress too:
That harlot sky
The night bird's cry
The smell of morning dew
The playful roll
Of newborn foal
The howl of prairie wind
Will call his soul
To pack bedroll
And go somewhere, my friend.
A cowboy's wife
Has lonely life
And if she loves the man
She'll bring no strife
But give her life
To know and understand
That he must be
A soul set free
To touch his lover...earth.
She will agree
To watch, to see
The pair of them give birth.
At worst, you'll be
His mistress, free
And cowboy's life...the wife.

Sally Harper Bates
(Miller 1994: 180)

8.2 Use of Guns on the Ranch

Stereotypes typical of the ranching myth, such as gun toting, shooting up the local saloons, and using force to assert one's rights are still perceived as true to life practices by people who hang on to the stereotypes created in pulp fiction and B westerns. Harris and Rainey, in The Cowboy: Six Shooters, Songs, and Sex write that much of the literature about cowboys and expertise with guns is nonsense, being written by people who have never handled weapons.
The men who were attributed with shooting and gun-slinging expertise were primarily outlaws in the territories of New Mexico and Arizona in the late 1800's. A lawless element existed and continued there until late in the 19th century, whose subsistence techniques included robbery, horse thieving, plunder, and murder. The image of this folk archetype was even identified by former president Nixon in speaking about getting out of Vietnam "as a cowboy, with guns blazing, backing out of a saloon (Harris and Rainey 1976: 97)," a tragic use of the metaphor in looking back on that war. Stegner likens this cultural gun toting hero as 'law' himself, as he describes Wister's The Virginian. The Virginian never questions his rancher friend's motive for killing homesteaders for cattle thieving. This is law enforcement without due process, in the absence of such a presence. Stegner also cites the Texas rangers in Lonesome Dove as killing more people than do all the outlaws in the book, but their actions are 'right.' Bolstered by supreme self-confidence and lack of any other competing socialized law, the rightness of their actions could be traced to biblical origins of law and order, right and wrong (1987: 78); such as the 'eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth' theory. The law and order of the early west has become part of the legends and the myths of those who settled it, including ranchers. History, in all its greatness, is only part truth and the rest fiction. As a phenomena, it is relative to how we choose to view it.

How are guns used today by ranchers in Lake and Modoc counties? A majority of the respondents answered that they used a gun primarily for shooting ground squirrels, small rodents who reproduce rapidly and make 'ant farms' out of a nicely worked field while devouring forage. Only one male respondent was an active hunter, who said he enjoyed hunting both elk and deer every year. One female in the survey hunted big game also. A few said they occasionally go hunting without serious conviction to kill an animal, but want to enjoy a break from work and enjoy the fall weather and the camaraderie of the hunting camp. Primarily, they responded that a gun is to be used for predators caught stalking livestock or who have already made a kill and are still on the premises. Both
cougar and coyote stalk and kill livestock and are prevalent in Lake and Modoc counties. Guns are not carried every day, mostly in squirrel season and in the winter for shooting coyotes that prowl during their cow herd's calving time.

### 8.3 Alcohol Use

Overuse of alcohol has been associated with the cowboy lifestyle, also. According to the responses, use of alcohol is not abused more by ranchers than in other occupations. Social use was cited as the reason for imbibing, although some respondents related alcohol use to alleviating stress symptoms and loneliness from isolation.

**Q. Do you think alcohol is a bigger problem for ranchers than others? Describe appropriate use.**

The only thing, sometimes the guys would have a beer. It didn't amount to too much. We would do several head (branding) and then if something breaks then everyone would stop and have somethin' cold to drink. Sometimes beer, sometimes pop, or sometimes water. They'd usually wait until everything was done. If we were working cows or movin' cows, then we'd sit in the yard and have a beer. (#951929)

Guess like anything else--in moderate use. I think that is good. If I am at social occasions I don't find myself neglecting it! I like to have fun. But I think abusing it is wrong because it inhibits your faculties and you are not going to do as good a job doing your work if you are involved with alcohol. I don't see a problem with it if you can use it socially. One beer every once in a while just to visit. Daily would be a little much I think. On weekends or when you are with friends every once in a while. Or at a branding. I think that is pretty normal around here. (#95195)

I don't think there is overuse of alcohol on ranches. It's too dangerous. It might look like there is. The store at _____ and ____? There probably is some, but mostly ranchers get together there as a gathering place. It used to be all the cowboys went there to cash their checks and everything. They just do it at the store to visit. (#951925)

Thanks to the D.U.I.I. laws, we don't have the problems we used to have. I think there is still a level of frustration that maybe had an out through
alcohol through the social thing. In the bar. When we talk about some of
the big tragedies in the past, a lot of them were tied to alcohol.
 (#952027)

When ______ was in its heyday here, it used to be a social hub. And it
was just a social thing whether there was alcohol or what. People went
there to visit. That doesn't exist here anymore. It just doesn't exist among
most of the ranchers here.........It has really ceased in the last four or five
years. There aren't the families on the ranches and our population has
dropped. There used to be another place, in __________. That was a hub.
Of everything at one time. It has changed. These D.U.I.'s make a hell of a
difference. It's a spookin' people and rightfully so. Probably the way it
should be. It had to change. ( #95207)

Did you hear about the Cattlemen's meeting over in __________? The
state director of ______ was there. Unfortunately, they opened up the
bar before the meeting and some of the guys got out of hand and blasted
the state man. And I'll tell you, the Cattlemen did not do themselves any
good with that kind of garbage. Nobody needs that kind of harassment.
Those kinda thing have turned me sour on the Cattlemen. One person that
I know was a Cattleman and he actually walked out on the meeting. That's
an embarrassment to the industry...............Sometimes alcohol gets in the
way. There's occasions where--I was brought up that way--have a drink
and start talkin' about things. There is room for a certain amount of that.
But if you are in a situation where there are higher-ups (decision makers or
regional officials), you better not be using drinks as a crutch. If I have a
glass of wine or something, I am less sharp. If it is a really important
meeting, you find yourself not as you should be. I definitely don't do it
with higher up people, no way. (#952010)

For me, personally, two or three glasses of wine a week is plenty. That's
one thing in ranching that is better than it used to be. We were shocked
when we came here with the consumption of alcohol. (#951928)

I'm a pro-hi. I used to drink a little, but I quit in '79. One old feller used
to work here and he said "we was makin' er pretty good 'til ol' ______ went
pro-hi on us. (laughs) No, I don't use alcoholic beverages, no coffee, no
tea. Don't use tobacco. (#95206)

Probably is an overuse. And a good share of that may be related to social
need. If you work by yourself day after day, and you want to see other
people, where do you go to visit after the sun goes down? And so,
probably the tavern is the best location you can run into other people to
visit with. Ya, we have had some pretty good disasters in this
neighborhood from that. But I can't be objective about what other
industries do. We know that blue collar workers in town are what keep an awful lot of taverns going. So, maybe it isn't any different. Appropriate use is where it doesn't affect your financial status or your ability to do your job. If you are driving a truck, more than an occasional drink during the week is out of line. If you are out for the weekend and party one night a week or something I have no problem with that. But, anytime it affects the way you show up for work, I have a problem. And most people in agriculture can't afford to be heavy drinkers, especially in public. Taverns and bars. (#95198)

I think there is a tendency! You are isolated and if you feel it has a lot to do with personal satisfaction and happiness. I think when times are tough it's a lot easier to go to a bar or pick up a six-pack on the way home and sort of blot it out a little bit. I think the isolation kind of contributes to that somewhat. (#95196)

Maybe some, but not........when I was a kid growin' up in __________, I think there was a lot more alcohol consumed in those days than there is today. There was probably quite a few people overused alcohol. Single men. Old time buckaroos, for example. I can think of four or five. That was really good buckaroos. (#95208)

The majority of respondents agreed that laws regarding drunk driving and abuse of alcohol are better for everyone concerned. As in many queries regarding alcohol use, the definition of 'social drinking' is not easily defined. Those interviewed approve of social drinking, but if alcohol use affected work, it is considered abuse.

8.4 Socializing

The venue of social life has changed, and doesn't revolve around the local dance hall, saloon, or for families--the grange hall. Single employees that formerly sought camaraderie or relaxation in the bar with other men are no longer characteristic of employee genre. Socialization time is spent at association meetings, industry get-togethers, the county fair and rodeo, neighborhood events such as brandings, bull and horse sales, and educational symposiums sponsored by ag pharmaceutical companies, the Extension Service, or the local vet clinics. Although local granges still function on a limited basis for events like wedding receptions or funerals, in some areas they have
closed their doors and disbanded. Grange still functions on a limited basis in both Lake and Modoc County, mostly for the occasional neighborhood function, including annual water meetings and reunions.

Regret was expressed that more social opportunities were not available for families, not unlike the concerns of urban populations. Increased level of participation by ranch children in school sports and other school activities take a major share of time for families. These functions also serve as social occasions for visiting and recreating. Respondents blame television, satellite dishes, and VCR's as prime culprits for lack of attendance at organized social activities or for taking the time to formally visit friends. "People just don't visit anymore."

That TV kind of did the small communities in pretty bad. Before they had TV. All the time I was growing up there wasn't any TV out there. It made a big difference on the amount of community functions there were. There were card games and they'd have a Thanksgiving dance and a Christmas dance and they'd be one or two in the summer. I think that has some bearing on it. (#95199)

The break-even line in this segment of the ranching population does not include the luxury of hiring full time employees to share in the work load on a ranch, either. Lack of a trained workforce and budget cutbacks hinder time off for the rancher and their families. More duties are the responsibility of the owners and family members than in former years. Costs have risen, budgets have been shaved. The cost and liability of employees in not possible in most instances for the size of operation in this survey.

8.5 Music and Song, Two-Steppin' and Strumming Guitars

Music of various types is enjoyed by ranchers in Modoc and Lake Counties. A poll of the sort of music most enjoyed revealed that 55% of the ranchers in both counties preferred country and western (Nashville) music. Accessible radio stations in Lake and
Modoc counties play country and western music as their primary format. Radio is not received in some remote areas of both counties, but CD's and cassette tape players in vehicles provide tunes when the radio won't play. Music stations are local, as well as signals from Klamath Falls, Oregon, Redding, California, Reno, Nevada, and on a clear day or night--Boise, Idaho. All available stations play country and western music. Although this style of music was primarily preferred, respondents cited other favorites ranging from western swing music such as Bob Wills, "fiddle music or ol' time dance music," and cowboy music by Ian Tyson and Buck Ramsey, to light jazz, old time rock 'n roll, Bonnie Rait and Guy Lombardo. Classical music is 'okay' in small doses or as soft, background music. To paraphrase one answer, "If it ain't country, it isn't me." (#951925)

In the last few years, Country Music Television's "Dance Party," features weekly line dance on camera with strolling couples in western dress moving in a syncopated gait to country and western music. It's choreography is highly predictable, repetitive, and hardly seductive or romantic in nature--lacking the intensity or excitement of a dance such as the Tango or even the Jitterbug. Bars and lounges feature line dancing in urban areas such as Medford, Oregon and Sacramento, California. It's also part of community education classes in Modoc County. How do ranchers in Lake and Modoc county respond to "line dancing?" Since they are the genuine representation of the cowboy culture, do they participate in it? Or, is line dancing another opportunity to act out perceptions of a life its participants wish to lead?

What is it? We have this whole thing that has just exploded the clothing industry. The Texas Two-Step? We have this whole thing goin' on in society. (#952027)

We love to dance. The two-step. (#951910)

We like to dance. Western swing and two-step. Haven't square danced since I was a kid. No line dancing! Real cowboys don't line dance. (#952011)
I had to ask _____ this morning about line dancing. So, I asked him what it was and he explained it to me that they line up facing the same direction. Like the couples face one another. The line dance I heard of was what the Virginia Reel used to be. So I don't know anything about line dancing. What do they do? Pair off? Just mixed in there? (#95206)

No line-dancing! (laughs) Judi, no line-dancing! (#952010)

Two women who were interviewed said they liked to watch it on television just to see the fancy clothes and hear the music. Both were over 65 years of age. One young couple had taken the class at a community education class, but had never put their learning in practice, citing lack of time for going out to dance. From the strong reactions to the concept of fancy dancing, the majority agreed with the quote, "Real men don't line dance, and a cowboy won't even watch."

How about use of musical instruments? The image of the guitar strumming cowboy is a familiar one in the movies; a campfire, twilight skies, pards drinking coffee from tin cups, and the faithful horse. None of the males in the interviews played the guitar, or any other instrument for that matter. A few had taken band in grammar school, but had not continued to play. Gene Autry and Roy Rogers would currently be without musical competition from Lake and Modoc ranchers. The closest affirmative reply in answering the question "Do you play a musical instrument?" was, "Yes, the radio." One female respondent played the clarinet and the piano, "much to the amusement of everyone else!"

8.6 Clothing for Work and Dress

Any study about the people engaged in the raising of beef cattle and associated with the word cowboy would be lacking if some attention were not focused on the style of dress of the culture. The western belt and buckle, chaps, spurs, cowboy hat, neckerchief, denim jeans, western shirt, and boots are part of the dress style of the ranchers in Lake and Modoc counties. However, they literally "wouldn't be caught dead" looking like the flamboyantly attired, be-sequined cowboy look-alikes on the country music television
channel, Rose Parade cowboys and cowgirls, or the hero and heroine types of the western movies. John Sisk states that designers like Ralph Lauren have exploited the cowboy look and have become rich in doing so.

Everybody, apparently, wants to be a part time cowboy. Perhaps we suffer from the fear that if we let the cowboy go completely out of our lives we not only will lose contact with an important source of our national integrity, but will have to face up to the technological complexity of our plastic and zippered world and get back to worrying about Star Wars and OPEC. Smart people like Ralph Lauren know this as they prove over and over that the superintendent of the census was wrong when he declared in 1890 that the American frontier was closed (Sisk 987: 405).

There is an element of escapism in dress-up, donning clothing that is not part of the normal, day to day wear by people outside of the ranching culture. Some young professionals from Lake County tell the story of city friends visiting for rodeo and fair weekend in Lake County. They excitedly wore their new hats, boots, and western clothing for four days of vacation. Hosts provided some gentle horses to allow them to ride in the Labor Day Parade that is part of the celebration. When they returned to Portland showing photographs of the experience, the onlookers asked "Cool! Did you get to keep the 'costume'?!" There is something about being someone else for a day that allows people the sense of freedom, flamboyance, comfort, and ease of attitude that is perceived about the ranching and cowboy lifestyle. Ranchers like the cowboy dress also, but they wear this type of clothing for various reasons, which are cited further in this section.

Male responses to the question of outerwear were somewhat varied, and included typical western wear in addition to baseball caps, tennis shoes, generic styled work boots, sweatshirts, and tee shirts. Gear such as spurs and chaps, or the short version-chinks, popular in the high desert country of southeastern Oregon and northeastern California, are only donned when there is horse and cow work to do. Spurs are a normal, often used tool worn by ranchers in this area. Chinks, the adaptation of the Spanish word 'chinquederos,'
are worn while branding or when the weather is cold to protect the legs from mud, manure, hot irons, wind, snow or rain. Neckerchiefs are worn about the throat to keep warm, and to protect the face from wind, cold, and dust, depending on the weather. It has become part of dress-up wear also, styles varying from plain cotton to fancy silk. Hats vary in style by owner preference and weather. Ranchers stated that the wide brimmed work hat is worn with more care now, since skin cancer is prevalent and caps do not offer the protection that a brimmed hat does. A hat is a matter of pride to a man, especially. Hats are a personification of the person and actually become an extension of the body. Meddling or touching one's hat without warning or invitation is not taken lightly. A gesture such as this is interpreted as an invasion of personal space. A dress hat has value, like a piece of fine jewelry. A belt and buckle is commonly seen accessorizing work and dress jeans on both men and women.

What you see is what I wear (western shirt, jeans, felt cowboy hat). I have changed my foot attire a little. I used to wear boots most of the time, but I have to have a shoe with a softer sole, so my knees can survive it.......I wear a hiking boot. A glorified tennis shoe, that's all they are. (#95205)

Men and women both prefer Wrangler jeans, although some men still wear the Levis brand. "Levis have gotten too expensive." Ranchers say that they have been priced out of the clothing market, since western wear has become popular with others. Women like 'Rockies' brand jeans worn with boots and a western blouse for informal occasions, like a BBQ or for going to the fair and rodeo. Prairie style skirts, boots, and short jackets are popular for dressier occasions. For weddings and funerals, most women stated they wear a dress or if the weather is bad, slacks to keep warm. Men wear both western and conventional styles sports jackets for dress occasions. For work, both men and women addressed functionality and practicality as primary considerations in regard to dress.
I usually don't dress up much. Maybe I figure as long as I'm clean and got clean clothes on I don't really dress up too much. I try to wear nice clothes but nothing fancy. (#95195)

Just in the summertime I wear a hat. In the wintertime I wear a scarf, because my ears are kinda sensitive to the wind. Cold wind. But just jeans and boots, overboots if I need to. I don't wear insulated coveralls, because they are too hot. When I'm workin' I can't get 'em off .......... Usually to a funeral I don't wear black. I hate black. I always like to wear somethin' kinda perky instead of sad lookin'. But I do like to wear a dress or skirt and blouse or somethin' when there's somethin' special. Unless it's really extremely cold, then I usually wear somethin' I can stay warm in. (#951929)

We don't buy Levis, cause Levis are too expensive. He doesn't like 'em anyhow. After Midnight Cowboy, boy! Hats and boots just went outta sight. We each have two pair a boots. We have our good boots and our work boots. A new couple said to me one day "How do you dress for winter?" I said "I have a blue snow suit and I put it on in November and I don't take it off 'til the Fourth of July." (laughs) That's about the truth! (#952023)

Jeans, boots, no cowboy hat. Don't like hats. Except to wear to church. And we don't do that anymore! I always dress up in a church. That's my age telling on me. (951924)

I wear a cowboy hat most of the time. Summer and winter. I wear a cap once in a while, but I usually wear a hat. Then if I don't have a cap or hat on I feel naked...........To a wedding or funeral I wear just what you see, as long as it's clean. You know, or got a bunch of holes or something like that. And you just don't see me in a dress. And I made a thing when I got outta high school. I wore dresses all the time I was in high school and after that I wasn't going to unless I had to. I didn't wear one to my wedding so I don't feel I have to wear one anywhere else. (#951925)

Q. There's a lot of literature about ranchers that depict them riding around in a Cadillac wearing fancy boots while hired men do their work for them. Do you think this is true where does this image come from?

I think it is there. That it is real. I think part of it is even in our magazines. The big operator dressed in a big belt buckle and 10 gallon hat driving a new pickup. He's got a thousand head a cattle here and another operation to run some hogs in Indiana. And so forth. So it's there. We recently took a trip through Nevada and stopped in a little casino. It was just plumb full of ranch people. There's no way of knowing how
influential they are. But they were dressed as cowboys. They take the cowboy dress. And whether that brings them status or not. (#95197)

Q. They are tying into a mythology of some kind?

Yes, they are. They are promoting it themselves. I dunno! Ask me something else! But I think the ranchers are doing it themselves. If they don't like the image, it's too bad unless they change their attitude. I think most of us that are out there are commercial ranchers, cattlemen, or hay growers, whatever. You are not going to be able to tell their wealth or anything else by how they look on a day to day basis anyway. Everybody wears work clothes and they work. They are not too damned concerned about what their pickup looks like most of the time. And so on, so forth. There are even cattlemen in this area, particularly those bringing in cattle for pasture, they put on a very fine image. They are usually runnin' around in a pressed white shirt or something. Very clean hat and maybe a pickup and trailer combined that are worth $35,000. or more. Burnin' gas like hell runnin' up and down the road with very little work goin' on. I don't know about this image thing—whether it's good or bad but there's certainly a segment of agriculture that likes to promote it. And does a very good job at it. (#95197)

**8.7 The Ranching Nobility**

And so, the myth continues, in one form or another. Another segment of agriculture may be responsible for presenting the image of rancher as cattle baron, but not in this research group. Although, respondents cite that they identify with cowboy dress, and that their childhood heroes had, indeed, been cowboys on the screen, in novels and on television and radio. Those heroes most visible of all were relatives in their own household or family, neighbors, or a community hero. When asked whether a ranching nobility was present in their county, both men and women think that this class designation exists.

Oh ya. I think in every county it's that way. Ya. Oh ya. I think it tends to be those who have been in it longer. A little more experienced. You can easily go to them for advice. You'd feel more comfortable. I certainly would. (#95205)

I think the old time ranching families in this county or any other county, have a little bit more clout than perhaps somebody who works in a
sawmill. However, the old time families in any industry basically in any county, are the ones that have the political clout and have the perceived wealth and the noble status. Whether it's _______ ________ when he was alive in Klamath County, he was certainly perceived as a substantial person and a leader in the timber industry. And I'm sure if he showed up in Salem with a concern he would be listened to far better than you and I would be on a timber issue. So I believe that the leaders in any industry have, normally, status and power. Some deserve it and some don't. (#95198)

These people in our county have more political power. Assets, reputation, generational perspective determines. What kind of example they are to me is important. How do they conduct themselves in the community? Do they give community service? These people have stuck with it. Their wise decisions, their history and tenure in the community. Common sense approach to things. People hold them in esteem. They have a lot of esteem for themselves. They care about ranching. (#95011)

There probably is a nobility in Modoc County. And I think some of it is the families who came when Modoc County was a very young county. And they stayed and had large families. And each generation has stayed. Yes. Yes, there is. People get false ideas about ranchers because these people go to this meeting and that meeting. These are the people who get the pictures in the cattle magazines that are interviewed. (#952026)

Ya, I think there is a nobility. I think some has it more so than others. _______ ________ for instance. Now, I'm not sayin' that she doesn't work hard, 'cause she does. But then her dad had a lot, then she ended up with it. That's the best person to have it, she's a good cattle person. She just has a lot more than other people. We just come out here and started from right from scratch. We couldn't even hardly get $6000 financed! (#95192)

Only one respondent answering this question perceived that there was not a ranching nobility in their county. Perhaps this is another topic for research to find out who is responsible for some of these stereotypes.

8.8 The Cadillac Complex

There were no ranchers in the sample, either male or female, that stated that they drove a Cadillac. An abundance of free time to survey their property in a large luxury car in the style of J.R. Ewing from television's Dallas, was not evident, either. Only one
ranch wife, recently retired from an outside job, drives a Lincoln car. Vehicles for family use range from various model pickup trucks, sport utility vehicles such as Explorer and Blazer, and Chevy Suburban, to Oldsmobile, Buick, Dodge, and Ford cars, such as the Taurus model. All respondents have various models and ages of pickup trucks for ranch use. Cost comparisons of new pickups to luxury cars show little difference in actual price tags, but the perceptions about each of their uses differ, not only regarding work but in attitudes. Pickup trucks are for work, luxury cars are for luxury use and are associated with wealth.

Well, in Lake County there are probably a majority of ranchers who can show a financial statement that can go above a million dollars of net worth. And lots can go far beyond that. And a number of those people cannot show a return in a year like this where they can pay taxes. Not a tax problem! They can't pay taxes. Well, when they do have a good year and are able to buy a Cadillac, anyone with a million dollars worth of net worth ought to be able to have a Cadillac in the driveway if they so choose. Certainly, in the Portland metropolitan area a tremendous number of those folks that have at least a million dollars of net worth have a car that is higher up the chain than a Cadillac. They own a Cadillac and nobody says a word! So it's pretty unjustified. (95198)

Ability to travel safely in various weather conditions is important in vehicle selection. All of the ranchers interviewed owned at least one four-wheel drive vehicle. Some use a pickup and trailer to feed animals in the winter, others feed from a truck or a tractor and wagon. Three people feed their cattle with a draft horse team and wagon. "They always start and they never get stuck." Although another segment of the ranching culture exists that own Cadillac vehicles, it was not in this sector.

8.9 The Code of the West

There is a solemn value in western culture which is known as "a man's word." This is a seriously taken expression of reliability and trust. To give one's word is like "swearing to God" or "swearing on the Bible." Cattle deals worth thousands have been made
without a paper exchange, down payments, or formal contracts, relying on the 'word' of the parties involved. Real estate deals, and the borrowing and lending of money take place on the strength of one's 'word.' Cawelti states that the "code of the west" is in every respect a male ethic and its values relate primarily to the relationships of men (1974: 63). However, in Lake and Modoc County the phrase "a man's word," turned up in conversations with both men and women.

Q. Is there a particular code of ethics among ranchers that differs from other types of professions?

I do. I do feel there is. Yep. I really do. Most rural areas that I know of still feel the same as when I grew up. Your word should be worth as much as anything you write on paper. That you don't find of in any other walk of life that I know of now. A handshake is serious. Umhmm. (#95199)

Oh, definitely. It's kinda like a hidden code. You don't really find out a lot about a lot of things until you get older, but whenever you are working cows, you gotta be polite. And there's different—you can't cut in front of somebody. You always gotta—if somebody's working cows and you hold rodeer—there's just a lot a things you figure out. ("Rodeer" is the gathering and holding of a large group of cattle by buckaroos on the open range so that cattle may be sorted. They are separated from the herd by identification marks; such as earmarks, brands, wattles, or eartags. It is customary that each outfit with cattle on the same range send a "rep" at gathering time to identify and cut their own animals from the herd. Animals include unbranded calves which are not yet weaned from their mothers). There is a lot of ethics. Everybody in this valley is very honest and true and there's no—I don't know—you can trust every neighbor for miles and you don't have to worry about locking your place or anything. I guess the morals are like they used to be a 100 years ago. You trust people, I guess. (#95195)

Yes, their word means a lot. That's one thing my husband and I—what we say is what we believe. If I tell you something it's the gospel. If my word is not any good, nothing's any good. I sold a bunch of calves over the phone one time and he said he would buy them. He didn't have his deposit check book so he said a handshake was good enough for me. It was like "we can handle it." Then the market dropped and we never have seen him to this day. He didn't get the calves either. But his word is no good either. To this day if he ever bought our calves on the video, somebody would have to receive them. He couldn't even walk through the gate, just for that
reason. That's the only dealings we've had with him and the last." (#951925)

The older time cattle people that have come up from that, I think there is. Ya, there is. The newer ones, that just happen to get in the business there isn't. I mean, they're kinda ruthless, a lot of'em. I mean, the older type families that have been in it a long time, ya there's values. I would say there is. Your neighbor is always right to you, you're always gonna be right to him. Even if it costs you money. (#95205)

Physical help to each other at any rate. There is a code of ethics. You have to look at it that way. How would you keep going on? If I had to worry every day that a neighbor was going to steal a cow or take my water, boy! That would be tough. There are enough things with the government or the environmentalists. (#952011)

Ya, I do. I see more evidence of that out of this area. The difference between businessmen. You go down in the valley and they are cutthroat. Totally. All you have to do is know someone well down there to know that. And you want to see a difference of attitude in doing business! I'm not saying every rancher is bonafide honest, upstanding, straightforward individual. But a hell of a lot are. And a hell of a lot of us, if we give our word to somebody, we stick to it. A lot more than in other businesses. (#952010)

The survey was split about half and half on the issue of superior ethical behavior within the culture, with no gender differences evident in responses.

There used to be, but I don't think it exists anymore. You know, you never had to worry about anything getting home to you but there are too many things that have happened here. And I don't know why they have changed. (#95207)

It varies from people to people you know. Need to just say that all ranchers have different standards and values. It's always just varied a lot. There's been people in the ranching business that would steal cows and were just as rough as anybody can be and there's been ranchers that were just the kindest, finest citizens that anybody ever knew. Those are the two extremes. And everybody else kind of falls in the middle. And I think that's always been the case. (#95206)
It is difficult to survey values and ethics. People's perceptions differ. Perhaps a survey of another business culture would indicate salient differences in this regard. Some responses obviously recall different occurrences regarding ethical behaviors on the part of family members, neighbors, or those who are perceived as outsiders. The frequency, however, of hearing the referral to the 'handshake' as a sign of one's word, indicates perhaps that this part of the ranching mythology has merit.

8.10 Cultural Patterning in Ethics and Communication

Communication rules exist within the ranching culture that identify its mythology, values, and ethics. Gerry Philipsen in Speaking Culturally, defines a speech code as 'social rhetoric,' distinctive to cultures as to what to feel and what to do (Philipsen 1992: 127). These "codes" provide answers to what exchanges and interactions are required to establish a bond between the self and others. Other researchers, such as Donal Carbaugh, focus on what he defines as "cultural terms for talk" (Carbaugh 1990: 53). Terminology, such as the ranchers' referral to the handshake or a person's word, is a way to speak metaphorically about interpersonal relations, social institutions, and modes for being a person (Philipsen 1992: 128). The perception of the rancher as strong, stoic, honest, and forthright in their actions appears to be correct in this example. The handshake and a person's word was referred to many times in interviews with a respectful reverence. The particular way of speaking in which ranchers engage is part of their sense of coherence as a group. Although opinions differed within the group as to whether ranchers were more ethical than other business people, their references to fairness, honesty, and moral acts indicate that their cultural ethics are identified in their ways of speaking.

Dell Hymes, who was initially an anthropologist and ethnographer before he became known as a speech communication theorist, terms the ethnography of speaking as "Ways of Speaking," involving two interrelated concepts: (1) means of speech (styles) and, (2) speech economy (the cultural rules for speech use and conduct) (Hymes 1971: 447). In
observations during interviews, certain rules for speech etiquette were observed; including refraining from speaking addressed, abstaining from questioning a particular inquiry, and the perception by the interviewer that the ranchers believe it was their obligation to provide information without delving into the researcher's opinion or reasoning. The interplay of respect and obligation in fulfilling the role of informant was reflected in speech styles, the context in which speech was used, and also in their body language which was observed as open and direct. Evidence of "code switching," or using language which is not part of everyday use, was not apparent. Such switching of speech styles is not within their ethics for use; perceived as phony, theatrical, or misrepresenting reality. It is important to be oneself and show respect by complying with what appears to be reasonable or lawful.

Philipsen expands on Hymes' theory with the inclusion of the term 'culture' into speech use; terming it "cultural codes of speaking." These codes are socially and historically transmitted in a system of symbols and meanings for communication (Philipsen 1992: 8). Culture and speech are interwoven, and Philipsen cites the importance of ethnography as a methodology for the study of speaking as a mode of communicative conduct and cultural meaning (Philipsen 1992: 9). It is when code (means of speech) and community come together that the identity of the culture is most strongly experienced (Philipsen 1992: 14). In summary, Philipsen points out (1) there is something about speaking that is important to lives and societies, and (2) whatever the importance is, it has something to do with culture (Philipsen 1992:123).
Chapter 9
The Future of Ranching

The future of ranching is the final remaining section in the interpretation of the responses received from participants in this study. In the preceding material, an attempt has been made to actualize the experiences of the ranching culture in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California. In the two years that remain in the 20th century, the ranching industry faces challenges that requires new attitudes, skills, and strengths. Environmental controversy continues, government regulations and legislation affecting business increase. Trade agreements have changed competition and the market, and there is a demand for new food products world-wide. The ranch workforce is aging, inflationary demand for land challenges new business start ups for the younger generation, and costs of production escalate. Kiplinger Ag Letter reports that over 97% of food consumers surveyed respond that a healthy, low fat diet is their number one food concern, ranking higher even than taste preference (Kiplinger Vol 67 No 12 1996: 2). This onerous list weighs on less than 1% of the U.S. population, and a far smaller percentage of those raising beef as their primary source of income (Agriculture--Oregon's Leading Industry 1995: 1). This chapter explores future issues and rancher’s response to what is ahead for their small operations.

9.1 Nutrition and Health Concerns in the United States

Changing attitudes and individual tastes have affected everyone in the food industry. According to Kiplinger Ag Newsletter, a recent food retailer survey found that 97% of consumers are changing their diets to make them healthier (Vol 67 No 12: 2). USDA's food pyramid guide emphasizes food consumption in moderation, recommending six to eleven servings of breads and cereals, and four to five servings from both the fruits and vegetable groups per day. The meat group recommendation is two servings per day, weighing five to six ounces each, about the size of a deck of cards.
In the same source, Kiplinger's also cite that six out of ten consumers state that fat is their biggest nutritional worry. This is four times the percentage from just ten years ago. USDA says that nutritionally improved low-fat and light food products have outpaced the original product offerings (Kiplinger Vol 67 No 12: 2).

In contrast to general public opinion on the dangers of red meat in the diet and early deaths associated with its consumption, Range Magazine features a section entitled "Confessions of Red Meat Survivors," featuring old timers in the ranching business who have ignored cholesterol warnings and believe that red meat is good for the attitude and in spite of health scares, adds to longevity. When asked if the demand for beef will go down, ranchers replied that it will fluctuate, but remain strong overall.

I don't think it will ever go down, no. If people's got money to buy it, they're gone buy it. That's the only thing that's come on us real hard. They might not have the money to buy it. But this beef, they are always trying to put a scare into the commodities. Remember cranberries will give ya cancer? If you remember, they came up with a scare right at Thanksgiving time. Put the price all ta hell. Well, look around. You take that "Range Magazine?" In there it tells about the red meat survivor, about them old people in there that's ate meat all their lives? I've ate meat all of my life and old _____ used to work for us? Ate that old fat mutton and he'd cook up a stew with an inch a fat on it. And he was 97 when he died. So you can't tell me it's gonna kill everybody! But, he kept a goin'. Hauled his own wood and raised a garden and shoveled the snow off his roof until he was 95. That's what makes you live to be an old man more than anything. Keep goin'. These guys that have never worked would quit, you know. They have a short life I think. (#95192)

The beef industry has worked hard in the past ten years to alter it's image as the high fat, cholesterol bogey-man of nutritional concerns. The Beef Checkoff dollar, paid per head by cattle producers at time of sale, has funded television and a media campaign with such titles as "Beef, It's What's for Dinner," and "Beef, It's What You Want." Television ads feature low-fat beef recipes fixable in 25 minutes or less, targeted to working, busy, family cooks. Recipes differ from the meat-and-potato based standards of twenty-five
years ago, appealing to the supermoms and dads, as well as the urban consumer, who have limited time for shopping and preparation. Beef councils have developed brochures and publications comparing other meats with beef for calorie and cholesterol content. As a result of marketing efforts from the Beef Checkoff dollars, the National Cattlemen's Beef Association was named Food and Beverage "Supplier of the Year," in October of 1997 at the Foodservice Operator's Conference in Los Angeles. The award, presented to a trade association for the first time in its 38 year history, was based on quality of product, reliability, and merchandising support. The event was attended by over 800 chain restaurant operators (Beef Business Bulletin Vol 21 No 2: 2).

Some of the concerns regarding beef as a threat to health comes from the medical community, who cite cholesterol and fat in red meat (particularly beef) as major factors in heart disease and obesity, a contributor leading to other diseases. The beef industry is focusing on medical industry education; recently serving roasted beef tenderloin to the 1997 American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation Board of Trustees and the National Osteopathic Foundation. The group claimed it was "the best meal of the entire convention," requesting information on their own state beef councils (Beef Business Bulletin Vol 21 No 2: 2).

Modern beef is leaner, having 27% less trimmable fat than beef a decade previously (Beef Business Bulletin Vol 21 No 2: 3). Beef Checkoff dollars also support research for mapping gene pools in cattle for identifying specific traits such as amount of marbling (fat distribution in the muscle) and tenderness. Texas A & M University maintains a herd of cattle devoted to this purpose entirely, and recent results indicate significant progress in this area of selective breeding for a tender, low fat, low cholesterol beef product (Beef Business Bulletin Vol 21 No 2: 2).

In regard to the Beef Checkoff dollars as funding educational and research projects for beef promotion, ranchers in this group react positively to their contributions to funding this marketing effort at sale time.
I think the best thing the beef industry has done is the Beef Checkoff. That's the biggest and best thing the beef industry has done. The dairy industry has been organized for years and they are powerful and their voice is one voice. They are unified. Whether ranchers get that unified, I doubt. But the Beef Checkoff is the best step in that direction. We are making progress every year with the issues we face. If the Beef Checkoff can help some way in unification, I am all for it. (#95195)

9.2 Food Safety Issues

Some bad press has continued to occur for the beef industry with the recall of hamburger from packers, the latest being Hudson Foods in August of 1997. Over 40,000 pounds of beef patties were recalled by the company after two separate incidences of E. coli poisoning in Colorado (Vetter 1997: 1). Individual consumers purchased frozen packaged patties, as well as the fast-food chains Burger King and Boston Market. Burger King had distributed patties to 1205 of its restaurants in its central and western regions.

The E. coli scare has risen to momentous proportions because of severe illness and death occurring from contamination in hamburger in the past several years. E. coli bacteria has the propensity to taint ground beef with the increased handling procedures required for hamburger production. The process used may even include meat from several animals, providing the opportunity for cross-contamination.

However, increased sophistication in technology to detect the presence of E. coli has recently become available; helping assure the public of a safe beef product. Lab tests from the victims of the Hudson Beef patties had the same DNA markers, detecting one supplier as the source of infection. A new test for the E. coli pathogen is now available on the market also, rapidly discovering its presence in meat products before consumption. Testing has increased, and new analysis methods require smaller samples for testing, preventing the loss of product. USDA developed procedures to detect a single bacterium in less than one gram of meat in overnight testing (Kiplinger Vol 68 No 3 1997: 3). USDA also campaigns actively advising consumers to thoroughly cook ground beef to
higher temperatures between 160 and 180 degrees Fahrenheit. Irradiation of meat was recently approved in late 1997, as a food safety procedure.

Irradiation is a safe method of destroying bacteria on food through low levels of radiation. Proven to kill food pathogens, including E. coli on meat, irradiation is approved for use in 37 countries by the World Health Organization. The process is also approved by the American Medical Association, the American Council on Science and Health, and the American Gastroenterologist Association Foundation as a means of controlling pathogens on meat and other foods (Beef Facts Index August 1997: 1). Irradiation also extends the shelf life of products, and is used in many places in the world as an alternative to refrigeration. Recent studies by Kansas State University show that irradiation does not affect the flavor, aroma, color, or other characteristics of beef (Beef Facts Index August 1997: 1). Costs related to labeling, consumer education and acceptance, and overhead, equipment, and training costs for packers remain to be known at this time. A period of six months for public input is required, as well as regulation and labeling developed by the United States Department of Agriculture before the process becomes effective (Boyle 1997: 13).

In the demand for a safer national food supply, other means of killing pathogens with inexpensive, non-harmful processes is a hot research topic. An Oregon State University professor, Daniel Farkas, is working with food pressurization techniques as much as 100,000 pounds per square inch to kill salmonella or E. coli. Although it causes no damage to the food, Farkas states the process is still expensive, but that improved technology and consumer expectations in food safety may cause such processes to become standard in the food industry (Herald and News 1998: 7).

At the Agricultural Research Center in Wyndmoor, Pennsylvania, researcher Arthur Morgan has discovered a relatively inexpensive way to kill Salmonella and other microorganisms on poultry, fresh beef and pork without cooking the meat. His device heats the meat surface quickly with steam and cools it in a vacuum in 25 milliseconds.
The prototype machine is said to be readily adaptable to processing production, quickly killing surface contaminants. The carcass is surrounded by a vacuum, a short burst of steam is applied, and the surface cooled within the vacuum to kill microbes. The cost of the process is estimated at not more than a cent per pound increase with this technology (Stanley 1997: 20-21).

For the packers recalling beef, increased levels of technology help them trace the original source of the contamination. Computerization in processing reveals the exact source, what hour and day of process, and what line. Along with the capacity to find the origin contaminated beef, new computerized implants in beef cattle also allow packers streamlined sophistication in selection of their suppliers. These small implanted chips indicate such data as age of the animal, source, breed, and weight per day of age.

Prior to the recent recalls of meat and other food products contaminated with E. coli bacteria, a fatal brain disease in cattle, known as BSE or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy was discovered in the United Kingdom in dairy and beef cattle in 1986. BSE is in a class of rare degenerative brain diseases known as TSE's which affect humans and animals. BSE in cattle is fatal, and the ingesting of products from the nervous system of cattle, including the brain and spinal cord, may be a link to transmission of the disease from cattle to humans. The beef industry in the United Kingdom has suffered severe losses, and products from the bovine central nervous system are banned from use or export. All animals showing signs of BSE in Great Britain are destroyed. To prevent BSE from entering the United States, in 1989 USDA's Animal and Plant Inspection Service stopped the importation of live ruminants and ruminant products from countries where BSE in known to exist. Records exist on the remaining animals imported to the United States prior to 1989, which are tested regularly with no sign of BSE to date. Cattle with symptoms similar to those exhibited in BSE infected cattle are also tested by veterinarians trained in BSE diagnostics. All animals tested in the United States have proved negative for BSE. In 1990, a BSE Surveillance Program
was initiated with more than 60 diagnostic veterinary labs participating. Preventative measures have also been taken in as banning the use of potentially affected feed supplements; specifically, meat and bone meal. These sources are suspected as the origin of the United Kingdom BSE infection (Beef Facts Index Nov 1996: 2). To this point, no cases of BSE have been detected in the United States.

Use of growth stimulating hormones have also been a concern for consumers. The World Health Organization and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization set the standards and after many years of discussion have set minimum residue levels for the synthetic hormone substances zeranol and trenbolone acetate for use in cattle. Three natural hormones, estradiol, progesterone, and testosterone, require no minimum residue level tests. Approximately 90% of the fed cattle in the United States are implanted with growth promoting products (Beef Facts Index July 1997: 1). FDA has determined residues are well below a safe concentration, but consumer doubt continues to exist. Responses from ranchers regarding hormone implants indicate prior use, but no longer do so because of industry buyer and, ultimately, consumer preferences.

Last fall we made the decision not to use them any more. Just too much controversy over them. What happens to our calves after they leave here is beyond our control. Last fall I did a lot of reading about implants and that's when we made the decision not to use them. I know we don't have any say further down the line, but we try to keep up with what the consumer thinks about the product they buy. What's sad is the lack of knowledge we have about what happens to our beef after it leaves here. Out of our control. There's just too much going on. (#9520211)

We never did use implants. It's an extra procedure that I don't know much about in the end. I know there's a lot a talk about hormones. We never got into it. (#95201)

When I hear the auctioneer repeat over and over "these calves are non-implanted" it began to dawn on me that it meant something. Some buyer is looking for calves that don't have the hormone stigma. Although it's been scientifically proven that implants can give you some extra pounds on your calves, there is still the hormone scare. Even though USDA testing says they're safe. We used implants on the steers for about ten
years. We quit two years ago, because the public has so many fears about beef. (#95193)

Biotechnology applied to agriculture predicts production of animals using genetic manipulation to "naturally" increase growth and development characteristics. Super livestock are coming, and the turn of the century will see commercial availability (Ag 2001: 15). Built in disease resistance and duplication of desirable characteristics through new science will give big boosts in cost efficiency to producers. However, the safety and ethical proportions of such practices will continue into the next century in a "science versus society" clash.

You asked me about what I'm doing on our ranch to produce a good product. This is good, healthy country. Our cows eat natural foods, in our hay and pasture. The air is clean here. We have enough cold weather to kill a lot of bugs and parasites. From our end of it, I don't feel like what I'm doing is unsafe. We spend a lot a time looking for bulls. We use EPD's (Expected Progeny Difference) to determine how their line is going to produce and what they'll do for the cow herd we have. We try to match our cattle, conditions, and management to the herd sires we purchase. A lot a research has gone into those EPD's. (#952024)

Many of these big picture concerns affect producers in Lake and Modoc Counties directly, although ranchers here are far from urban areas or centers where laws are debated, legislated, and regulated. Controversy exists at the highest levels of world government regarding food production in the concern for depletion of the ozone layer. While President Clinton and Vice President Al Gore voice concern for the atmosphere, scientists world-wide disagree about the creditability of the depletion theory itself. The doomsayers fear desertification and subsequent shortages of world food supplies. This is a matter of science and diverse theories. It is safe to say, as this is written, "who knows at this point?"

Ranchers struggle with the red meat controversy. Clearly, however, the beef industry realizes and has made strides in clarifying and changing attitudes about beef
consumption. Scientific testing is also helping to alleviate food safety concerns and also increase pressure on packers and producers who need to examine production methods in regard to food safety. The media devotes airtime and column inches to food safety, much of it regarding the handling of meat.

On local levels, ranchers rarely experience food safety and contamination issues. They eat their own beef products, feel they are safe, and don't relate well to the issues that make the headlines. Old time ranchers explain methods of keeping beef safe when refrigeration was not available. Beef and other foods were kept safe by methods that are obsolete on modern ranches.

Heck. When I first started out in this business, we'd kill a beef and not even have refrigeration. At night we'd hang that beef from the wagon tongue or in the barn. Then we'd get that beef down and tarp it and roll it up. Now they got this E. coli. Now butchers are doing a lot of trimming and throwin' it all together, scattering it in with the meat. (Respondent is referring to mixing scraps and trim from several animals together.) They are better off to leave it there. We use to roll meat in the same ol' tarps. Didn't wash 'em or nothin'. But during the day the meat was tarped and covered with bedrolls and such. And we'd hang it up again at night to cool it out. It'd get a crust on it. But if it rained in the night, it would go to spoilin' on ya. It would mold and ruin the meat. It was always someone's job to go get the meat down if it started to rain. After we butchered it took about three good nights to cool 'er out. I guess our systems now aren't immune to the bacteria we used to be. Been on asphalt too long. (#95191)

9.3 Trade Agreements, Marketing, and Product Niche

In the same year interviews were conducted for this research (1995), the devaluation of the Mexican peso and subsequent flood of Mexican cattle on United States beef markets produced mixed reactions to NAFTA, implemented January 1, 1994. The agreement will eventually remove most trade barriers between the United States, Mexico, and Canada. Many trade barriers with Mexico were eliminated. Other tariffs and restrictions with Mexico and Canada will be phased out over 15 years (United States Information Agency June 1996: 1). More than half the value of agricultural trade became
duty free when NAFTA went into effect. Ranchers state that the agreement might prove itself within the long run, but that the numbers of Mexican cattle flooding the market was a direct contributor to low beef prices for U.S. producers in 1995 and 1996. Ranchers have mixed reviews about the North American Free Trade Agreement.

**Q. Are cow numbers affecting the prices this year? Have we got too many cows?**

I don't think so. I believe one of the things--two things--I have never seen the Democrats in office but what the cow market doesn't go to hell! It's just as simple as that. It seems like it always does. I think another thing that has a bearing on it is the Free Trade Agreement. And I can't see that it doesn't affect it. When their (Mexico) economics was lower than ours, when they did get a free trade. They said everything is going to get equal. That means we was here (hand gesture) and they was here (lower hands) and it's gonna do this (hands meet, one goes up and one goes down). That means we have to come down. Exactly. Hey! If we was down here, Free Trade would look real good. Then you know you are coming up. If you are on top, there's only one spot if you are going to Free Trade and that means we go down........I just know our price went to hell, so you blame it! (laughs) Whether it's real or not! (#95199)

**Q. What about the effect of the new trade agreements?**

I don't know enough about NAFTA yet. I'm hearing both sides and I really haven't got to make a decision of my own. (#951924)

They need to look beyond to see who is making the money from those decisions. And I hate to say this, because it sounds like paranoia, but those are the enemy. The real enemy are those who will make any kinda deal. We all knew NAFTA was a mistake when it was happening. You could see it, you could read it. But there was something else pushing that. And I think we are all falling. (#952027)

I've got mixed feelings about NAFTA. What you hear and what you read are two different things. I mean, you can go and sit at the coffee shop and within half an hour you'll hear some truckdriver say "Well, you know when I picked up that load of cattle at someplace in Montana that the trucks were just pourin' through there with Canadian beef. But when you read the figures that come out of USDA they don't reflect that. So I dunno know which is true. We thought it was fine when the Canadians came down here a year ago and were buying 90 cent calves (90 cents per
pound). But now we don't like it when they come back either killed or ready to be killed. 'Course that's 'cause the market went flat. They probably been doin' it for years and we didn't care as long as the market was good. We lost the Mexican market when the peso went south. Because they aren't buyin' anything! But they're sellin'! So, you know, a lot a things happen and we wouldn't care as long as the market was good. If we were still gettin' 90 cents for the calves we wouldn't care if we weren't sellin' anything to 'em. (#95209)

Right now I am dead set against NAFTA and GATT. I am dead set against the cheap consumer food policy we have. Because I feel like for me to be a consumer, or you to be a consumer, or those sawmill workers that are being laid off in Lakeview to be a consumer, they have to have a job. Seems like a real dead end road we are going down. When all your production goes to foreign countries and it's all shipped back here. It isn't even really cheap, but when nobody here has got any money to buy it with, what good is a cheap consumer policy? Not only in the food industry, but in televisions, VCR's, cameras and can openers and the whole thing. It just can't be cheap. Somebody has to have money to buy it with.........This free trade agreement would work if all the economies were equal. But when you have one down here and one up here, they have to equalize. And what happens when we're the economy that's up here? Us little people? I know the politicians in Washington D.C. don't care. But us little people down here, do we want to come down? And be on the level that the Mexicans are? I'm sure we are going to come down and the Mexicans come way up. I really feel like NAFTA is responsible for the depression in the cattle prices. The people up there say "no, no, it's not NAFTA, it's oversupply of beef." But this oversupply happened awfully fast. This is all a political thing. We are the ones payin' the price for it. Our tax man told us the number of wrecks that have come across his desk this year as a result a this. How can you be worth over a million dollars on paper and wonder how to pay next month's bills? (951911)

Time will tell. I think in the long run it's going to be beneficial. Right now it hasn't helped because one thing Mexico counted on was being a buyer of meat and they are broke. So they are not buying meat. The Canadians are probably sending more to us than we are to them at the moment. But those people up on the border states up there--I just made a trip to South Dakota and we went to Montana and North Dakota also. They said this NAFTA has opened up their trade across the border. It's much easier and they are moving meat both directions. They are not too sure it isn't all right for their business. They feel as though it's helped! By opening up another market, it's another option. Certainly, our future lies in the far east. There's a lot more people that realize they like to eat beef. We're going to send more and more beef, and we are all the time. If we
get these trade barriers lifted, it's the way to go! So, I think NAFTA will
in the long run be good for us. (#951910)

Portions of interviews quoted above were recorded in late fall 1995. Further
developments regarding trade agreements have put some perspective to the concerns of
ranchers since 1995. In a fact sheet on cattle imports written in August 1997, Lambert
states that cattle imports from Mexico and Canada in 1997 experienced declines in both
slaughter and feeder cattle by 7% compared to the same time in 1996 and was more than
40% less compared to the same time in 1995 (Lambert 1997: 1). Lambert states that
NAFTA, criticized for low beef prices due to increased imports from Canada and Mexico,
actually did not affect U.S. regulations regarding imports. Prior to NAFTA there were no
restrictions on cattle imports except health regulations. Between one million and 1.3
million cattle were imported into the U.S. before NAFTA took effect. NAFTA actually
eliminated tariffs benefiting cattle export to Mexico and that during the first year of the
trade agreement, beef exports to Mexico increased by approximately 47% in amount and
over 70% in value. Exports did decline in 1995 because of peso devaluation, but
increased by over 70% in 1996 and during the first five months of 1997 increased by
82.5 % more than 1996. Beef exports to Mexico remain strong.

According to Lambert's fact sheet, imports of Canadian cattle decreased 20.6 % in the
first six months of 1997 compared to the same time in 1996. No slaughter cattle were
imported from Mexico during the first six months of 1997 compared to 722 during 1996
and 6,632 during 1995. The 1997 import figure reflects a 67% decrease from 1995.
The National Cattlemen's Beef Association states that it will remain diligent in
monitoring and reporting beef trade to assure legal trading, access to the markets by U.S.
cattle producers, and in providing information to them regarding trade tools and
competitive advantage information (Lambert 1997: 1).

Ranchers also state that potential exists for expanding new markets; even though
disappointments have occurred in their minds regarding free trade in North America. Big
changes have occurred in the area of trade potential in the past two years, since these interviews were originally recorded. Other areas in eastern Europe and the orient are viewed as open territory for lucrative trade for beef products.

Q. Do you think the desire for beef as a food will remain?

Oh, ya! Beef is always gonna be a food. It's going to come and go as being a real popular thing. Probably in the next few years they are going to come up with some new recipes, new dishes, and new methods that make it more exportable. And I think perhaps Russia will be a huge market. Japan will be a bigger market. And we'll be exporting more products. (#95198)

Sources such as the USDA estimate decline in beef production in the next couple of years (Agricultural Outlook AO-243 1997: 5). As a response to declivity, a press release in January of 1998 from the National Cattlemen's Beef Association stated that the beef industry will progress from a commodity market to a consumer driven focus. A more integrated marketing system for the chain of production will set up improved communication and streamline efforts toward brand-like consistency of the product, improved quality, and standardization. Consumers expect consistency in the product. When a steak is purchased for consumption, a certain expectation in taste, tenderness, and size is required by today's consumer. Their satisfaction leads to repeat sales. Catering to what the consumer wants will make the difference between profit and disaster.

Today's consumer also wants convenience. Meals prepared rapidly, nutritious snacks, one-handed foods, mini-meals, and food for on-the-run lifestyles are the norm. Workers and families grab meals from convenience outlets, eat meals in their cars, or want to prepare dinners in a half hour or less. U.S. consumers also want food purchases to continue at a reasonable cost. Currently, Americans spend 10.5% of their consumption dollars for food at home (Ag 2001 1996: 13). One half of consumer meals are currently eaten away from home, also. Chuck Schroeder, the CEO of the NCBA states that "we know that when it comes to meal planning, Americans want foods that look and taste like
it took a lot of effort, but, in reality, were prepared with no-muss, no fuss. The beef industry is moving to meet those demands (NCBA January 8 1998: 1)."

Schroeder also referred to beef companies that have developed new easily prepared products, such as the fully cooked, ready to eat boneless pot roast which can be prepared in seven minutes in the microwave. To motivate the creation of innovative products, NCBA will award $250,000 to a company which has created a new, branded beef product based on good value and meeting criteria of taste, convenience, and quality (NCBA January 8 1999: 1). The beef organization is also urging the use of a recognizable symbol for their product which meets industry standards for excellence and consumer preference. Ranchers contribute Beef Checkoff dollars from cattle sales that help these marketing efforts by NCBA.

The race to remain on a equal footing with chicken products has keep the beef industry marketing team hopping. Sources vary in reporting consumption rates for chicken and beef in the United States. However, the NCBA reports that on a boneless basis, beef consumption per capita in 1997 was 63.5 pounds per person, chicken at 49.6 pounds, and pork at 44.5 pounds (Beef Facts Index July 1997: 1). Commercial restaurants dished up over 7 billion servings of beef in 1996, a 2.3% increase from 1995 (Beef Facts Index July 1977: 1). Steakhouses report increased business of over 41% over the past 3 years from 1993 to 1996 (Beef Facts Index July 1997:1).

Income levels have changed on a global level, diets are more westernized, and distribution systems are becoming stronger in countries formerly closed to U.S. imports. These are important variables which have the potential to increase sales of beef. Japan will remain our largest customer, with Canada, South Korea, and Mexico following, according to Kiplinger (Vol 38 No 3 1997: 3).

Since the creation of the United States constitution and the political system which governs us, agriculture and government have been integrated in various ways. Thomas Jefferson's "land is freedom," western expansion, the Homestead Act, the rounding up of
native Americans to reservations, and the bail-out agricultural subsidies of the Great Depression all relate to government's involvement and intervention in agriculture. Government's cheap food policy has been a part of U.S. philosophy many years in the United States as a developmental necessity. Trade agreements are part of government's involvement in the vision for agriculture and food in the 21st century. The next subsection will deal with opinions on government involvement regarding agricultural subsidies as well as land management by government agencies.

9.4 Partnering with the Bureaucracy: Agricultural Subsidies

Along with trade agreements such as NAFTA, Lake and Modoc county ranchers are affected in many respects by government policy and regulation. Ranchers expressed their opinions in regard to agricultural subsidies and the debate that surrounds such assistance for agriculture in the United States. Subsidies for commodity producers were initiated as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal policies to revive the economy during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

In order to save western economies, particularly those in the Great Plains drought area, the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 provided agricultural loans, benefit payments, and purchased starving cattle and sheep (Athearn 1986: 96-97). Farmers and stockmen received federal aid at a critical time, which spurred local economies. Other federal agencies created at that time were the Farm Credit Administration and the Resettlement Administration. Even though these federally created administrative programs saved the west from economic doom, westerners as a whole were reluctant to accept these subsidies and retain their independence from bureaucratic control. Robert Ahearn in The Mythic West referred to westerner's show of resistance to subsidization as "biting the hand that feeds them." Although many western states opposed the continuation of New Deal policies, they lacked organization and a plan to initialize their own form of self-help for agriculturists. Collier's Magazine wrote that over 50 federal agencies had invested
millions to bail out farmers described as "plundering agrarian industrialists (Athearn 1986: 96-104)." Eastern journalists sharply criticized programs, and changed public opinion; describing New Deal agricultural policies as wasteful--bestowed upon those who played at independence but were not beyond mere colonists, relying on federal subsistence (Athearn 1986: 96-104). The federal government posed restrictions on spending of assistance monies, creating new agencies to regulate and control. These still exist in one form or another today, as spin-offs of the original New Deal bureaucracy. According to Athearn, East-West grievances regarding subsidies continue to this writing.

Westerners in Lake and Modoc county regard subsidies to agriculture as non-positive for the most part. But, the myth that all people engaging in agriculture are "on the dole" continues. Some sectors of agriculture are subsidized by the government, but are ranchers the beneficiary of sure profits or bail-outs if downturns occur in the market? The following comments are a brief review of rancher's opinions in regard to agricultural subsidies, particularly in regard to beef production.

Well, generally speaking I'm not very much in favor of government subsidies. Although I have used the drought relief plan one year. We are currently doing some work on the Summer Lake Irrigation District using some ASC assistance. I can't say I am dead set against it, 'cause obviously we're using it. But as a general practice, I feel like we ought to stand on our own two feet. I don't think I'd be happy dependent upon it. (#95191)

Wouldn't it be wonderful if the government would stay out of agriculture. Subsidies--you know--the government payin' people? Such as the CRP Program on the land we purchased. Payin' people not to produce. It's been discussed many times that the cow business is not a subsidy business. But, in the same respect it should be, because the government won't leave us alone to produce. We have NAFTA and GATT, we had deals with Australia and New Zealand and Argentina to import and export. And if meat prices were too high, they just raised our quotas 'til it just broke the market completely. Then they'd drop 'em and eventually build back up. The government won't stay out of it. (#951911)

Personally, if subsidies are available, you are a fool not to take them. But I just as soon they not be in any ag program. It creates a lot of false markets
and maybe one year you benefit from them and another you don't and then you expect to get it. And then they change the program and it will really hurt you. It creates a false market that's not good for any body. Maybe people get into it for the wrong reasons. (#95195)

Well, we have taken advantage of subsidies when we had the drought. We didn't have any hay to speak of. It helped us immensely. We had to buy a lot of hay. I think a lot of people do abuse it. I've read where people get thousands and thousands of dollars for government subsidies. A lotta people think ranchers are subsidized, with our hands out. Well, we're not. Like I said, we used it when we really, really needed it. But I guess a lot of city people don't see it as needed. Like this farming program? (This is a referral to the Conservation Reserve Program.) So many people have made a living off of it in the years past. (#952023)

I think subsidies are as much a public relations problem as anything else. About 90% of the subsidies go to about four crops. But on the other hand, it's the cheap food policy that this country wants. But I think we are probably better off without it. I think we need to keep the funds that develop conservation projects because there is a direct benefit to everyone. Keep us in the business of managing resources, money available for things like riparian repair, flood damage and the like. There's a case for those. Things like CRP--I dunno. But direct crop subsidies? We're better off without 'em. So we can make a case for what we absolutely have to have without fighting that issue. (#95209)

I don't like the CRP subsidy. Around here a lot of people are making it part of their income! They put it into CRP and take the water rights off of it and go put it in another piece a ground. Then when that goes out they put it over here. And if it's real dry the government let's 'em go in and graze it anyway. I think it's for the birds! I don't think it's right at all. No, absolutely not. (#951929)

I think it would be better if we phased 'em all out. It does put us at a disadvantage in the world market because a lot of other countries feel farmers are valuable. Our country doesn't. When you are competing on a world market, a lotta countries subsidize their farmers 'cause they want 'em there. But I think as far as what we're doin' I think they should be phased out in time. Give 5 years or so they don't get hit. I think there has been way too much. In cattle we really don't get into it because we don't have a subsidy for cows. Grain programs and things like that. Reports of 30-40% of farm budgets—you know that's not right. You gotta phase out of it over time to allow the guy to compensate for it. Can't wean somebody overnight. Not when the government did it to 'em. (#95203)
Some regarded conservation programs like stream restoration and flood control as a subsidy when cost shared by government agencies, while others thought the question referred to crop subsidies only. Both types of assistance to agriculture are construed by segments of the population as handouts to agriculture and have damaged its public image. The stereotypes that have formed regarding the agricultural population's reliance and acceptance of subsidies remains in the 1990's, although the majority of this type of assistance was generated over 60 years ago during the Great Depression of the 1930's.

The feed subsidy program to which ranchers in Lake and Modoc refer is the Livestock Feed Program, authorized by the Agriculture Act of 1949 and currently amended by the Disaster Assistance Act of 1989 (Skaggs, Falk, and Hancock 1996: 23). The program provides assistance to livestock, including cattle, sheep, hogs, goats, poultry, horses, and fish used for food or the production of food. USDA'S Farm Service Agency has estimated that 75 - 80% of funds expended went to beef cattle in recent years as a result of emergencies due to disease, flood, drought, fire, hurricane, earthquake, both hot and cold weather extremes, or other natural disasters (Skaggs, et al 1996: 23). Requests to implement government feed program funding is initiated by the Farm Service Agency or by the state governor in a disaster declaration. Producers are eligible who suffer a loss of at least 40%. The program cost shares additional feed purchases on a 30% reimbursed basis, or on the loss of feed production whichever is the lesser (Skaggs et al 1996:23). In 1997, the United States Department of Agriculture made additional assistance available in several parts of the country, due to severe losses from weather conditions.

The NCBA contends that feed subsidies are inequitable, because they are applied inconsistently among states and producers, according to the above source. Skaggs, et al go on to state that questions regarding the market and resource effects of feed subsidies are likely to continue. Interestingly, in regard to the controversy over agricultural subsidies in general, Jon Wefald of Kansas State University states that the total sum of agricultural subsidy payments from 1933 to 1996 was 80 billion dollars, while the
savings and loan bailout of the late '80's cost the U.S. government 200 billion dollars (National Public Policy Education Conference: 1997).

Government relations, if not in the form of subsidies, are a part of ranching. Regulations regarding safe production of beef, use of private and public lands, licensing for use of chemicals, livestock transportation inspection, and herd health of livestock—such as Bangs vaccination of cattle—are some of the areas in which government and private business interact. The relationships forged with government agencies and their personnel are of crucial concern for future continuation of rancher's livelihood.

9.5 Partnering with the Bureaucracy: Agency Relationships

Use of federal lands was encouraged early in the century with the creation of the U.S. Forest Service in 1906, and the Taylor Grazing Act in 1934. The multiple use concept developed in 1960 for integral recreation, wildlife, grazing, timber, and mining use. Management of public lands by federal agencies consumes legislative activities, regulation, and huge, organizational bureaucracies. The association between ranchers and these governing agencies in Lake and Modoc county was revealed regarding attitudes, relationships, and interdependence.

Q. Describe the current agency philosophy, your relationship, and the change, if one has occurred, in your relationship with these agencies.

The government has changed so that they have to conform to the government rules, you know. They are doing their job. That is what they are getting paid for. So, I dunno. It would be hard if we get some real bad personnel in here. A lot of the problem is how the head person interprets policy and following through. A lot of their interpreting is not the way it was intended. Some of 'em are using it on a more personal level. You know, that's bad. It's created a stir in people in the west. People are mad. With range reform, it's not the price raise, it's the regulations we are going to have to conform with. (#952025)

If they keep screwin' with ya, pretty quick you gotta quit, because you don't have time to deal with all the bullshit. From the '60's to the '80's, you went and met with them in the spring and when you gathered in the fall.
Now it seems we are in there every week with them. Not us, because we have a good range con, but a lot of people are. (A range 'con' is jargon for range conservationist.) (#95205)

The hardest thing is keeping our cows away from the riparian areas on our permit. We have been monitoring conditions for the last four years. Trout Unlimited has come up with some funds for fencing through a grant. We have limited grazing there now. We are waiting for the forest supervisor to sign off on our Environmental Impact Statement. The EIS. There are so many acronyms! When we are at a meeting with them, most of the ranchers have to finally tell 'em whoa! You've got to tell us what these mean. We don't use them every day and we don't remember what they are. (#952026)

The BLM won't listen to the horse problem. The biggest problem they have is disposin' of 'em. When you have a stallion that is 15 years old, there isn't much that can be done with him. There's nobody to take him and train him. And nobody wants to take him and feed him for the next 15 years. They can't do anythin' with him! This Wild Horse Annie got all these bills passed and she went to schools and showed pretty pictures of the horses and things. But they never came up with a management plan to keep 'em in balance. They catch these stallions and if nobody wants 'em, they take 'em back out and let the old ones starve to death. We have over 300 horses out there on our range. They run the cows off from the water holes. They tell us when to move the cows out of the bitter brush so the deer will have feed, but the horses are there all the time. They stomp and paw in the wintertime and trash those bushes to pieces. There is very little water out there on the allotments and when we took our cows off they (the government agency) observed that the waterholes were gettin' all stomped up. That's where the horses come when there is nothing left. They'll come to water as their natural instinct. And they are really tearin' it up. Common sense was left out of the picture. (#952029)

Look how inefficient the Forest Service and the BLM and the government agencies are. It costs the government so much to administer what anybody with any bit of sense could do with 5% of the help. A lot more efficiently. (#95196)

I don't know whether you'd say it was a cycle of administration, but it was pretty difficult for a while. I think that's why the Stewardship Committee was formed. Then, after it was formed there were some transfers of personnel and some out and others back in. With the Stewardship, we got these AMP's (Area Management Plans) done and one thing and another. Well, things got better! 'Course, I think there's give and take. And maybe ranchers don't want to admit it, but we changed our philosophy some, and
they changed theirs quite a bit and there was a spirit of cooperation there for several years that has really helped. The Stewardship Committee is a good working group. Because BLM administration went right ahead and shoved things down people's throats, whether they wanted it or not. I gotta give a lot of my friends credit—ranchers, the Modoc County farm advisor, the district manager of the BLM, the forest supervisor. A guy from the Nevada Fish and Game. (#95208)

The harassment is certainly more intense. I wouldn't say their management is, really. I don't know if you want that in your records. They might come and kill me! A neighbor says they are bowing to environmental pressure. The environmentalists complain about the grazing and the Forest Service come and bears down on us about it. They are caught in the middle. (#952060)

I have one statement for 'em. They are impotent in every area, except expenditure of funds. They don't do anything. (#95203)

In the 40's we had one man here at the ranger station. And he was taking care of all of this here. We didn't have all of this paperwork. All of these people in a great big building running into each other trying to get to the coffeepot. First thing in the morning, all day long. You go out into the forest and see so many Forest Service pickups. One man in each rig. (#95202)

Our ranger was a Haight-Ashbury person. Trying to save the earth? So, right off the bat it was "I want all the cattle off this range." We have another person, our range technician, who is pretty knowledgeable, really is. But they are between a rock and a hard place. We just don't have knowledgeable people in the Forest Service anymore. They may know what weeds are by identification, or what a piece of grass is. They can't read a brand or anything else. They'll call on a Friday afternoon and say they saw 15 out there. You don't know whether it's 15 pair or 15 cows. My husband rode three days trying to find them. He never found a cow...............They put in a roadless area on our main trail to the permit with a berm as high as this ceiling. Our cows can't walk over it. They do that every little bit. (952023)

The agencies move their personnel after they do what they have to do, whether people like it or not. Do whatever damage, and they're gone. He doesn't have to look people in the eye and be hated and despised because he's gone and probably where he's gone the job is real cushy and nice. So many of these guys come in here whether it has to do with agriculture or what. It affects people for years to come. We had a guy in here at our dining room table, he had no more idea of our operation and didn't care.
He had a lot of great plans for our place and we just couldn't go along with it. He got another job in _________. When he told me, I just smiled from ear to ear and said "oh, good!" (#951911)

Emotions get very high on things. You hear comments from people that you know won't work. The lifestyle they grew up with allowed 'em certain things they can't have now. They have gotta change their way a thinkin' and be progressive is what it amounts to. I'm not sayin' "cave in to everything!" But you have to rethink what you're doing. One of the very successful approaches we have had in this basin is sayin' "okay, we are looking at total resource management." We are not looking at livestock management or fish management. We are looking at total resource management. So let's look at everything. Environmental groups can't argue with that. They say "okay, you are taking in our concerns." You better look at the total picture--fish, cattle, wildlife, water resources, timber, grazing, everything. We have the two watersheds here and we are looking at watershed management. People say "they let you talk you into this?" We haven't given in to anything. If we have a problem, we take a good look at it. The only way to do that is to get everyone involved to look at the facts. On the environmental end, they often don't want to look at the facts, so you have to challenge them. Bringin' in everybody to the table and saying "let's talk." If somebody would have told me three years ago, I'd be sittin' down with a bunch a biologists, I'd a told them they were crazier than hell. But if we don't take that opportunity to do that, they are going to do it behind your back. You might as well be in the loop. (#952010)

In the late 1980's, relationships between ranchers and rangers began to diverge, as a result of legislative rulings and environmental pressures carried out by the agencies. Regulations increased in how and when ranchers could use their allotments. These days, reassignment of grazing permits or their re-issue draw comments from persons filing "affected interest" status with a resulting public process from environmentalists, recreationists, and hunters. Range Reform '94, initiated by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, gives environmentalists and other non-ranchers more say in public land decisions. Government actions are sometimes viewed as lack of due process for the small entrepreneur, whose financial equilibrium is easily upset.

Agencies are often caught in the middle of conflictive situations regarding land use, with orders for policy coming from urban regional offices or Washington, D.C. While
efforts to trim the size of the local bureaucracies through layoffs and hiring freezes occurs within the agencies, ranchers see little benefit, relief from regulation, or return to simpler management styles. These organizations have a diverse structure including recreation managers, biologists, wildlife managers, and others who support specific agendas regarding resource use.

During "Environmental Stewardship," a conference held in Cedarville, California in September 1996, speaker Frank Gladics described the change in personnel in federal agencies as having a different value set and short experience in rural communities. Gladics is a former Forest Service employee and currently a consultant to an independent forest products association. He stated that the average length of stay for new government employees within a community is an 18 - 24 month stint. The new agency biologists and archaeologists think for themselves and publicly try to make images—going against the historical, military tradition of these organizations. Gladics emphasized that ranching is no longer just ranching, it is education. He voiced concern for ranching families whose children leave, encouraging offspring to become directly involved in the political process (Gladics 1996: Environmental Stewardship Conference).

9.6 Organizational Change and Communication

Corporate and organizational culture also reflect the paradigm shift of the 1960's and 1970's. With a nation secure in its ability to provide food in abundance, policy began to center on social issues and societal needs. Organizational culture also changed with computerized technology. Organizations have become 'knowledge oriented,' according to Peter Drucker in Post-Capitalist Society (1993: 8). Knowledge, both technical and academic, are equated with power. Drucker views the use of knowledge, or one's possession of it, as cultural. Ranchers, government agencies, and public land's affected interest groups each have their own cultural codes for expressing knowledge. As
agencies downsize, government agency personnel often seek to establish a high profile in the organization using knowledge as power, expressed in their ways of speaking.

In research by Susan Philips, speech styles are observed as a tool of power. If one does not know the language of a culture, including that of the bureaucracy, speech becomes a control mechanism. Philips' work in bureaucratic settings establishes speech styles as a means of social control. Language equates with knowledge. Often, systems require conformity to the rules, including expression of knowledge through speech. An example of bureaucratic control is in the previously cited quote by a rancher. "There are so many acronyms during the meetings! When we are at the table with them we ranchers have to holler 'whoa.' You've got to tell us what they mean. We don't use them everyday." Systems have formats for communication, and although the citizenry of the United States believes that we have a shared, common, interpretive framework of language, it does not exist.

9.7 Challenging the Bureaucracy

Western ranchers efforts to fight government control are expressed in causes such as the Sagebrush Rebellion in the 1970's, and more recently in areas such as Nye County, Nevada. Dick Carver, County Commissioner in Nye County, is a well known figure in the public lands use debate, because of personal decision to bulldoze a pathway through a roadless area designated by the U.S. Forest Service. His contention with the Forest Service was that public land use decisions should be determined in the affected county, rather than with blanket rulings enacted somewhere far from local citizens and their perspectives. The incident made Carver a leading voice in the county supremacy movement (Larson 1995: 54). The U.S. Justice Department states that over 35 counties in Arizona, Nevada, New Mexico, and California have declared authority over federal lands within their boundaries (Larson 1995: 54). Carver carries a copy of the U.S. Constitution in his pocket, referring to it often while emotionally describing his rights as
a citizen of the United States. Roger Marzulla, a former Assistant U. S. Attorney General defending Nye County likens Carver’s actions as a County Commissioner to Rosa Park’s actions in defending her civil rights.

Nye County, Nevada is an immense tract of land which is 93% federally owned. The Bureau of Land Management controls most of the valleys and the U.S. Forest Service the upland regions (Larson 1995: 54). The history of dissatisfaction from federal regulation began when the BLM refused to allow the county to run a phone wire through a ditch to the landfill without first obtaining an archaeological survey and appraisal. Time elapsed, and finally, the BLM admitted it had lost the application for the required permit. Cellular service came quicker, but not without loss of faith and knowledge of the agency’s lack of cooperation in the matter. Various snubs by government officials followed, and Nye County Commissioners continued in an atmosphere of oppression, cut from communication with agency personnel. Government managers blamed the county for an attitude they described as lawlessness.

Carver takes offense when linked to extremists, even in his relationship with neighbor Wayne Hage who lives just a few miles from Carver’s small ranch in Nye County. Hage charges that the Forest Service so closely monitored his access to public land that the agency eventually drove him out of business (Larson 1995: 54). Hage has been involved in several lawsuits regarding the use and access to his public land permit.

Time Magazine compares Carver’s actions against the U.S. Forest Service to the Oklahoma City bombing incident, although dissimilar in that no life or destruction of property occurred. Carver’s controversial and supposed anarchist action was to bulldoze open a roadway closed by the Forest Service without the required permission by the government. He did so with a Caterpillar D-7 draped with an American Flag, accompanied by the singing of the national anthem, while seated behind the steering mechanism with a copy of the U.S. Constitution in his shirt pocket. Carver bypassed an
armed Forest Service marshal who blocked the way, who subsequently crawled out of the way to avoid the advancement of the large machine.

The following case of Nye County versus the federal government resulted in a decision in 1997 stating that while the United States has the authority to manage and administer public lands, it also acknowledges that Nye County, Nevada has the legal right to participate in the management process for these lands. Future actions on the roads bulldozed by Carver are to be determined by the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, and Nye County. Parties involved are to agree to future maintenance, closures, or changes in road use (Bowman 1997: 30). Carver stated that the decision was a major step forward in furthering relations concerning public land use between local citizens and the government to enhance outcomes for both the people and the resources (Bowman 1997: 30).

Ranchers in Lake and Modoc County are well aware of Carver's actions. Some agree and some do not think it is an appropriate means of settling differences regarding increased government control of public lands. Ranchers in Modoc County staged their own "Win Back the West" symposium with speakers including Wayne Hage and Dick Carver.

We put on this conference mainly to educate the people around here that there are some things you can do to educate yourselves. It was sponsored by the local Cattlemen's Association. We had an attendance of over 300, county commissioners from both Lake and Modoc. Environmentalists too, and national news coverage. Dick Carver is a very nice, great guy. He was forced to make a decision because of the regulations imposed on him. (#95205)

In February 1996, the Lake County Stockgrowers also hosted Dick Carver as the guest speaker for their annual membership dinner meeting. Carver stated in his comments that governments are created by men, and the Constitution was written to protect citizens and that "takings" were not within the historical rights of the people who came to America to
own property. Agency heads are merely appointed officials, not elected by the populace. He stated that "good" people are employed by the agencies but that some are driven by the power of politics, which includes the control of a most valuable resource--water. He is against police powers by federal agencies, objecting that policing is not within their jurisdiction. Grazing is a legislated right on public lands which county commissioners are obligated to support. He pointed out that nobody purposely destroys public land when their income is derived from it. During the presentation, Carver emotionally cited several passages from the U.S. Constitution, which he keeps in his breast pocket. He appeared as not as a man of radical ambition, but sincere in his beliefs about the basic constitutional rights endowed to him as a U.S. citizen who happens to be a rancher, and to his civic responsibilities to the citizens of Nye County.

The ranchers commented about Carver's activities, stating that such actions serve a purpose.

I think the Dick Carver's of the world have done one thing good. They have raised the issue. But, the confrontational approach that Nye County uses is not the solution..........The question is not who owns it but the question is that there is a shared management out there. That there are private property rights that exist, grazing and mining rights and those sorts of things and that they have to be recognized. Water rights have to be recognized by the Federal government as an interest that has to be considered when management decision are made out there. So it's up to us to provide the mechanism locally for that input. And we have done that here. It is different than Nye County's. It's different than New Mexico. It is working. To an extent, it's working. But, God, does it take a lot of work! Incredible amount of work! (#95209)

A positive aspect of the debate over public land use is the heightening of consciousness and awareness for the permittees, the preservationists, and the government workers whose task it is to oversee these lands. The concept that public lands operate and should be managed on a site-specific basis is a positive advancement in the health of the rangelands. Each region and place in the United States is unique, and each operation.
The National Research Council recommends in their 1994 study that a new national system of inventorying and monitoring rangelands is needed. According to the Council, a national assessment requires the following (National Research Council 1994: 151):

* adoption of a standardized definition of rangeland health and indicators of change
* consistent classification of federal and non-federal rangelands
* collection of data by the same or similar methods
* data collection using statistically valid sampling for evaluation at state, regional, and national levels
* periodic and consistent repetition of sampling to detect trends in the measures used to evaluate rangeland health

Science versus societal ethics will also be of concern in the continuing debate. Science itself is debated, in whose science is "right science." Ranchers in this survey refer to range scientists such as Mike Borman, John Buckhouse, and Fred Obermiller (OSU) at the land grant universities within their states as credible scientists, along with their local Extension agents, such as Don Lancaster in Modoc County. BLM range conservationist Susie Stokke of Cedarville, California was also cited as fair, knowledgeable, and a helpful person in dealing with range issues. The path to agreement on public land use has been arduous, long, painful, involved, and difficult. Concerns will not disappear overnight, and local involvement will play an increasingly important role.

With new expectations for the ability to stay in business, what are the chances of entering this endeavor as a career? A look at some of the internal factors affecting young people who would like to ranch reveals some concerns for the future. Financing is difficult to obtain without major capital investment, probability of return is unpredictable and risky, and economics of the business do not justify the high cost of land. In fact, in many areas the highest and best use for land is no longer listed as agricultural.
9.8 *Internal Factors Affecting Ranching as a Future Option*

A profile developed by the Oregon Department of Agriculture in 1996 states that the average age of ranchers in Oregon is 60 years old (*Agriculture: Oregon's Leading Industry: 7*). In this research sample, 60% of ranchers were 50 years of age and older. Also, in selecting respondents to interview, it was hard to find ranchers that fell within the under 50 age category who ran between 300 and 600 cows.

It is difficult for beginning farmers to capitalize the initial investment necessary for land, stock, machinery, and operating expense without inheritance or assistance of some form. Although banks recognize the value of agriculture to the economies of these two states, a financial statement still needs to balance before loans are made. The banking industry is unwilling to repeat the agricultural credit disasters of the 1980's in which overextended loans and price fluctuations caused severe losses in the financial sector. Policies are tighter, credit more restricted, and a centralized banking structure makes agricultural loans more obscure.

*Klamath Fall's Herald and Newspaper* ran an article regarding the high price of land in Montana on the subject of "trophy ranches." Some purchasers are looking for rivers, others fish, or a way to invest new money in assets. Lee Levine a Bozeman realtor, says today's customer has a bigger bankroll, willing to invest anywhere from 5 million to 12 million now for the right ranch in the right place. This is a jump up from the average one to two million-dollar price tag from previous years (*Larcome 1997: 13*). Although places with mountains, wildlife, beautiful scenery, rivers, and fish top the list in high sales, demand and high prices trickle-down to ranch properties in less-scenic settings. The incongruity of high land prices and paying for it from ranching generated lively discussion on whether ranching will be able to perpetuate. Ranchers were asked if anyone could be a rancher.

No. I think the majority of people would not be up to the long hours. There's certain ranchers can't do it! They are out of business right now. I think there's an aura about runnin' your own ranch from people who come
out of the city. They have no idea. I think they find out when reality kicks in and say "this is too hard." When you start losin' calves from scours you are out there in the middle of the night trying to keep calves alive. Puttin' up hay all hours of the day. My wife and I need to get away badly sometimes. A person needs to get away from it sometimes, but you really worry about it and stay in touch. It's a 24 hour-a-day commitment. I don't think a lot of people could take the financial instability of it. Most businesses look at a net profit of 10%. And the cattle business in a good year is 2-3%. The fact that people who really enjoy it and come here to visit, is a distinct separation from making a living from it. (#952010)

Definitely not. You have to be motivated, a self starter. (#951911)

Oh, I think so. I think it might take a lot of time for some people but if you like something enough you are going to become easier to learn, if you want it. You gotta want to do it, if you don't enjoy it you might as well leave. Like I say, if somebody from the city wanted to do it, it might take a little longer but they could figure it out. If people were willing to help 'em, and they had the right attitude. It's harder nowadays to get into it, the expense is too much. Ranching is not to make money. You are better off putting your money in the bank and getting 2-3% interest than this if all you want is money. Land is high, and the price for what you produce is too low. The most truth about ranching is until you sell it or die, you never see wealth. Most ranchers are not rich. They are probably the lower middle class of America, as far as usable income. (#95195)

I know of people that want to be ranchers but there is some mentality, there is something to 'em that they can never read a cow. Or they never can see what the grass is doin'. Their mind just doesn't work right. And I don't know why. I'm workin' with a person right now that's been around it all his life, but he just doesn't catch on. (#951928)

Well, if things don't go right then people blow their top. A lot of 'em. And some people just don't want to put in the hours in that it takes sometimes. And there's sometimes that it's pretty hard work, like building fences. And people anymore are just not interested in workin' that hard. If they can hire it done, well, they like that better. But you have to have money for that too. And I'd just as soon work and keep the money! (laughs) (#951929)

No. No, I don't. You have to be able to cope with the unpleasant things that go with this business too. And it's not all pleasant work. It's a lot of hard work. And you have to be committed to it every day. It isn't a five day a week job, it's a seven day a week job. Some people don't like that
kind of schedule. And I guess the best example of that is my son who lives off the ranch and has another job five days a week. He works just as hard in five days, but has free time. He really felt tied down to it here. (#951910)

No. I don't think so. I think you have to like it! You have to be dedicated. It's not a rich life. You have to go with the ups and downs, and hope your family likes it and the wife will stay. And not leave. (#952026)

Probably not. Well, not full time anyway. Unless you've got plenty of money. I don't think you can pay for land at the price it is and pencil it out payin' for cows too. Ranch land has taken on a higher value than it's economic value. (#95209)

Ranchers agree that it is difficult to get into the business, even through inheriting the ranch. Many stated that the only way to get into ranching was to inherit. Others discussed the lure of higher wages, regular hours, and better benefit packages available in other careers. The future of their enterprise was an unsettling concern.

Look at the young people who would be working on the ranch. You don't see the young people anymore. I mean the families are separating. The families are going to the cities. Higher wages. Easier living five days a week, eight hours per day. (#95202)

There are probably six of us around here that got ranches from our parents. Of our age group, there's not one of us that our kids are left on the ranch. Not one. They left for one reason or another. Air conditioned office, car, house, swimming pool. We don't even make per month what the last raise they received was. It's unreal. So you can't blame the kids for not staying. High salaries. (#952023)

The only way you get in it is if you stay and work with your dad and go through that routine and hopefully, he will set up his estate right so you don't lose it all so you can go on. If you are a kid who likes ag and you don't have a family deal, there is no way basically you can get in. (#95205)

A pet peeve of mine is that we need more young people's programs. One that would finance operating expenses while you were purchasing land. It seems like you can scratch a little together to buy some landbase, but you can't operate. There's a couple a younger fellas here that if they don't
finance 'em, they are missing the boat on. Hard workers. They'd a had a lifetime customer. And they'd a had an easier go of it. (#951910)

Uncertainty of economics, the instability of beef prices, and high break-even points have led ranchers to diversification in their operations. Some capitalize on the high price of hay and sell it to raise ranch income. They change their business plan in doing so, by either reducing herd size or renting pasture elsewhere that does not require winter feeding of hay. Small diversifications supplement their income in various ways; starting colts and training horses, selling leatherwork, keeping a few head of sheep or bummer calves, offering guiding and guest services. These small enterprises are what many of our grandmothers called "the butter and egg money." Many wives are also employed away from the ranch to supplement income.

The future of ranching involves change. Changing the stereotypes that envelop ranchers, surviving politics and policy, finding new product ventures using beef, unification of producers and production, educating the public, and just merely "hanging in there" will require careful scrutiny of their operations, patience with those who do not understand the operation of their businesses, a sharp pencil, and a willingness to tell their story. They will probably lose some of their freedom and independence in doing so. They must determine if they can meet the cost of their own futures.
Chapter 10
Conclusion

This research about ranching in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California is organized into five categories: the land, the ranching culture, business and lifestyle, myth and stereotype, and the future of ranching. Conclusions are discussed in similar organization including physical environment, rancher's perspectives on business and lifestyle, myth and stereotype, challenges to the business, and advocacy. Also in this concluding section are future research possibilities and applied applications of results.

10.1 Physical Environment: The Context for Ranching

Lake and Modoc counties are big on space, and to get to know them, one needs to stay awhile. The senses come alive with the sound of the wind, the feel of it; the song of coyotes at night; the leaves overhead; and the occupational sounds of ranching—the baler, the feed truck, or the stock trailer on a bumpy road. There is an abundance of wide, open country for the eyes to see, the smell of snow coming in winter and fresh mown fields in the summer. The senses provide non-verbal ways of learning about these two counties and clues to why people stay or choose not to stay. I find that ranchers are closely intertwined with Nature, and view themselves as conservationists of the environment for two reasons: (1) they love the interaction between raising cattle and the natural aspects of birth, harvest, and weather, and (2) they realize they cannot continue to do business without respecting and taking care of the resource that allows them their livelihood. The power and beauty Nature exhibits is part of their satisfaction as ranchers.

Both Lake and Modoc counties are sparsely populated, rural, high desert environments well-suited to ranching. They have a high percentage of federally owned lands; 77% in Lake County, Oregon and 75.8% in Modoc County, California. The
reality of these numbers is that only 23% and 24.2% of land is privately owned for the production of beef cattle. The terrain consists of mountainous, timbered areas, upland plateaus, and valley floors. Volcanic eruptions, beginning over 25 million years ago, formed the geology of these areas. Although human activity takes place primarily in the valleys, soils are alkaline in nature and the majority of farming activities are limited to hay production and pasture. Plant life has adapted to the environment regarding elevation, temperature, growing season, soils, and consistently available moisture. Drought is well known in the region.

The land is full of surprises upon inspection. In addition to salty soils, many of the large bodies of water are alkaline, making them unsuitable for irrigation and recreational opportunities. Hot water springs erupt in places, juniper and sagebrush are prevalent vegetation, and the land is rocky. Although unsuited for row crops, beef cattle grow well here on native and established pastures. Weather is unpredictable and extreme, and there is the potential of freezing in any month.

There is a variety of dryland plants and animals. Some are sensitive species while are abundant and do well. Many come back after an absence, such as the peregrine falcon and the magpie. Plant varieties often lay dormant, waiting for sufficient water or other variables in temperature and weather. What is missing in both Lake and Modoc County is a substantiated record of natural occurrences in conjunction with the condition of the land during such times. A record such as this would provide insight into whether sensitive species are victims of agricultural practices or are in their natural pattern of existence.

In addition to the conditions present in the high desert environment, I find that the high percentage of federal land ownership in both counties is a major factor in county economics. Grazing on public lands is a part of the majority of ranching operations simply because of lack of available productive private land in these counties. Due to the small amount of deeded land, elimination of public grazing would eventually put most
ranchers out of business. Those opting for private ground leases would find the price subject to fierce competition and, subsequently, receive minus or very low returns to their business.

10.2 The Ranching Occupation

Ranchers believe that producing beef cattle on ranch lands in Lake and Modoc country is suitable for making a living, raising their families, and working at attaining personal goals. Strong ethics exist regarding work and conduct which includes abiding by one's word, with a respect for others who do the same. Freedom, independence, and being one's own boss are important values. They feel a sense of community obligation and neighborliness. I find ranching in these two counties requires both physical and mental stamina and a real love for what one does to continue in business.

John Sisk's hypothesis that "ranchers are mortgaged to the past" has weight. They interact in a world that is technologically oriented, but their success in ranching is related to cow savvy, horsemanship, and a practical, common sense attitude. The participants depending on public lands, who comprise 74% of this survey, are confused about government policies which affect the management of their business and its value. The data collected indicates that ranchers feel that partnerships were encouraged the government with the passage of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 and that now this relationship is changing. This legislation was initiated to stop overgrazing by itinerant stockmen during the drought of the 1930's in the West. It protects the environment through apportionment of rangeland use to certain permittees only, who are assessed a fee for use, or an A.U.M. fee. Price per Animal Unit Month assessed for grazing on government land is confusing to the public, who see it as subsidized welfare to ranchers. Fees appear low, but after computing the additional cost of transportation, water, repairs, predators, decreased conception rates, and the impacts of marginal forage, costs are comparable with leasing private pasture. There are widespread considerations for the
sustainability of rural economies when considering eliminating public land grazing in areas where federal ownership is very high, as in these counties. The doctrine of the saving of rural America is preached, but use of federal land is not addressed as a factor in it. Use of public land for grazing in Lake and Modoc Counties not only allows agriculture to be conducted, but has a trickle-down effect in the community. Removal of this government-managed resource would be devastating not only to ranchers, but to the isolated communities in which they live.

Government personnel in Lake and Modoc counties hold diverse theories within their organizations regarding land use. Large bureaucracies manage the majority of public lands in these two counties. Major policy decisions affecting local ranching are made far from southeastern Oregon and northeastern California. Results indicate that relations between some government personnel and producers are excellent, while others could be improved. Building rapport and stable relationships between ranchers and government personnel in regard to land use will continue.

Although ranchers use skills made popular in the mythology of over 100 years ago, they are not oblivious to new demands or skills required in the late 20th century. They are contributors to wise use theory and their longevity in business reflects they know its value. The era of the range wars and large scale land acquisitions, such as the Louisiana and Gadsden Purchases, by the U. S. government has passed, and history has seen the move away from an agrarian lifestyle. Stockgrowers realize they are small in number, and see the changes in the industry. It is ranchers belief that the U.S. no longer regards domestic food production as one of its top priorities. The farm vote is gone, ranchers work harder for what they get. Ranching is more difficult than it was even 10 years ago. Government relations, environmental pressures, higher production costs, and high land prices factor into expansion or continuation of the operation by heirs.

Ranchers, above all, are an independent, diverse group of people; each has their own ideology. Ranchers differ from cowboys in that they own land and are tied to the
responsibilities ownership entails. They respect skill in individuals, feel that education occurs both institutionally and through on-the-ground experience, although each category is valued for different reasons.

Findings indicate ranching is a male-oriented culture, although men and women may do the same work. For a woman to be respected as equals by male ranchers in terms of skill, they have to be very good ropers, demonstrate a high degree of horse and cow sense, prove business acumen, and perform the duties associated with ranching better than men do.

Observations and oral data indicate ranchers have a spiritual reverence for Nature, although they are reticent about this unless directly addressed about a religious aspect of the business. Ranching requires long hours in all kinds of conditions. This is their choice. They report being happy in their work and that they wouldn't be doing anything else. Responses reveal that they think not just anyone is cut out for the job. The risk is high and the pay low. In our technologically oriented society, there are differences in cultures who work on the land and those whose primary employment centers on technology and services. The literature cited reveals misunderstandings in both ways of life.

A paradox that exists in the ranching culture concerns the nurturing, love, and care that is expended for beef animals, yet culminates in their shipment to slaughter. Ranchers believe they are providing a valuable product, that their part in food production has high worth. Doing a good job of caring for the animal is a moral obligation as well as providing a safe consumer product and a yearly paycheck for their families. One rancher's comment about their old horse provides an analogy about this paradoxical relationship between love and death.

Life on a ranch you see a lot a death and a lotta life. We love 'em but we send 'em to be food. Well, I sent my saddle horse this fall. I had rode him for 12 years. And he was a horse I didn't want nobody else a ridin'. He was gettin' all gray around his face and everything. And I sent him to be
chicken feed. 'Cause I'd rather see him loaded up in a truck with his head up like he was a goin' somewhere than to have to take a gun and shoot him. Find him someday where he couldn't get up off the ground. I just.................there comes a time when you just gotta bite your tongue and do it. (#952029)

10.3 Myth and Stereotype

In reviewing the hypothesis for this study, the mythology and stereotypes surrounding the ranching culture are the result of three historical periods. Legends originally formed around the stockman-cowboy lifestyle during the period following the Civil War when cattle enterprises were established in places previously uninhabitable for farming. Young men became cowboys, riding the trails from Texas to Montana, moving beef to pasture or market. Ranchers and the cowboys that worked for them dealt with floods, prairie fires, drought, pests, Indians, and wild cattle and horses. Stories of bravery, independence, and high risk adventure became associated with their lifestyle.

The late 19th century brought an end to cattle ranching that founded legends about land free for the taking, self-imposed laws, cowboy skills, and brave deeds. Financing became tighter, severe weather forced many out of business, and the U.S. population began to move to the cities with advances in industrialization. Dudes traveled west on the train, a widely available form of transportation. This new era of western seekers also took pleasure in the Wild West Shows and read popular literature available to the general public. Artists, such as Remington, sent their cowboy works to national magazines for distribution. Silent motion pictures followed, then by talking film and television. The cowboy image became both a nationally admired symbol as well as a notorious character who conquered by eliminating anything in its path; such as nesters, Indians, sheepmen, or farmers. Although both personas had an element of truth, stereotyping began in the minds of those who received information indirectly from these mediums of communication. The U.S. government participated in promoting cattle raising with The Homestead Act and other land settlement programs, eliminating the Indian "problem,"
territorial protection, and supporting the development of transportation for shipping to markets in the east.

The third and current period developed with the social reforms of the 1960's and 1970's. Protection of the environment, land use, and activism replaced older theories of manifest destiny. These new ideologies continue. Ranchers are caught in the turmoil regarding regulations, grazing, agricultural subsidies, and species protection. Major populations live out of rural context. Many people have skewed images of the rancher that, in reality, earlier history and media hype helped to create.

10.4 Challenges to the Business of Ranching

Dave Frohnmeyer, President of the University of Oregon, in a speech in 1995 to the Albany, Oregon Chamber of Commerce speaks about building community and what he describes as "The New Tribalism," a theory that addresses fractionalism in our society. He describes it in this way.

The phenomenon of small and intense groups energizing the political fray based on narrow concerns, rooted in the exploitation of class, cash, gender, region, ethnicity, morality, and ideology—a give-no-quarter and take-no-prisoners activism that demands satisfaction and accepts no compromise. It is an environment where the political system is asked to take on social and religious disputes that the system cannot possibly resolve.

Assuming Frohnmeyer's description of "The New Tribalism" is correct in assessing cultural behavior in the 1990's, his theory can be applied to the controversy between ranchers and the environmental movement. Small groups on both sides of the debate have narrowly defined concerns on issues, which affect political decision-making and social policy. This fractionalism works against organizational unity for ranchers. There are many small issues, differing from region to region and even county to county.

Ranchers are well aware of the concerns and realize that education regarding beef production is of crucial importance. Local and national stockgrowers' associations have
concentrated on activities to promote ranching and beef as healthy. Research and extensive media campaigns are funded by the Beef Checkoff dollar, to market beef as a product that is nutritious, tasty, and is easy to prepare. Although ranchers are slow to unify as a group, some progress has been made. Barriers stemming from the original myths of freedom, independence, and being one's own boss remain strong values. I find some ranchers express confidence in the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, while others distrust or do not support their efforts.

From the environmental side, the movement is powerful and has a large membership that funds activism regarding land use, endangered species, and various forms of preservation. Environmentalism ranges from the activists at local levels, college campuses, and urban dwellers, to the highest level of government in the United States in the present administration of Bill Clinton and Al Gore. Ranchers see the environmental movement as a world agenda, in which the facts are inconsistent.

Environmentalists are actively interested in preservation in both Lake and Modoc counties regarding fish, plant and animal species, riparian welfare, and use of public lands. Documentation of preservationist involvement as affected interests can be found in the minutes of various government agency meetings regarding grazing activities or in regard to specific plant and animal propagation in the two counties. Research from the literature indicates that the majority of its followers are urban dwellers. Those who view land use from a preservationist view have their own set of myths. Many of these lack the direct contact with nature and the day to day realities with which the rancher deals. The alienation of the general population from the land occurred during the last 50 years.

Although both environmentalists and ranchers have their own particular sets of baggage, building common ground in Lake and Modoc counties is observed. The 'building of community' that Frohnmeyer encourages, is a slow and painful process, but efforts are present. Working groups involve biologists, environmentalists, ranchers, range specialists, government personnel, botanists, and other private land owners. These
teams are having some success. Examples of working groups in these counties are the Modoc County Stewardship Committee, the Goose Lake Fishes Working Group, the Warner Sucker Habitat Restoration Group, and the Beatty's Butte Grazing Association.

Part of the changing philosophy also involves the food chain and its hierarchy. The "survival of the fittest" theory of the food chain is being replaced by a philosophy that puts values on freedom and wildness and attempts to make science out of it. Historically, humankind, under threat to survive, protected themselves against predators. Ranchers are still connected to this theory. While environmentalists value freedom and wildness from a preservationist viewpoint, ranchers term themselves conservationists with similar ideals. Ranchers differ in theory through the use designation, while non-use is more widely supported by environmentalists. Ranchers see resource use as renewable, while environmentalists view it as extraction.

The definition of natural balance is also under debate. The Endangered Species Act is an example, and this legislation is hotly contested by both groups. Wild animal life is a symbol of freedom for many people. Ranchers report that elimination of species is not their intent in controlling predators caught in the act of killing livestock. The question arises whether food production and economic sustainability are more important than animal rights or preservation of species. Damage and kills from both cougar and coyotes are well-documented in both Lake and Modoc Counties. These are examples of how social change of the 1990's has affected local business.

10.5 Ranching in the New World Order

Research results indicate that speech style and the context in which it is used helps to define the culture. Hymes and Philipsen are two major researchers who have introduced the role of speech within cultures and the interpretation of its meaning in the larger society. I found that ranchers rarely "code switch," or use different speech styles outside
of their own culture; such as in speaking to government personnel or special interest
groups. To adapt a different way of speaking would be considered dishonest or
misrepresenting their own identity.

The shift of a production-oriented culture to one that includes that of public good
involves community service of a wider scale than currently exists in the ranching culture.
Although ranchers have been instrumental in the historical formation of western
communities and still give service, expanding to a wider area of public service would put
them on an equal paradigm with other large organizations. A very important need exists
to re-think defensive positioning on issues with a focus on serving the 'greater good.'
More bonding, leadership, and cohesiveness as a group is necessary, however, to
accomplish this.

If ranchers, for example, were to donate beef to homeless programs in Seattle, Los
Angeles, San Francisco, and Portland, the impact would improve their image as
benefactors of human need. Ranchers could outsource the completion of such projects.
Outsourcing has been another adaptation in organizations, which is more cost effective
and also builds business collaborations. Ranchers tend to do things themselves, not only
because of cost factors, but because of their independent nature. The Beef Checkoff
program or similar funding sources could be directed to these types of projects.

To cite Peter Drucker--"Economic performance is not the sole responsibility of a
business. Power must be balanced by responsibility (Drucker 1993: 101)." Social
responsibility also might include a firm stand on an environmental issue, but for the
'public good,' rather than in defense of economic sustainability. A city project regarding
polluted air or toxic wastes would be an example. This would create social power.
Seeking political power is no longer feasible on a majority scale, as discussed earlier.

Drucker also gives three practices that are required of the new successful organization
to prevent obsolescence: (1) continuing self improvement, (2) exploit to learn, and (3)
innovate, abandon and begin again (1993: 59). Ranchers must become more innovative
and willing to cross cultural lines, using knowledge to educate in new ways. Social
responsibility must become a multi-media communicated effort for ranchers to be
successful in changing their image.

One of the major obstacles or barriers that stands in the way of contributing to the
social needs of others is the highly valued principle of the work ethic. The cultural
importance placed on physical work is such a high moral value that it prevents ranchers
from giving to those who "won't work for it." Responses to being labeled as "welfare
ranchers" were defensive, and respondents viewed the term as very insulting as well as
untrue. Sponsorship of work programs, scholarships, neighborhood cleanups, or even
baseball teams might be more appealing to ranchers, who are outcome oriented. It is
probable that ranchers' support of a public health and wellness program would be
unexpected by the public, but it would expand product knowledge. Addressing statewide
strategic plans, such as the Oregon Benchmarks document, would serve as another public
good.

Ranchers must be able to speak the language of those who seek to control their
interests. Working on cross-cultural communication skills and breaking their own rules
of speech economy is an important piece of future success. The education process
depends on their ability to do this.

10.6 Advocacy

There are those in the 1990's who have little to do with ranching that like the lifestyle.
Dude ranches serve a wonderful purpose in that they provide a brief encounter with ranch
life. Many would never experience the cattle ranch in any form if this form of recreation
were not available. This group of aficionados also watch western movies, and are the
ones who give a friendly grin and wave or stop their cars and visit on the highway during
cattle drives. They buy beef and ranchers would do well to take their attentions to
advantage. These people like a cowboy hat, boots, and a pair of denim jeans, too. There
is a group of folks who would love to be asked to help at brandings, invited in to visit, or even just ride a horse. This is a valuable educational effort, also, and would enhance alliances from citizenry that are not directly involved in controversial issues. An interview conducted with the manager of a guest ranch revealed that many of the clients come from the east coast or Europe, have limited knowledge of ranching, and are unaware of the day-to-day realities.

They are amazed they can ride a horse all day without seeing anyone else. Most don't realize the space that exists in parts of the rural west. They request low fat meals but also enjoy more hearty foods during their stays. Some are vegetarians. Many strict vegetarians go on cattle drives. They don't equate the experience with meat production. I haven't figured that one out! All guests aren't ready for some of the veterinary practices that go along with being on a working cattle ranch. Not all participate in the activity of doctoring if they are squeamish. They worry about the safety and pain of the animals. We try to give them some education about the business and some of the facts about ranching on public land. (#952028)

Agri-tourism is promoted by the Department of Agriculture in both states. This would make interesting research in assessing potential for economic development and diversification of farm income. Ranch stays, tours, and experiential recreation are other possibilities for both education and income diversification.

10.7 Future Research

This study generates additional topics for research. Ranchers in this group own between 300 and 600 head of cows. An investigation of those who own more than these numbers would provide comparisons in land use theories, social relationships, women in ranching, public land controversies, economies of scale, and profit or loss margins. Ranching studies in other areas of the United States and the world would also provide data for comparison of issues.
In this research, issues such as government management and relationships with permittees have provided some interesting viewpoints. An ethnographic study of the government hierarchy dealing with land management issues would either repudiate or augment data in this study. A history of organizational change compared to the historical periods in which myth and stereotypical attitudes developed would be a comparison that would also support this research.

Ranchers, both male and female, discussed the Cattlemen's Association and the Farm Bureau and their effectiveness in helping the producer. Further studies in the philosophies and politics of these two organizations regarding beef production would provide information to clarify the trust/mistrust factor that respondents addressed. Some believe that the loyalties of the newly created National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) lie with the packer instead of the independent producer. Distrust is evident over this issue.

Beef cattle implanted with computerized chips to trace product contamination may not be the answer to identifying its source. Also, the public is confused about how it occurs; whether on the ranch, the feedlot, the packer, or the retail outlet. Food safety is a national initiative in the United States and an area for further research regarding beef.

The NCBA is promoting vertical product integration from ranch producer, feedlot operator, and packer, to outlet marketing and purchase by consumers. Many ranchers equate this systematized management structure as eliminating the free market activity they value. A study formulated on the benefits as well as the downsides of a system such as this would benefit ranchers in decision-making as well as others within this type of management structure. The poultry industry operates in this manner. Some of the downsides felt by producers are that it takes away the individuality of production. Big corporations, such as Perdue Farms, make the decisions for chicken growers regarding feed programs, date of shipment, type of product produced, and also set the price. Beef producers fear the same outside management and production-line type of control.
Environmental issues are being mediated in various working groups in the west. Often, the positive outcomes of these efforts go unpublicized by the media. Investigation regarding the time involved in producing results, attitudinal change, benefits, and group effectiveness is important to further teamwork. In Lake and Modoc Counties, ranchers state that positive results are possible with the right combination of people with good communication skills, open-mindedness, and willingness to learn and try new methods. What does not work, according to the ranchers, is involvement by either agency personnel or affected interests who do not have on-the-ground experience, exhibit superior attitudes attributed to higher education or professional status, lack historical and biological knowledge of the environment in question, or refer decision-making to parties outside of group context.

I found that women's role on ranches is underestimated. This is a broad category for further study. Their roles in ranching and as sole proprietors are largely unrecognized. Comparisons with other herding cultures throughout the world and the part women play would indicate similarities and differences. Although, women's role in the settlement of the West has been researched, their role in agricultural business is less documented.

There are other areas of useful investigation, such as regional dress, social customs, and rituals of the business that could provide additional comparative information. One interesting study would be in the comparison of generational ranchers who have inherited the business and traditions from their families and those who enter the ranching business without prior experience in raising beef cattle. Some of these men and women succeed, although local opinion and mythology probably prevents a majority from placing a bet in their favor. This is a non-traditional segment in the business.

There is also an opportunity for research with those who advocate the lifestyle but are not directly associated with it. Dude ranch trips, horseback riding, and trail experiences are sought by people who like a cowboy style, western get-away for a few days. Reasons for why they seek this as leisure, influences regarding their decisions, and
reasons for repeat experiences would provide information to assist in niche marketing and
the creation of new businesses. Since dude ranches have successfully continued for over
100 years in the West, an established group exists for contact and subsequent data
collection.

10.8 **Evaluation of the Thesis Process**

Future research studies using this method of research would include the use of a
software program for categorizing data. One of the most time-consuming aspects is the
hand sorting of transcripts materials to find emerging themes and quotes to support the
hypothesis. Perhaps contacting anthropologists in the department who use software for
ethnographic data collection would be helpful. Furthermore, it would be very beneficial
to have coursework designed specifically for graduate students learning to write for
publication. Course curriculum would include methods of research, organization and
management of data, avoiding bias in the work, acceptable writing styles for research,
and introduction to applicable computer software products. The graduate student's thesis
preparation guide from the Graduate School would supplement the course work. This
preparation would save time for both the major professor and the student and accelerate
the production of a more acceptable product. This would not take away the potential
learning gained in the thesis process, but enhance it.

10.9 **Research Applications**

Although providing this information to local citizenry might provide interesting grist
for discussion, it is like "preaching to the choir." Although most of the locals have the
message already, some value of the presentation of research results would be gained in
stimulating further discussion and evaluating reactions to the issues raised. Further
themes might emerge as well as ideas for communicating results to audiences outside of
local areas. Articles in local and regional publications such as the Capital Press in
Oregon, the Cascade Cattlemen, and the Herald and News daily paper are avenues for distributing results. Presentations will be given in both Lake and Modoc Counties for stockgrower groups, Rotary Club, Soroptomists, Chamber of Commerce, and other service clubs.

More beneficial application would be publication or presentation of results in urban or college environments with populations who view the rancher in a mythological or stereotypical perspective. Publications, such as The Oregonian newspaper, who has circulation to a broad audience would provide results to those who may benefit from this information in new ways.

A very important application of research of this nature is in teacher's training; both in K-12 education and at the college level. Required coursework and curriculum to include the history of agriculture in the United State, the role it has played in food availability in the world, and the facts of where and how food is produced in our country is as important as such required courses such as geology, for example. Society has lost track of where and how food is produced and the anthropology of people who raise it. The origins of land grant colleges, such as Oregon State University, are a result of the need to improve food production for expanding populations. Although, technology and societal philosophies have changed, world need for food has not. Another facet of this research is the recording of the oral history of a culture that is less than one percent of the population in the United States. It is a very colorful one to say the very least, in addition to serving an important role in food production and rural community development.

Statewide groups which can be helped by this research are the state Cattlemen's organizations, the Beef Councils, and the Farm Bureau. The state agricultural colleges and their respective Extension Services would learn about the social side of the sustainability of ranching. The social sciences, of which Anthropology and Speech Communication are a part, and their application in resolving conflict or affecting beneficial change are often overlooked when discussing agricultural issues.
Applied research results from this study could be used by industries who are extremely successful in selling beef as their service contribution to the beef industry. If the McDonald's chain were to promote the history, efforts to produce a safe product, and the environmental stewardship practiced by ranchers in the U.S., it would be a major educational piece in the effort to tell the ranchers' story and endorse beef as an all-American, healthy product. McDonalds could develop this campaign as their contribution to the 'public good;' citing support of rural economies, and so on, in the United States. They have a history of purchasing United States beef and other agricultural products for use in their restaurants. Although this idea might be a tricky sell to a major chain, collaboration with McDonalds would provide widespread, multi-media and on-site education regarding beef as a food. This chain has been selling beef for many years, with no recognition, relationship, or connection to the individuals in the United States who provide the base ingredient in their success. Representatives for the beef industry would have to sell the benefit of this project as philanthropic; which would also benefit McDonalds. Once again, the power of the myths and legends of the ranching culture could help accomplish this effort. Collaboration with corporate giants would provide the resources, marketing, and results that ranchers and their representative organizations currently lack.

10.10 Megabytes

The following condensation highlights the research, entitled "Perspectives from the Ranching Culture in the 1990's: Addressing Mythological and Environmental Concerns"--an ethnographic study in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California.

(1) Lake and Modoc County are harsh, high desert environments with a low percentage of privately owned ground. Consequently, ranchers and their rural economies depend on public land grazing leases.
(2) Myth and stereotypes about ranching remain strong. Ranchers hold many values which are inherent in the mythology of the culture; primarily freedom, independence, working in a natural environment, and skills performed in working with horses and cattle. Stereotypes have occurred, and are still prevalent regarding ranching.

(3) Ranchers lack cohesiveness as a group, because of the values identified in the mythology.

(4) The primary challenges to remaining in the business in the 1990's are finding resolve for environmental issues, continuing positive relationships with government agencies and others who affect their livelihood, and creating economic sustainability for their families and businesses.

(5) As a group, ranchers lack perspective in communicating as an organization, and fail to recognize the paradigm shift that is necessary to remain viable as an organization of the future. In order to change public opinion about their goals, they must address service as well as produce and market beef as a desirable product.
Epilogue

During this research, the seasons have come and gone twice. The shifting of the seasons are a metaphor for the changes that life brings. Change is a primary theme in the hypothesis and results of this study of ranching in the 1990's.

Now it is winter, as the last chapter concludes this research project. Work breaks the monotony of January days, the early dark, and wind, snow, sleet, and ice. Spring comes, just when winter seems endless; its brightness anticipated like the visit of a long absent friend who comes back once more. It is birthing time, the spindly legs of foals, calves, and flower stalks. Sand lilies bloom for just a day, blue larkspur sings the siren's song. Summer arrives, wearing a tomato-red dress. She smells good, burns hot, and goes out too fast. Heat waves crimp the air above the fields while bass slap the water in the canals, breaking the stillness. Summer is a tease--she mesmerizes. Just when you surrender to her, she is gone; her bed empty, the covers thrown back, no good-byes. Mortal love is not enough to keep her from the party somewhere else.

Ranchers savor the fall best. It is the test of a year's work--a time to look at the haystacks standing for winter, work the cows, enjoy the sight of fat calves, and pay the bank. The end of summer brings the smell of fall; ripened grass and the pungent odor of sun and heat on Cottonwood bark, blown through window slots while dry leaves clatter overhead. Clouds gather quickly in the afternoon at summer's end, the air cools fast, the first drops began to fall. Mini-geysers of dust spring up. Open windows gather the grit of the prelude, while low, rolling thunder sounds. Lightning cracks the sky open. The rain pours. "Close the window" says the voice of practicality, but it is difficult to do. During these awesome, hypnotizing moments people find what their heart seeks, if they let their senses work. Thoughts crowd the mind with all of life's axioms, it's fragility, the absolutes, and obligations. A desert storm is a prescriptive gift; bringing order to the complexities that exist and providing an exit to the simplicity we seek.
Ranching has a spirituality that bonds men and women to the land doing what they love the best, though it is difficult, high in risk, and uncertain. Reub Long of Fort Rock, Oregon wrote over 30 years ago "the desert gives something to each; big open country where you have to rely on yourself makes differences in character and outlook. If a man is big enough, he becomes broader, more tolerant. A narrow, mean man draws inside, loses breadth, merely as self protection. So you find the widest and the narrowest, the expanding with the contracting; growing personalities and withering nobodies; great generosity and degrading meanness. Many men, in trying to change the desert, only change themselves--often for the better (Jackman and Long 1964: 11)."

It is up to mortals to gather at the table to sort options for the future of the land. If we listen, we will hear Nature's voice speaking to us; in the rustle of the grasses that are her silk and chiffon skirts, and in the whir of the night hawk's wings on his journey for food. Nature's face is in the cold, crisp beauty of fall mornings and in the deep, peach moon of summer, bursting sweet and full in the night. We can feel the shifts of the wind as Nature whispers that change is inevitable. Although there are those who have drawn divisional lines regarding land use and ranching in particular, it is up to all who have a deep love of the land to find workable solutions, mitigate differences, and realize that as long as we cohabit the earth, we are in this together.
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APPENDICES
Appendix A

Informed Consent Document

Major Professor: Dr. Courtland Smith; 541/737-3858
Department of Anthropology; Oregon State University
Thesis; Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies

Title: Perspectives from the Ranching Culture in the 1990's: Addressing Mythological and Environmental Concerns

Mythology provides humankind with a message for living. In the mythology of the ranching culture, an image has been created which often contradicts the goals, philosophy, attitude, and lifestyle of the stockgrower of the 1990's. This image has been distorted by popular literature, film, the advertising and entertainment industry, and those who have lost contact with the land. In this study, research will be conducted on adults over 18 years of age who are members of the ranching culture. This research is conducted as part of the requirements toward a Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies degree at Oregon State University.

Tape recorded interviews will be conducted in response to a set of oral questions regarding the ranching lifestyle. Information collected will be used to augment or disprove the above hypothesis. The thesis will become part of the published record at Oregon State University.

Confidentiality will be maintained. Your name will not be attributed to particular comments or information and only the researcher will know your name. Participation is voluntary and the subject has the right to refuse to participate at any time. Compensation is not provided as a result of participation. Questions may be directed to Dr. Courtland Smith of the above, or Mary Nunn, OSU Research Office, 541/737-0670.

This research will provide an account of the current lifestyle that ranchers using both private and public land in Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California experience. Research will contribute to the historical record in both of these counties, review frontier history which helped create the image, and gather a spectrum of modern day mythology from the ranchers themselves.

I have read and understand the procedures described above and give my voluntary consent to participate in this study. A signed copy of this consent form will be provided to me.

__________________________  ____________________________  __________
Signature Printed Name of Subject Date

__________________________  ____________________________
Address Phone
Appendix B

Questionnaire/Data Collection
Ranchers; Lake County, Oregon and Modoc County, California

Background Information

1. Statistics
   Name
   Address
   Gender
   Age
   Marital Status
   Children, Ages
   Place of Birth
   Occupation
   Years in this Occupation
   Years in this Location

2. Education
   Formal Education. Comment on the value of formal education versus experience.

3. What is the reason and the history of why you chose ranching as an occupation?
   Where did you learn the skills? From whom?

Operation and Business Management

4. Tell me about your cattle operation.
   Number of cattle
   Outside/Inside land use
   Ranch base
   Cow/calf, yearling?

5. Grazing on public lands has been termed “welfare ranching.” What is your response to this label?

6. What is your opinion on government subsidies?

7. Do you have employees? How many? What is their job description? Do you do the same work that they do? How does the communication regarding duties take place?
8. What is the greatest cost as a stockgrower?

9. What are the most valuable tools of the operation? (Material assets, such as dogs, horses, pickups; or personal skills such as computer skills, intelligence, education, and patience, etc.)

10. What is the most difficult task in ranching? What other job would you rather have done in life if given the choice?

11. Can anyone be a rancher? Why or why not?


Personal Rewards; The Myths of Ranching

13. As a kid, who were your heroes? Are they still relevant to you now? What characteristics do they display?

14. Does this occupation offer you freedom? What makes you feel constricted or restricted?

15. What is most rewarding about this job?

16. What sacrifices are required for the job? What is accomplished by them?

17. What does it take to be successful in ranching?

18. What happens to those who leave ranching because it is not economically viable for them?

19. Name some of your favorite books and magazines.

20. What kind of music do you enjoy?

21. What was the last movie you watched?

22. There have been many movies about cowboys, westerns, etc. Are they accurate? Why or why not?

23. What do you like to do to socialize or for entertainment?
24. Do you like to dance? What type of dancing?

25. What hobbies do you enjoy?

26. Describe women's role on the ranch from your perspective. How has it changed in the past 20 years?

27. Do you hunt or use guns? For what?

28. What is appropriate use of alcohol? Swear words?

29. What do you wear to work, weddings, funerals? To meetings?

30. Do you play a musical instrument?

Wealth and Status

31. In ranching, how is wealth determined? By family name, income, assets, number of cattle, reputation?

32. What, in your view, is being wealthy?

33. Is there a ranching nobility in your county? A status? Are certain brands influential, powerful? Do these people have political advantage?

34. The image of cattle barons in novels riding around in Cadillacs while their cowboys do the work is actually believed by some. Comment on this.

Self and Society

35. To what space do you belong? Do you consider yourself a Californian, Modoc County or Lake County resident? An Oregonian, eastern Oregonian, Northwesterner, or Great Basin resident?

36. How does space affect your communication out here? Stockgrowers are perceived as friendly. Contrast this with an urban communication style.

37. How does one contribute positively to society? Their community? Is this a duty or responsibility? Cite your community service.

38. When your life is over, what do you want people to say about you?
Future Concerns

39. Who are some effective spokes people for the cattle industry today? Are they politicians, organizational people, artists?

40. Are you a member of the Cattlemen’s Organization? The Farm Bureau? Comment on their effectiveness.

41. Do you consider yourself a conservationist? How does your philosophy differ from that of the environment movement, if so? Cite your examples.

42. Who are some of our good leaders today? Why? Has the political arena changed since you began in business? How?

43. Has NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement) affected the cattle industry in a detrimental way? Explain.

44. What will happen to the ranch when you no longer wish to operate it? Pass to family, sell, or disburse?

45. What do you think the future holds for the cattle business?
   - Why have problems occurred recently?
   - What can be done about them?
   - Is it rancher's responsibility to educate the public regarding the raising of beef?
   - If so, what is the best way to educate the public?
   - What are you, personally, doing to educate the public regarding your industry?