



RANCH MANAGEMENT

**CATTLE CALL**  
**Newsletter for Alumni of**  
**TCU Ranch Management**  
Spring 2025

***From the President, Trevor Caviness '98***

806-679-2998 [trevor@cavinessbeef.com](mailto:trevor@cavinessbeef.com)

Hello all,

I hope everyone is having a great start to spring and a successful calving season; it is a wonderful time of year with new life all around. As your new Alumni Association President, I am honored to work with the current board and help lead the association the best we can over the next couple years. We have had some good initial meetings full of ideas and received an update from Dr. Garcia in which he answered several questions and discussed opportunities and challenges ahead. We plan to have a few of these update calls throughout the year to have alignment and give input and support. He made it clear that his door is always open, and he is available for phone calls from alumni to discuss current program updates and initiatives. Likewise, please reach out to me or any other board member you may know for questions you have. A primary goal of the board is to increase communication and transparency to the alumni base.

The program staff's top priority, besides teaching and graduating the current class, would be recruitment for next year's class as well, as filling the open faculty position. They are open to any connections we as alumni may have regarding recommendations in this regard.

As always, we hope that everyone can make as many alumni events as possible this year. We had an excellent turnout at the TSCRA Alumni happy hour this past Saturday evening in Fort Worth, it was so great to see everyone! Graduation is right around the corner, see y'all soon!

Trevor Caviness



**Dr. Matthew Garcia**

**Director**

Southwestern E & L S Professorship

[m.garcia768@tcu.edu](mailto:m.garcia768@tcu.edu)

## Ranch Management Update

As another class has completed their Management Plans and we are heading to graduation, I think its important to discuss how the program is evolving and will continue to evolve to better train our students for an ever-changing industry. As we all know, the program has welcomed a new professor in Mr. Lee Knox and we have an opening for another faculty member we will try and fill in the near future. While we welcome new expertise on the faculty level, we are also adjusting curriculum to be more modern and relevant. While Mr. Knox will be writing his own article, I will outline some of the changes to the program and curriculum that I was actively involved in as the primary instructor and director.

I think it is best to start with the curriculum updates. Honestly, all curriculum should be evaluated every year and now that we have some new eyes in the program, I think the time is optimal to make adjustments as needed. The major factor to understand is that there have been no major adjustments, only minor changes to modernize the program. As such, this year I was the primary instructor for Ranch Operations, Animal Health, Genetics/Repro and Ranch Business Management. In Animal Health, there was a major focus on getting students out into the field to actually experience animal health practices. Day trips to the Bonds Ranch and Jake and Jessen Cowen's operation were essential to meet this mission. Students were exposed to vaccine use, antibiotic administration, bloat mitigation strategies, disease identification, and necropsy protocols. The other factors that we had to implement were information on the injectable antibiotic directive and why having a good relationship with your veterinarian is more important than ever.

Curriculum for Ranch Operations, Repro/Genetics, and Ranch Business Management probably had the most additions to their curriculum. Ranch Operations added water development, fence development, incorporation of new technology, while still including animal handling and corral design. Reproduction/Genetics major focus was improving reproductive efficiency, incorporating new technologies/management (while still evaluating ROI), and ensuring that we critically evaluate genetics we are incorporating into our systems to ensure compatibility and maximizing efficiency, profitability, while still ensuring strong reproductive efficiency.

Ranch Business Management had many new incorporations this year. The beginning of the year really focused on leadership development, resume development, cover letters, interview strategies, and becoming a manager interviewer. The class was required to read Emotional Intelligence. This book is a required read for many MBA programs and trains individuals to critically evaluate emotional responses to their message, so that they can alternate strategies of message delivery and ensure their vision as a leader is understood and embraced. The concept of ranch succession and estate planning was a major focus this year as well, as many of our young people will be subjected to this process in the near future. We also incorporated many alumni guest speakers to share their expertise on mineral rights leases, negotiations, value added programs, and agricultural legal issues.

While many minor updates have been implemented to the class curriculum in an effort to update and modernize, a small addition was implemented on the Management Plan that some of you may or may not have heard of. The first component of the management plan remains relatively similar to what it has always traditionally been. However, I strongly felt that the program really needed to evaluate the student's ability to adapt when things did not go their way. As such, I suggested that after the students completed their "primary plan," where everything was working great and they were turning the operation around, they incorporate two major disasters. This could be things like drought, fire, disease, market collapses, or even bad ranch succession. This secondary plan forces the students to critically re-evaluate their resources and strategies to adapt and keep the ranch sustainable going forward. I strongly believe this component adheres to the mission of TCU Ranch Managements mission of training adaptable and functional managers.

I know I have outlined some changes here and future newsletters will further update you all on what direction we are going. However, for a quarterly newsletter column, I have probably over exceeded my space limit for this submission. However, I strongly encourage anyone that has questions or concerns, reach out to me directly so we can have a discussion. Thank you all for your support and I look forward to your involvement with TCU Ranch Management in the future.



Lee A. Knox

Associate Professor

Houston L S & R Professorship

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## Year-End Review

I started my first Cattle Call article in the fall with the following , “Our legendary program prepares professionals to manage a broad range of global resources on an ecologically and economically sound basis while conserving and improving resources.” The preceding mission statement is straight off of the TCU Ranch Management website and is our mission. I have strived this year to impart that mission with the Class of 2025. An effective method of preparing professionals is projects. Projects force the student to not only grasp the class curriculum but assimilate that information into a comprehensive professional product.

Adopting projects into the classroom environment required significant change in the syllabus and teaching methods. We spent significantly more time in the field conducting resource inventories and seeing alternatives so they can make better decisions. I’m currently spending a significant amount of my time evaluating their efforts (see the Winter Cattle Call about GRADE).

Let’s look back at the projects this class has completed during their time at TCU Ranch Management. For Forages they completed a 10 plant weed collection. Not only did they have to identify the plant correctly, but also make an effective chemical control and cultural control recommendation. The Forage Plan was updated to an intensive east Texas Bermuda grass and Bahia grass operation, utilizing a soil sample analysis that they collected and submitted themselves. The students had to complete a comprehensive nutrient management plan, forage harvest plant, establishment plan and budgets.

Sheep and Goat Production included two projects this year. The students had to develop separate 250 head sheep and goat enterprises integrated into their Range Management Grazing Plan from the fall. They have just a few days to finish and I’m looking forward to seeing what they come up with. In Soil and Water Conservation, the students compared the terrace and water way construction cost for continued convention farming to the equipment upgrades needed to convert to no-till farming.

The students have completed the coursework required to apply for the Texas Private Certified and Insured Prescribed Burn Manager Certificate. Part of the requirement is developing Prescribed Burn Plans. The students developed these plans and as a group presented their prescribed burn plans for different goals to the staff and class. My plan was for them to assist on a prescribed burn to complete the burn course. Due to weather and arrangements we have not been able to burn.....maybe next week we will put some smoke in the air.

I’m a firm believer in hands on and outside educational opportunities. The weeklong field trips have been wonderful and I appreciate the support of the alumni when we are traveling. If you have an idea for future projects in the coursework, please let me know as I’m always looking for ways to improve the TCU Ranch Management Program.

# ***TCU Ranch Management Alumni Association Sponsorship***

<b><u>LEVELS</u></b>	<b><u>GIFT</u></b>	<b><u>BENEFITS</u></b>
<b>CATTLE BARON</b>	<b>\$10,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One Reserved Table with company signage at Events</li> <li>• Linked Logo on TCU Ranch Management Website</li> <li>• Logo and Named information on all Event Marketing</li> <li>• Social Media Recognition with Logo</li> <li>• Company Banner displayed at Events, when applicable *</li> <li>• Logo, Advertisement and “Sponsor Spotlight” in quarterly newsletter, The Cattle Call</li> <li>• Advertisement of Company informational events, webinars, etc. to alumni database via email **</li> <li>• Spoken Recognition at events, when applicable</li> </ul>
<b>RANCH BOSS</b>	<b>\$7,500</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Six Tickets with Company Signage at Events</li> <li>• Logo on TCU Ranch Management Website</li> <li>• Logo and Named Recognition on all Event Marketing</li> <li>• Social Media Recognition with Logo</li> <li>• Logo and “Sponsor Spotlight” in quarterly newsletter, The Cattle Call</li> <li>• Advertisement of Company informational events, webinars, etc. to alumni database via email **</li> <li>• Spoken Recognition at events, when applicable</li> </ul>
<b>TRAIL BOSS</b>	<b>\$5,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four Tickets with Company Signage at Events</li> <li>• Recognition on all Event Marketing</li> <li>• Social Media Recognition with Logo</li> <li>• Name Recognition and “Sponsor Spotlight” in quarterly newsletter, The Cattle Call</li> <li>• Advertisement of Company informational events, webinars, etc. sent to alumni database via email</li> <li>• Spoken Recognition at events, when applicable</li> </ul>
<b>WRANGLER</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two Tickets to Events</li> <li>• Company Name Recognition on Ranch Management Website &amp; social media</li> <li>• Advertisement of Company informational events, webinars, etc. to alumni database via email **</li> <li>• Spoken Recognition at events, when applicable</li> </ul>
<b>COWBOY</b>	<b>\$1,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advertisement of Company informational events, webinars, etc. to alumni database via email **</li> <li>• Spoken Recognition at events, when applicable</li> </ul>

\*Company should provide banner of their choice for events

\*\*Sponsors will not receive alumni contact information – Specific product information and marketing will not be approved – advertisement of informational events, webinars, etc. should be sent to the Communications Director and TCU Ranch Management Program Specialist for approval and sending.



# Alumni Spotlight



**Name:** Ben Anson '16

**Current Employer:** Pitchfork Ranch, LLC

**Job Position/Title:** Manager

**Job Duties/Responsibilities:** Manage commercial cow/calf operation, small direct to consumer beef program, coordinate with government agencies on leases, budget and marketing of all ranch enterprises. We also facilitate a horse sale every spring because calving and branding doesn't take up enough time.

**TCU RM Reflections:** One of the best decisions I've made was attending the Ranch Management program. The subject matter made school fun for me again. I use what I learned at TCU daily and the amount of field trips to see different operations has proved to be invaluable. I've learned to place a dollar amount on every decision I make on the ranch. Ranching in Wyoming is a lot different than Texas, but the fundamentals remain the same, it's all about pounds of beef produced per acre (or whatever the sheep and goat guys say). The program provided me with great contacts across the industry, many of these being my fellow classmates.

**Advice to Applicants/Students:** Soak it all in. Work hard and enjoy it. There is very little that I've experienced in my formal education that has been as useful or enjoyable as what I did at TCU. Take the time to hang out with your classmates outside of school, enjoy your time in the city because it's likely that you'll never live in a place that big again.

**Prior Experience/Education:** BS in Wildlife Management and Biology/minor in Rangeland Ecology and Management from the University of Wyoming (2015).

**Involvement in Organizations/Clubs:** Wyoming Department of Agriculture (board member), Meeteetse Conservation District (board member), Meeteetse Fire District (board member), Park County Predator Board (secretary/treasurer), East Yellowstone Collaborative (working lands advisor).



## *Announcements*

*For address, marriage, and birth updates in this issue, contact  
the Ranch Management office (817)257-7145 [ranching@tcu.edu](mailto:ranching@tcu.edu)*

*With  
Sympathy*

Our sympathy to the families of:

**Gilly Riojas '02**

passed away on December 13, 2024

**J.E. Kimbell '62**

passed away on January 9, 2025

**Larry Shackelford 'E76**

passed away on January 28, 2025

**merch available**

Need birthday/holiday gift ideas?

TCU Ranch Management has merch available for purchase!

Call (817)257-7145 or email [s.strother@tcu.edu](mailto:s.strother@tcu.edu)  
to see what's in stock.

# Sponsor Spotlight

This edition's "Sponsor Spotlight" is Compass Ag Solutions. Understanding and managing market risk is a key component of running a successful agricultural business. Compass Ag Solutions provides producers with expert strategies to navigate market volatility and protect their operations. We had a chance to visit with Brian Vasseur '98 - here's what he had to say.

## **Tell us a little about yourself and how you ended up in the risk management industry.**

I am a TCU Ranch Management graduate, class of 1998. I always had an interest in markets and margin operations, like stockers and feeders. I enjoy being a student of the market and managing market risks around cattle ownership.

## **What is Compass Ag Solutions and what skills or qualities do they offer to help their clients succeed?**

Compass Ag Solutions is a commodity risk management and consulting firm helping cattle owners in North America measure, manage, and mitigate market risks. At Compass Ag Solutions, you are dealing with people that have ag production experience and are involved in ag operations. Most everyone at Compass Ag has experience in either the feedlot, stocker, cow-calf, seedstock, farming or packing sectors. In fact, the collective ag experience of our team represents hundreds of thousands of cattle. This separates Compass Ag from most brokerages and keeps our focus on your risk management.

## **Why do you believe risk management is essential for today's farmers and ranchers?**

Managing a profitable cattle operation has never been more difficult. With increasing volatility, overwhelming data, and a global risk climate, this is a road best not traveled alone. While one can never control all the factors of cattle production, Compass Ag Solutions can partner with you on your journey to provide a strategic perspective and peace of mind in a time of rising uncertainty.

## **How do you stay informed about trends and developments in agricultural markets?**

At Compass Ag, we strive to keep our customers up to date with the latest fundamental and technical market information. Between in-house research and use of strategic information partners, Compass Ag offers knowledgeable insights into the drivers of many markets. Our customers often look to Compass Ag as their premier source of market information.

## **How would you explain hedging to a farmer or rancher unfamiliar with the concept?**

We spend a lot of time educating new customers about hedging and risk management strategies. Starting with your business model, we dedicate ourselves to developing strategies that can manage risk in such a way that your operation can be sustainable.

## **How do you evaluate and manage price risk for commodities like corn, soybeans, or cattle?**

The success of any risk management program is highly dependent on the quantification of the actual risk that needs to be managed. One cannot manage what they cannot measure. The first step of any risk management is to quantify your existing position.

## **What factors do you consider when advising clients on a risk management strategy?**

Evaluating a physical position and its relative economic value to the futures will help determine what a successful risk management program includes. Aggregating physical positions with purchase orders, contracts, futures, options, and/or LRP insurance are imperative in order for a manager to truly know their risk or exposure.

## **What is Livestock Risk Protection (LRP)?**

Livestock Risk Protection (LRP) is price insurance for livestock. Producers may choose from a variety of coverage levels and insurance periods that correspond with the projected marketing date of their livestock. The coverage is a price floor that limits loss to the protection level selected by the producer, who in turn pays a premium for that protection after the coverage period ends. It does not limit any gains or upward price movement in the market.

*continued on page 8*



# Sponsor Spotlight Continued

## **What type of producers would benefit by utilizing LRP the most?**

All cattle owners would benefit from LRP Insurance. We offer this as another risk management tool in our “toolbox” because of these advantages for producers:

No margin money required; it is an insurance product not a market product. Premium is not due until AFTER the coverage period ends:

Up to 25,000 head of Feeder Cattle may be insured per crop year

Up to 25,000 head of Fed Cattle may be insured per crop year

In our research Feeder Cattle insurance averages \$15/head cheaper than a bought put (futures market price floor)

In our research Fed Cattle insurance averages \$18/head cheaper than a bought put

Coverage is placed per head of livestock, so cattle owners can protect their exact inventory

## **What exactly are the software solutions Compass Ag Solutions can provide producers?**

### *Navigator*

Navigator reconciles current cattle inventory with your trade positions. It gives the advantage of multiple views and analytics that answer the question of “Where am I right now?”. Navigator helps you know your price risk, provides information on which lots are over-hedged, and shows which hedges you should lift each week with your show-list or sales points. The software provides lot-by-lot hedge reconciliation which drills down on measuring the hedge strategy around a set of cattle.

### *Cattle Management System*

CMS is an end-to-end cattle management system built around the integration of cattle and trade inventory. This is your one-stop shop from projections through closeouts. CMS comes with the automation and analytics that carry you through each step of your cattle’s life cycle. CMS gives you the ability to increase management efficiency and leverage the breadth of your feeding performance history to make powerful data-driven decisions on the market.

### *Linus 7*

Linus 7 is software for measuring risk that integrates currency risk measurement and management surrounding cattle ownership.

## **What advice do you have for the alumni?**

We are a part of the best alumni community in the cattle business. I interact with Alumni daily and still benefit generously from these relationships. My advice would be to continue to uphold the higher standards that were expected of us when we were students at TCU Ranch Management. Sharing resources and helping each other is always a phone call away.

**Brian Vasseur ‘98**  
**Chief Operating Officer**  
**(970)372-0482**







Abby Schroeder, class of 2025, being interviewed @ NCBA, San Antonio, TX.



Special thanks to TCU alumni Richard Witherspoon, owner of Rancho Seco Steakhouse in Mount Pleasant for a delicious meal on the East TX field trip.



- April 29 & April 30: *Texas A&M Agrilife Hemphill Co. Beef Conference*, Canadian, TX
- June 23 - June 27: *Florida Cattlemen's Association Convention & Trade Show*, Marco Island, FL
- June 27 - June 29: *RMAA Alumni and Family Summer Gathering/Roping*, Childress, TX
- October 4—*RMAA Annual Tailgate*; RM lawn

## **TCU Ranch Management Alumni Association, Inc. Executive Committee and Board of Directors**

**President: Trevor Caviness '98**

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- mail: TCU Box 297420,  
Fort Worth, TX 76129 OR
- call: 817-257-7145 OR
- email: [ranching@tcu.edu](mailto:ranching@tcu.edu)



Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

**NEW ADDRESS/PHONE/EMAIL**

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

**JOB CHANGE**

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**WEDDING**

Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Married \_\_\_\_\_

**BIRTH**

Baby's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date Born \_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Thank You!!!***

We are pleased that so many of you take advantage of this form to indicate change of address, marriage, birth, or job.

You are helping us keep up with you and that's what we want to do!



As a reminder, due to the rising cost of postage, printing, and budget cuts, **Cattle Call will *ONLY* be sent via email.**

You are able to view past issues on the TCU RM website <https://cse.tcu.edu/ranch-management/alumni/cattle-call-newsletter.php> or <https://www.facebook.com/TCU-Ranch-Management-269381929485>

*Please make sure we have your most recent email address.*

**If you do not have access to a computer or email, or prefer a paper copy, let us know and a copy will be mailed to you.**



# SAVE THE DATE

## SUMMER GATHERING 2025

CHILDRESS, TEXAS • JUNE 27-29

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*For sponsorship opportunities, please contact Allison Haubold '22*

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