

Babbitts Trusts a Wolf with their Cattle, No Bull!



Wolf says 2009 was a tremendous year for Babbitt Ranches for numbers and weight. "This is the best year they've ever had. Of a total 1,400 Babbitt steers, the average weight was 884 pounds. That's about a 50-pound increase over the past three years."

Wolf is used to seeing the Babbitt cattle get better each year. In the last 15 years he says Babbitt Ranches cattle, 90 percent Hereford and 10 percent black baldie, have increased in weight about 140 pounds per head. And that means profit.

He's marketed more than \$200 million worth of cattle for ranchers all across the West and, as long as he's working with operations like Babbitt Ranches, Willard Wolf has no intention of stopping.

Wolf, currently the western representative for Crossroads Cattle Company in Austin, Texas, may well be the most knowledgeable Hereford broker in the country. There's probably nobody who knows as many purebred breeders, feedlots, ranchers and auctioneers in the industry.

He admits Babbitt Ranches cattle are easy to sell because of genetics, quality, consistency, the health program and management of the ranch, and getting the top market price is fairly easy.

"We have a network of prospective buyers nationwide that we deal with," he said. "You have to know the corn market, food costs, the cost of production and get all the terms of the sale before you consider an asking price. We try to get the top of the market for Babbitt Ranches cattle each and every year."

"The Babbitt Ranches community has been working hard at it. The environment also has an effect. You can have the best genetics in the world, but if you don't have moisture, the weights will be lighter. We are going into drier situations, but even in drier years, Babbitt Ranches cattle still do a little better than most."

Wolf has been around cattle his whole life, and for many of those years he's been working with Babbitt Ranches, consulting on where to buy bulls and shipping 3,200 to 3,500 Babbitt Ranches heifers and steers a year.

Born and raised on a commercial ranch in Oklahoma, Wolf recalls working with his grandfather from the age of 5. "He marketed and handled a lot of cattle. He'd take me with him when he'd go to sales. When I got to be about 11, sugar diabetes took one of his feet so I began driving the trucks."

Wolf graduated from Oklahoma State University with a degree in animal science. Soon he was tasked with setting up the western division of the Oklahoma Commission Company and learning all aspects of the livestock industry.

From there he went to work for the U.S. Department of Agriculture reporting market news about sheep, hogs and cattle. Two years later, he was exporting livestock to foreign countries such as Honduras and Mexico for a Richmond, Va., firm.

It was at a national exposition in Mexico City where the American Hereford Association spotted Wolf and made him an irresistible offer.

Through the years, Wolf has owned and operated his own ranches. Today he runs up to 200 head of cattle in the state of Washington.

At age 69, Wolf has narrowed his focus to the western states and is picky about who he does business with.

"I couldn't overemphasize what it's like working with Babbitt Ranches. These are very honest people who stand by what they say and just want to do it right."

Wolf recalls how his grandfather did business on a handshake. "Five years after he died, people were still bringing truckloads of horses and cattle to his ranch to make good on their debts. Like my grandfather, the people of Babbitt Ranches understand that 90 percent of the business is based on the integrity and honesty of who you're dealing with on both sides."



Improved Visibility Along Highway 180 Helps Wildlife and Motorists

Elk and pronghorn will be able to move through their habitat more easily and motorists will be less likely to be surprised by animals jumping out of the forest and onto the highway following a 200-acre tree removal project on the CO Bar Ranch.

This spring, nearly 85 volunteers from the Arizona Elks Society teamed up with the Coconino Rural Environmental Corps, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Arizona Department of Transportation, Forest Service and Babbitt Ranches to open up the corridor alongside Highway 180 near Slate Mountain.

Small junipers and ponderosa pines were cut by the CREC crew. In late May, representatives from the Arizona Elks Society braved a weekend of fierce winds to lop branches from downed trees to increase visibility through the area.



"The end product is remarkable. You can't tell there were ever trees there," said Arizona Game and Fish Department wildlife manager Mike White. "This effort will restore connectivity for pronghorn habitat. Plus, elk and other wildlife species benefit from expanded meadows, too. The edge of

meadows is where the majority of wildlife hang out."

The Arizona Department of Transportation strives to maintain safety for motorists by removing trees that might impair visibility within 50 feet of the highway. "With funding limitations and tough economic times, we are extremely restricted in what we can get accomplished

with the state budget," said ADOT Flagstaff Area Environmental Coordinator Chuck Howe. "A large volunteer effort certainly helps accomplish these projects."

Researchers say the area around Kendrick and Slate mountains was once a grassland complex with open meadows connected

by woodland corridors. However, during the last century with the exclusion of fire, small trees have invaded the open spaces critical for large game, as well as grassland birds.

"It's a good project for a whole lot of reasons," said biological consultant Jim de Vos. "With money for habitat projects getting tighter and tighter, the partnering aspect is the most important outcome."

After cutting off branches, volunteers scattered the woody material to speed the natural decaying processes that put nutrients back into the soil.

"It's great to have land owners who are willing to participate in projects that benefit wildlife and public safety," said White.



Article III Cowboy Essence Section 1. Industriousness

There is no substitute for work. Worthwhile results come from hard work and careful planning.

Article IV Cowboy Essence Character Qualities Section 2. Sincerity

The genuine earnestness that binds friendship.