

Legendary Ranches Celebrated in Coffee Table Book

With stunning photography and a glimpse into time-honored ways, the cowboys, history and traditions of Babbitt Ranches are being featured in Western Horseman's book *Legendary Ranches*.

Writer Kathy McCraine captures the essence of the Babbitt Ranches experience as she takes the reader through howling wind, the sea of yellow grass and down lonely gravel roads to ride alongside the cowboy crew who are working some 2,200 yearling calves. She calls it a breathtaking sight to watch the perfectly matched white-faced Hereford calves marching in formation.

"This seasonal ritual has been repeated now for 120 years on Arizona's largest privately owned, working cattle ranch. How the Babbitt brothers put together this virtual ranching empire—and even more remarkably, held it together for more than a century—is one of the more fascinating tales of the American West," she writes.

McCraine traces the Babbitt history from 1886, when David and Billy left Cincinnati for the promised grassland of the West to purchase a cattle ranch, through the early 1900s when the Babbitts owned or operated almost every ranch in northern Arizona and beyond, running thousands of sheep and cattle on some 100,000 square miles of range land.

The article describes the struggle to withstand droughts, bad markets and paralyzing snowstorms, and the good times of ranch expansion with the acquisition of the Arizona Cattle Company, the Circle S and the giant Aztec Land & Cattle Company, also known as the Hashknife operation.

A major character in the Babbitt Ranches story is Frank Banks, a ranch manager who is credited with establishing the modern ranch operation, starting the yearling steer and heifer program and creating the critically important watering system.

The John Babbitt years that began in 1939 when he became director of the ranches are high-

lighted as well, describing him as a well-respected man of integrity. Babbitt reorganized the operation, purchasing the Espee Ranch and consolidating the holdings into four parts—the CO Bar, Cataract, Hart and Espee.

ees, many of whom have worked there for generations. When I asked why, they replied, "It's just a good outfit to work for," said McCraine. Another thing that sets Babbitts apart, writes McCraine, "It is one of the last remaining big ranches in Arizona to run straight Hereford cattle."

The article touches on the recent donations of large conservation easements to The Nature Conservancy, Coconino County and other entities and quotes Babbitt Ranches President Bill Cordasco.

"Babbitts is still here today because we have a philosophy. We have a land ethic, and we are constantly learning, constantly trying to understand. We have to be ahead of the curve today, as far as understanding ecological issues with the land."

Legendary Ranches recounts the history of 13 contemporary ranches of North America. The back-

cover reads, "The cowboys are still horseback, gathering, sorting and branding, just as those who came before them, and the horses they ride are as strong and rugged as the land they travel."

"This coffee table book no doubt will become a treasured fixture in ranch families' homes for years to come," said Cordasco. "It is truly an honor for the Babbitt Ranches community to be included among the great ranch operations."

Legendary Ranches was printed in November 2007. It is available from *Western Horseman* for \$23.95 softbound or \$34.95 hardbound.

Caviness Packs Tradition into Beef Products

Since the 1960s when Pete Caviness and John Babbitt did business on a handshake, Caviness Packing Company has been buying old cows and bulls from Babbitt Ranches.

Today, the next generations of Cavinesses and Babbitts steer their operations with the same principles of trust and respect.

Like Babbitt Ranches, Caviness is a family business founded on family values.

With a healthy diet of customer service, high-quality products and cherished relationships, the company has grown from a small locker plant in Hereford, Texas with just a few employees to an international company with more than 450 employees that processes more than 1,000 head of cattle a day and produces some three-million pounds of beef a week.

Caviness President Terry Caviness recalls traveling all over the Southwest with his dad buying cattle when he was 10 years old. "He'd wake me up early in the morning and I'd hate it, but I feel lucky to have grown up in grass country with the ranch life."

He remembers the cattle with the CO Bar brand on them and the cowboys on horses who loaded the older cows onto railroad cattle cars and shipped them to Hereford on the Santa Fe Railroad.



Article III Cowboy Essence Section 1. Industriousness

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



"We're really big on relationships with suppliers like Babbitt Ranches," said Caviness, who first visited the ranches while he was in high school. "I remember going to the Babbitt department store and to John Babbitt's office on the second floor. My dad and John enjoyed each other's company. They were both real people persons who liked visiting and talking."

Caviness Packing Company's grass-fed range beef is sold around the world, including to fast food restaurants such as McDonalds and Burger King.



Article IX Priceless Values Section 1. Organization

Babbitt Ranches, founded in 1886, is rich in history and strengthened through relationships. For as many as six generations, owners, employees and their families have shared in this history and have forged a deep commitment to the health of the land and the organization.

Though Babbitt Ranches has always enjoyed a reputation for strong horses, it was in the '60s when the ranches, managed by Bill Howell, got serious about the horse breeding program.

The article describes how the colt sale evolved and how decades of studying and breeding horses culminated with recognition in 2005 when Babbitt Ranches received the Best Remuda Award from the American Quarter Horse Association and Bayer Animal Health.

In addition, the book takes note of how generations of ranch families have remained loyal to the ranches. "What struck me the most about Babbitt Ranches was the sense of 'family' there, the longevity and loyalty of the employ-

ment."

BR

IT'S A STEADY GRIND
But We Have to Keep At It

People Will Have
BABBITTS

Home Made Sausage