



2016 Outstanding Rangeland Management Award Recipients — Bobby Helmers of Bar H Ranch with Joe and Paige Franklin, and 2016 TSSRM President Willy Conrad

## Texas Section Society for Rangeland Management

### Outstanding Rangeland Management Award

Bar H Ranch



## **Bar H Ranch**

The Bar H Ranch, near Christoval, Texas, has been owned and operated by Bobby and Sandra Helmers for the past 48 years. Bobby began building this ranch over four decades ago, starting from scratch without any cattle or working pens. Currently they have 3 sets of working pens.

Since that time, the Helmers have built a livestock operation that centers on a herd of registered Brangus cattle and includes Dorper sheep, Spanish goats, and Texas Dall sheep. Bar H started their Registered Brangus Herd in 1974. They produce high quality Brangus Bulls that bring a premium. In the last 3 consignment sales his bulls have topped the sales. The Bar H uses EPD's in selecting stock and the 205 day adjusted weight on all of their calves so they know how they compare to their contemporaries. Every cow is capable of producing a usable bull or replacement heifer every year. The quality of their Brangus herd increases each year. They only keep the cream of the crop. The Bar H has 2 cows classified as Summit Cows by the International Brangus Breeders Association. Although the markets have fluctuated over the years, proper grazing management has been a key factor in the constant effort to improve range condition on the Bar H. They are currently stocked with 70 cows, 25 heifers, 100 Dorper sheep, 90 Texas Dall Sheep, and 100 Spanish goats. On average they plan for 60 acres per animal unit on cattle, 145 acres per animal unit on sheep, and 360 acres per animal unit on the Spanish goats.



The Bar H is conservatively stocked and they cull on the front end of a drought. With the help of grazing exclosuers, information is collected to adjust stocking rates and deferment. A pasture receives deferment during the growing season once every two years. They have seen an increase in mid and tall grasses, such as, Indiangrass, Texas cupgrass and Little Bluestem. Lease properties are treated the same as their own. In the horrible drought that intensified in 2011, destocking occurred by the first week of June.



26 heifers were kept through the drought as their genetics went back to when Bobby started putting cattle together in 1972. As far as livestock management goes, the Bar H focuses on increasing the quality of their Brangus cattle, not quantity. This ties in with keeping the range in good condition to prepare for the droughts that are so common in West Texas.



Bobby encounters numerous ranchers that want to conduct brush management but they just cannot afford it. Mr. Helmers will tell you that if you are in the ranching business, you cannot afford NOT to. He has managed the red berry juniper using mechanical treatments for over 40 years. They are currently treating the ranch for the third time since 1972.



Water development, cross-fencing, and rotational grazing are also essential to the healthy rangelands enjoyed by Bar H livestock. The goal for the ranch is to have 2 water sources in each pasture. They have 22 surface tanks, while only one pasture has water further than a mile away. Bar H has replaced every foot of fence since the early 1980's. The Helmers have utilized a variety of programs to help

offset some of the expense of implementing these conservation practices. Working with the NRCS, they have participated in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and the Conservation Stewardship Program.

The Bar H has been in the Managed Lands Deer Permit (MLDP) for 12 years on the home place. The deer population is kept in check to ensure they are providing the very best habitat for their deer herd. In the high fenced areas of the ranch they have harvested 150 inch Boone and Crockett trophies with the largest being 178 inches Boone and Crockett. They know that when you manage deer at this level, the fawn crop increases so they have to stay on top of managing the numbers. The quality of deer produced on the ranch has improved since they have been in this program. Quail and turkey are on the increase.



Bobby, Sandra, and the family have also promoted sound rangeland management through their community involvement. Bobby Helmers has served as Chairman of the Board for the West Texas Rehabilitation Center, serves as a Trustee for the West Texas Rehab Center Foundation, and has served as Co-Chair for the Ranchers Roundup for the West Texas Rehabilitation Center for the past 8 years. The Bar H hosts the kick off Bar-B-Que for the Round Up for Rehab at their ranch, donates a hunt for the West Texas Rehabilitation Telethon, and hosts the Christoval Animal Science Class each year to properly demonstrate field dressing game animals. He has served on the Board of Directors for the First National Bank of Eldorado for 17 years. Bar H has received the Conservation Rancher of the Year from the Eldorado-Divide SWCD and was Runner-Up in the Region. The Bar H also

received the Wildlife Conservationist of the Year Award from the Eldorado-Divide SWCD. The Bar H is a member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Land Steward Program. Bobby is currently serving his second term as President of the Hill Country Brangus Breeders Association and has served as the Vice President of the West Texas Brangus Breeders Association. He just retired from serving six years on the Board of Directors from the Brangus Breeders Association of which he served as Vice President the past year. The Stewardship of the Bar H is widely known amongst Brangus Breeders and Ranchers.

Bobby and Sandra Helmers are passing along the passion for conservation through their daughter Paige Franklin and her husband Joe Franklin and their daughter Staci Jenkins and her husband Monty Jenkins. Joe and Paige moved back to the ranch in the last few years. Joe Franklin is Bobby's right hand man. Recently retiring from the NRCS with 33 years of Rangeland Experience, he is as valuable asset and is available 24-7 to assist in the day to day operations of the Bar H. Bobby and Sandra's two Granddaughter's Macy Milchalewicz and Blake Jenkins have their own cattle and help on the ranch when their schedules permit. Bar H has made huge strides in range stewardship and livestock management. The cattle market has changed a lot over the 44 years that Bobby Helmer's has been at the helm of the Bar H. His grazing management has been a constant effort to improve the range condition so he can leave it in better shape than he found it for the coming generations.

TSSRM is proud to announce Bar H Ranch as the 2016 recipient of the Outstanding Rangeland Management Award.

