

The Earth Steward

I have lived on ranches my entire childhood, and I have learned firsthand how much a rancher depends on the Earth. As my dad, a man who cares for a ranch and understands the need to positively steward the Earth, says, "We are actually grass farmers and the selling of our cattle is how we are paid for caring for the grass." In order for a rancher to last very long in ranching, he must disperse his cow herd over his country in a conservative way so that his cattle won't eat all of the grass or use up his natural resources in a few months and leave the country barren. If he doesn't have any grass for his herd, then the cattle will starve and die. If there isn't any grass on the land, a good wind will blow the dirt away because it isn't held down by the grass. A rancher preserves his natural resources because it is ethical and good business practice. Natural resources are not replenished quickly enough for a rancher to become careless in the stewardship of his land.

I have honored the responsibility of preserving the Earth's resources by taking steps towards positive stewardship of the Earth's resources. My steps have mainly been learning from other cattlemen how to properly manage the natural resources on a ranch. Although I cannot decide how the cattle are to be spread over the ranch that I live on because I am not the manager or owner of the ranch, I am expected to implement their plans and goals. Even though I do not have the ultimate power of decision, there are some things in my control. I can observe, make judgments of my own, and ask the other men that I am working with what they think is proper resource management. I can now begin developing my plan of how I will manage the resources of the ranch I will one day own, but only to a certain degree. I can get a general idea of what is proper resource management through observing other cattlemen and seeing which approach works best. By learning from the experiences of other ranchers, I can hopefully keep from

making the same mistakes that they did and ensure that my portion of the Earth is stewarded properly.

My progress of properly managing the Earth's resources can be developed further by continuing to learn from other ranchers and eventually having the opportunity to implement my ideas about proper stewardship into my own ranch and cow herd. That opportunity is hopefully sometime in the near future. Until that opportunity arises, I can learn and develop my ideas through observing the practices of other ranchers. I do understand the need for proper resource management and realize that I need to observe other ranchers and learn from their years of experience. The best method of learning in the ranching industry is to observe the practices of other ranchers and have personal experience. For me, right now, all that I can really do is learn from others how to steward a ranch's resources. I will be able to gain my own experience in the near future and implement my ideas about proper stewardship of resources.

I will incorporate my commitment of Earth stewardship in my overall education and career plan by first graduating from college. The degree that I am going to graduate with, Agricultural Business, has classes that teach a person to properly manage the natural resources of a ranch. This aspect of my degree will help me expand my knowledge of proper management of the Earth's resources. After college, I plan to own and operate a ranching operation and implement my ideas of resource management into whatever operation I have. I don't know how big my operation will be, but I definitely want to steward the resources of my operation in a way that is positive and helps the Earth. I plan to ranch for a long time, and I don't want to ruin the country I have.

I greatly understand and appreciate the need for people to positively steward the Earth's resources because those that we have are scarce and we must ensure that there are enough resources for future generations. The Earth is all that we have to live on. The mistakes and mismanagement practices of today have consequences tomorrow. I know that I don't want my children and their children to live with significantly fewer natural resources because I was wasteful with the resources we have. As a result, I will do whatever I can to preserve and protect the Earth.