



Heading to Santa Anita.

Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2004



Til the Cows Come Home.

Artist: Karen Foster, 2003

HR Hollister Ranch Cooperative



Sue Benech on Pecho, Jerry Cole on Bull.

Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2003

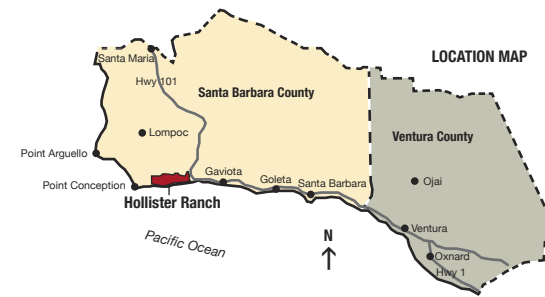
How the Hollister Ranch Cooperative works:

On average, over 2,000 head of cattle call the Ranch home each year. The Co-op conducts two traditional types of operations: cow/calf and stocker. The cow/calf operation consists of about 400 year-round resident mama cows producing calves each year. Each spring the herds are rounded up and the calves are given their annual vaccines, marked, and turned out until weaning time. When weaned, they part company with their mamas and are sold and shipped. The spring roundup is a traditional, community effort when the neighboring ranches gather and help each other out – keeping costs down and relationships in good favor.

The stocker operation is much simpler: an average 1200-1500 young cattle (6-12 months old) are brought on the Ranch in the fall or early winter and are shipped at the end of the grass season, typically around the first of June. On a good season, the stockers will gain 200 to 300 pounds from the rich coastal grasses. The Co-op is paid for the weight gained from the time they come, to the time they leave the ranch.

John McCarty at work.

Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2004



Left: John McCarty with his dog Chewy • Bottom: Sue Benech on Ranger Photos: Mehosh Photography, 2003
Right: Ear-tagged cow Photo: Kathi Carlson, 2005 • Cover: Cattle line Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2003



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The Hollister Ranch Cooperative:

Hollister Ranch has always been well suited for cattle ranching, due in part to its unique geographical situation. Simply put, the Ranch is good “cattle country”, and has been a working cattle ranch since the original grazing lease was awarded to José Francisco de Ortega in 1791. In 1973 the 14,500 acre Ranch was granted agricultural preserve status under the Williamson Act, and today it continues to be a working cattle ranch managed by the Hollister Ranch Cooperative (the Co-op). The Co-op was officially set up in 1977, and the “cooperative product” is grass. The documents which give a structure to the Co-op are: the parcel grazing leases held by the Co-op; a marketing agreement which defines Co-op membership, activities, and financial details – including a revolving fund; and Co-op by-laws, which govern the organization. The Co-op manages one of the four largest cattle operations on the central coast of California, shipping an average of a million pounds of beef annually. Although the Ranch is composed of 133 individual parcels, it is run as a single cattle ranch.

San Augustine holding pasture.

Photo: Shannon McCarty, 2000





Sue Benech and Nancy Brown at Santa Anita Corrals. Photo: Mehosh Photography 2003



John McCarty on Buel Flat Jack. Photo: Three Amigos Photography, 2002



Babies in the Santa Anita Corrals. Photo: Three Amigos Photography, 2000



John McCarty and Jolie at the Barn. Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2003

Benefits of the Hollister Ranch Cooperative:

The Hollister Ranch agricultural preserve status provides a tax incentive for owners to run cattle on their property. In turn, the owners have made significant efforts to accommodate, promote, and protect their cattle operation. In addition, there are important ecological advantages in maintaining a well balanced grazing operation. The Co-op Board of Directors has made rangeland preservation a number one priority. To achieve this goal the Co-op utilizes innovative grazing techniques to manage the grasses, using historic pastures, topography and strategic water sources. The Ranch environment produces annual and perennial grasses which mature at various times of the year, therefore, the rotation of significant numbers of cattle from pasture to pasture produces the best results. This high density/short duration grazing provides adequate time for grass recovery.

Water development is also critical to the Co-op's goal of rangeland preservation. In 2003 the Ranch owners

John McCarty on Jolie in Alegria Canyon.

Photo: Mehosh Photography, 2003

adopted a Watershed and Rangeland Enhancement Program. The funding provided through this program allows for the development of over 50 new water troughs (in addition to the 35 existing) strategically placed for cattle to graze where water is not normally available, such as high on the hills. This allows the pastures to be grazed more evenly year round. In addition, the development of off-stream water sources helps protect riparian habitats from over utilization.

The Co-op's program of managing grasses provides another benefit by reducing the amount of dry matter which can become fuel for wild-land fires. Other rangeland preservation projects undertaken by the Co-op include native grass re-vegetation of previously cultivated fields and removal of noxious weeds.

*Cowboys on horses
and good cattle dogs
are still the best means
of moving cattle on
Hollister Ranch*

The Co-op provides strong, creative and informed management of the cattle operation which is critical to the future of Hollister Ranch. Private property rights, agricultural status, wildfire safety, and the unique and beautiful environment we all enjoy hinges on a sound, ecological, and viable cattle operation. With your support the Co-op will continue to protect and preserve rangeland agriculture and the Ranch's western heritage; because cowboys on horses and

good cattle dogs are still the best means of moving cattle on Hollister Ranch.

