

THE HOLLISTER RANCH CO-OP

Mission Statement

The Mission of the Hollister Ranch Cooperative is to manage a grazing operation which promotes healthy rangelands and preserves the pastoral beauty and Western Heritage of the Gaviota Coast. (Approved by Hollister Ranch Cooperative, Board of Directors August 17, 2001)

Goals

1. To continue to operate a viable cattle operation while considering the preservation of the range and environment as a priority.
2. Operate a profitable operation with reasonable risk.
3. Anchor program with a cow-calf operation to assure the economical and historical value associated with it.
4. Continue to maintain a stocker operation, adjusting stocking rates and periods to achieve optimum management of forage and habitat

The Co-op was established in March of 1977 as a means to continue the ranching tradition at Hollister Ranch and preserve the Ranch's prominent role in the area's agricultural production.

The HR Co-op is one of the four largest working cattle ranches in the Santa Barbara County and getting higher on the list each year as other large ranches continue to break up and be sold off.

The Co-op supports two main types of operations: a mother herd (cow/calf) and stocker yearling operation. On the average the Co-op runs 2,000 head of cattle each year during the grass season. The cattle operation is sub-leased by the Co-op Manager; however, the Co-op continues to oversee the entire operation.

The operation has endured three major droughts; 1976 – 78; 1985 – 90; and the most recent 1999 – 2004. The Co-op has shown a profit 14 of the 28 years with an overall average of positive cash flows and revenue.

The Co-op has developed 45 off stream water sources, with plans for an addition 30. The first 35 were developed strictly with Co-op funds, the remainder are results of the Watershed Program funded by HROA. This is an exciting program, highly supported and *funded* by the HROA membership. The developed off stream water sources combined with proper grazing techniques are our greatest tools for promoting healthy rangelands and preserving wildlife habitat and the pastoral beauty of the Hollister Ranch.

The Hollister Ranch Owner's Association is the Co-op's operational partner. The Co-op and Association share the facilities essential to the Co-op's operation (employee housing, barns, storage areas, corrals, developed water and much more). The Association makes daily decisions which can be costly, which are based solely upon the cattle operations needs such as types of road surface, fencing of private areas, common area policies and overall security of the cattle operation.

The owners of the Hollister Ranch have made significant sacrifices to accommodate, promote and protect their community agricultural operation. They have preserved an outstanding grazing program.

The Co-op's employees have been the leaders in the HROA volunteer fire for 20 of the last 28 years. A strong volunteer fire department has been critical to the protection of thousand of acres of valuable summer and fall feed.

The Co-op has a strong sense of accomplishment as we reflect on our mission and goals. Together with the HROA & Co-op Boards and their respective Management we will stay on track to protect and preserve rangeland agriculture and the ranching tradition on the Santa Barbara coast.