
Drought and What It Means for Coyote Creek Angus

Colorado Cattlemen's Assoc &
Colorado Assoc of Conservation Districts

Nov 29, 2021

COYOTE CREEK



ANGUS

Coyote Creek Ranch Angus



1. Ranch founded in 1880s – first brand registered in 1885
2. In Dunckley Park, south of Hayden
 - Elevation from 6,900 to 8,000 ft
3. Coyote Creek Ranch today
 - High-altitude, registered Angus seedstock
 - Nominal stocking: 100 - 110 registered Angus cows; late summer calvers
 - Irrigate up to ~170 acres; most years 130-140 acres



Droughts Over the Years

- 2008
- 2012
- 2018 (localized)
- 2020
- 2021
- 2022?



The Drought and Coyote Creek Angus



Drought Has Forced CCA to Take a Hard Look in 4 Key Areas:

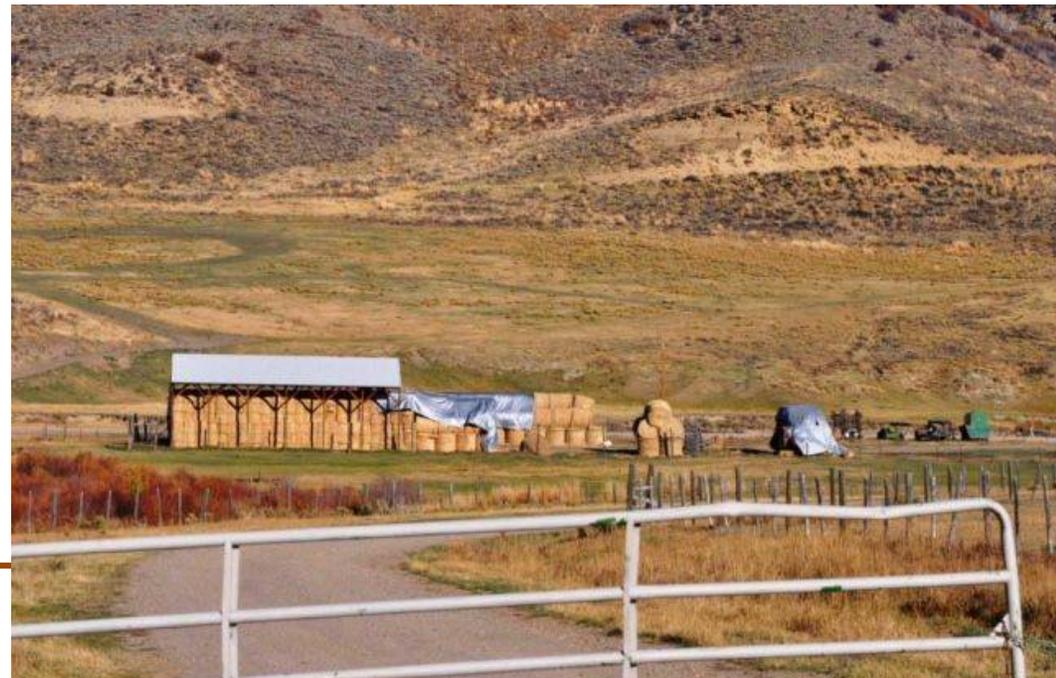
1. Hay Planning
2. Pasture Management
3. Irrigation Improvements
4. Cow herd management/stocking rate



Hay Planning

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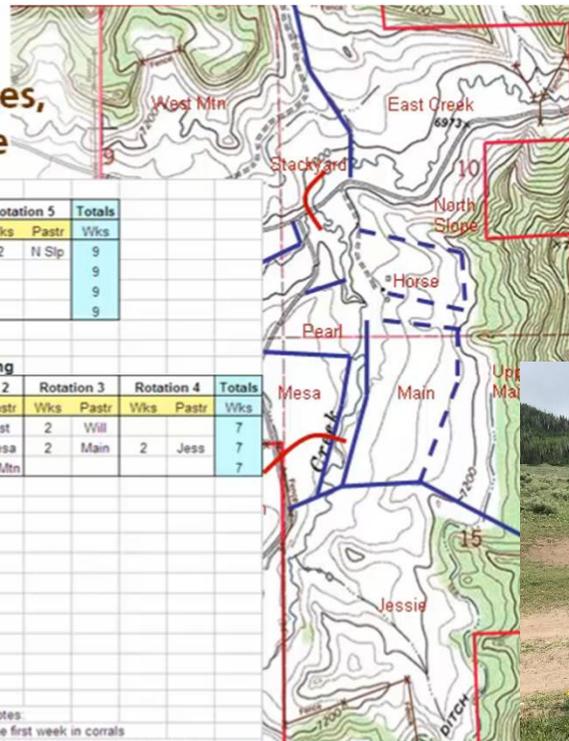
- Getting orders in early
 - Consistent relationship with hay broker has helped us
 - Use alfalfa because it's available and is nutritious
 - Contract where there is rain (Front Range in 2021)
 - Consider other states: Utah, Wyoming



Pasture Management

- Rotational grazing planning
- Manage horse grazing, 4-6 hours a day vs 24 hours
- Preserve grass/minimize erosion as much as possible e.g. limit driving on grass

Pasture planning requires a detailed analysis of growth rates, stocking rates, and pasture size



Breeding														
Group	Sire	Cows	Clvs	Rotation 1		Rotation 2		Rotation 3		Rotation 4		Rotation 5		Totals
				Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks
1	RT2	26	12	1	Jess	2	N Slip	2	Main	2	U Main	2	N Slip	9
2	2BOB	28	26	2	Yst	3	Will	2	Yst	2	Will			9
3	708	26	24	4	Dave 1	5	Dave 2							9
4	IF3	26	24	2	7Bcks	4	E Crk	3	W Mtn					9
		106	86											

Post-Breeding Thru Ultrasound													Ultrasound to Weaning					
Group	Who	Cows	Clvs	Rotation 1		Rotation 2		Totals		Rotation 1		Rotation 2		Rotation 3		Rotation 4		Totals
				Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks
5	Pairs	54	38	2	Main	2	E Crk	4	3	W Mtn	2	Yst	2	Will				7
6	Pairs	52	48	4	Jess			4	2	U Main	1	Mesa	2	Main	2	Jess		7
7	Bulls	8	0	2	W Mtn	2	U Btm	4	3	U Btm	4	W Mtn						7
		114	86															

Weaning to Shipping								
Group	Who	Cows	Clvs	Rotation 1		Rotation 2		Totals
				Wks	Pastr	Wks	Pastr	Wks
8	Cows	100	0	4	Andy 1	3	Andy 2	7
9	Wnlg B	0	46	7	Mesa			7
10	Wnlg H	0	40	7	E Crk			7
7	Bulls	8	0	7	U Btm			7
		108	86					

Breeding Season = 9 wks
 Post-Breeding to Ultrasound = 4 wks
 Ultrasound to Weaning = 7 wks

Weaning Notes:
 1. Assume first week in corrals



Pasture Management

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Finding leases

- We trade hunting rights for summer pasture
- We traded meadow upkeep (harrowing and aerating) for pasture
- Be a responsible leasee: check cattle often, fix fence, etc. so owners welcome you back
- Leases can be risky/tenuous,
 - get it writing if you can
 - if verbal, make sure you both understand and are clear with the terms



Pasture Management

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- Drier Conditions Mean More Weed/Pest Mitigation
 - Aerial Spraying
 - Spot Spraying
 - Gophers



Pasture Management

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Burrowing pest: the WY Ground Squirrel ... *is your enemy!*

1. Compacts soil
2. Eats high volume of grass
3. Makes irrigation difficult/ impossible
4. Creates hazards for stock
5. Brings ... *badgers!*



We employ the 'SIP' Strategy:

- **Shoot**
- **Irrigate**
- **Poison**

Irrigation Management

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- Relationship with neighbors and ditches
 - Need a good relationship on shared ditches
 - On long ditches we share by days vs amounts
 - Over the irrigation season, we also consolidate the water into one ditch



Irrigation Improvements

Gated Pipe-Objectives

1. Replacing steep, erosion-prone ditches
2. Improving take-outs

Improves water control, especially
in low-flow conditions

Efficient use of water resource
while maintaining the benefits
of flood irrigation



Irrigation Improvements

Gated Pipe Considerations:

1. Splash box/transitions to gated pipe
2. Picking up pipe after the season – do we need to?
3. Do we need screens/filtration?

Lessons

1. It's a low-pressure system
2. Pad erosion control a must



Pad Erosion Control:

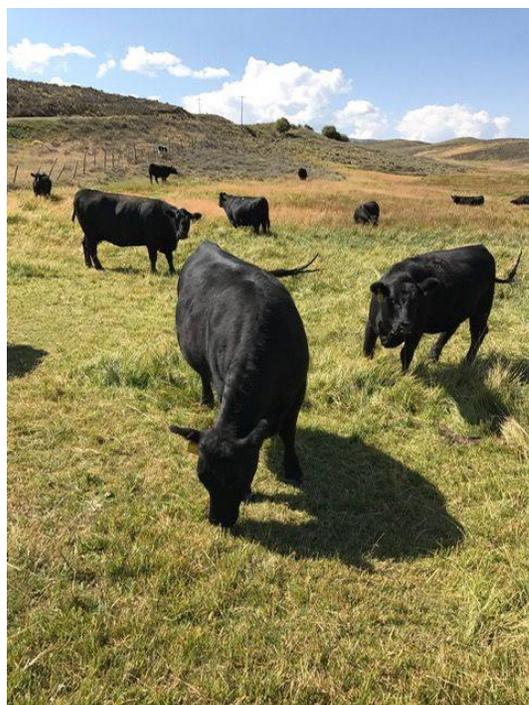
1. Harrow, harrow, and then harrow
2. Seed with irr pasture mix
3. Cover with ECB

Herd Management

Drought has meant herd reductions

- Reduced to 90 cows after 2018
- Cut by 10 more pairs in fall of 2020
- Did not keep replacement heifers in 2021

Implications for Seedstock Operation



1. Loss of genetics
2. Loss of acclimated females
3. Loss of revenue



Herd Management

- Analysis of Herd Reduction
 - EPDs and PAP history
 - Age of cow
 - Sex of calf (heifers)
 - Calculations of hay/pasture consumption





Is Drought the New Normal ... ?

Questions/Discussion

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