

BEEF *in BC*

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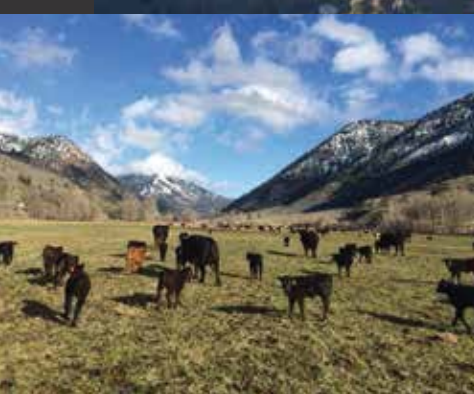
READ THE RANCH PROFILE ON PAGE 40

LEFT TO RIGHT: DIANNE, JOHN ROSS, SANDRA, WADE, JUNE, WILSON, MARLA AND STEVE

Congratulations to the Clifton Ranch for receiving the 2019 BCCA Ranch Sustainability Award.

Clifton Ranch

Keremeos, BC, Established 1968



BC Cattlemen's Association Ranch Sustainability Award 2019

The Clifton family of Clifton Ranch in Keremeos, BC were honoured with the 2019 Ranch Sustainability Award for their excellence in environmental stewardship and sustainability.

Dream Come True: The Clifton family has been ranching in the Keremeos area since 1916 but the Clifton Ranch began in earnest May of 1968 when Wilson and June Clifton made their dream of operating their own ranch come true. With two young boys, Brad was 9 and Wade was 5, Wilson and June set about building their own ranch operation in the beautiful Similkameen Valley.

50 years later, Clifton Ranch is a true family operation: Wilson still participates in the ranch activities and both Brad and Wade worked together and raised their families on the ranch. The family partnership is best described as everyone knows what is going on, but they all have their own areas of responsibility and expertise.



Above: Sage Thrasher



Above: Riparian Fence



Above: Burrowing Owl



Above: Dominion Radio Astrophysical Observatory at White Lake





The Ranch, Land & Cattle

Today, the ranch encompasses a 500 head cow-calf herd, a 50-70 head bull test station, a feedlot where the calves are retained and backgrounded, and a beef retail outlet. Since the cattle are not implanted, the Clifton Ranch is working towards certification for the European Union market.

The 500 head herd is Hereford based crossed with Angus and Salers. A small herd of purebred Salers are also raised on the ranch. The herd genetics are selected to thrive in the steep terrain and dry ecosystem of the Similkameen Valley. They are also carefully chosen for their calmness. Interestingly, the Cliftons handle the cattle on foot and horseback as much as possible so that the cattle are habituated to people and are undisturbed when they encounter hikers or recreationists in the area. This is important because the ranch is

located in a densely populated area and the cattle may encounter people regularly.

Clifton Ranch uses land from a combination of private, federal, Crown and Nature Trust British Columbia. These lands are spread over a large area and include the White Lake Basin, the Columns area adjacent to the ranch, the Old Tom Mountain range and Mahoney Lake range near OK Falls. The Ranch manages a wide range of ecosystems from 1300 feet at the valley floor (at the home ranch) up to 6500 feet at the top of the range. Grazing occurs on native grasslands (including Bluebunch wheatgrass and Fescue stands) and open forest. The average annual precipitation in the area is approximately 11-13 inches. All the hay and winter feed is produced on 150 acres of irrigated cropland, cut three times, stored as silage in AG bags.

Wildlife, Biodiversity & Management

The Clifton family has close to a 20 year history working with non-profit conservation groups on sustainable management. In 2000, they first partnered with The Nature Trust BC on the establishment of the White Lake Basin Biodiversity Ranch. This partnership on the Biodiversity Ranch, and other agencies across the landscape, ensures that the land is managed for both cattle and wildlife values, not only in the White Basin area but across the whole ranch.

Three aspects of Clifton Ranch stand out: the large number of species at risk that need to be managed on the landscape, the number of different agencies that they deal with and the number of water developments constructed. The Clifton Ranch manages for 31 animal and plant species at risk across the landscape (deeded, leased and Crown lands) including Brewers and Grasshopper sparrows, Sage Thrashers, Great Basin Spadefoot Toads, Tiger salamanders, and Western rattlesnake. Caring for the species requires a landscape level approach to the management. Some of the specific strategies and management tools used by the Clifton Ranch are:

- Key to their management is the extensive, well thought out and designed water developments used throughout the range to manage cattle and take pressure off of riparian areas
- 100 water developments spread throughout the range. The longest one is 17,000 feet with nine troughs. These have

improved the range and forage condition, taken pressure off of riparian areas, reduced soil erosion and helped distribute cattle throughout the range.

- All riparian areas on the home ranch, along with sensitive areas on the range, are fenced. Totalling approximately 30 kilometres of fence
- Off-stream waterers are used strategically away from riparian areas on the home ranch
- Riparian fences are wildlife friendly, using smooth wire on the top and bottom strands. Additional fences are used throughout the property when and where needed
- A rest rotation grazing system is used. Some pastures are rested every second year; however, they always monitor and adjust based on how the grass looks in a given year
- Going forward, the Cliftons hope to lessen the use of fencing and increase the use of water developments

“The Biodiversity Ranching Program continues to demonstrate that sustainable cattle management is synonymous with protecting both biodiversity and conservation values. The success of this partnership would not be possible without the co-operation and leadership of Clifton Ranch and the Clifton Family.” ~ Nicholas Burdock, Nature Trust British Columbia.



Brad Clifton

Brad Clifton passed away suddenly in February. The Clifton family would like to recognize Brad’s contribution to ensuring the ranch met its sustainability vision. It is thanks to his efforts, in part, that the Clifton Ranch is being recognized with this award.

1. Left to right: Marla, Steve, Dianne, Brad, John Ross, Erin
2. Wade, June, Wilson, Brad
3. Cody, Trisha, Weston, Wade, Cassie, Wylie, Jessie, Wade, Sandra, Megan, Evan



Watch the Ranch Sustainability Award video with Wade Clifton to learn more about the family’s commitment to stewardship and sustainability

