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**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE SEELHOF FAMILY ON RECEIVING THE
2020 RANCH SUSTAINABILITY AWARD. READ MORE ON PAGE 36**

Woodjam Ranch

2020 Ranch Sustainability Award



The beautiful Woodjam Ranch, located East of Horsely, BC, is both rich in history and biodiversity. Driving down the dusty Kroener Road along the Horsefly River leads you to the home of the Seelhof family, surrounded by spruce trees and luscious fields. The sun comes up over the misty hills and fog lingers in the creek ravine and the animals start stirring - **welcome to a new day at the Woodjam Ranch.**

A Family Affair:

If you have ever had the privilege of sitting in the kitchen with the Seelhof's drinking coffee, you know that this family lives and breathes for their ranch operation. Chad's parents, Ellie and Louis Seelhof, bought the Woodjam Ranch in 2003 while residing on a ranch in Saskatchewan. "We were looking for a spot where we could grow lots of grass and not have to worry about water," says Ellie while reflecting on the trip that Louis and Chad took to BC when Chad was a teenager to find a new ranch to call home. Ellie and Louis moved to BC bringing half of their herd with them from Saskatchewan, and Chad and Ricky

followed to BC a year later to a neighbouring ranch. In 2016, Chad and Ricky bought the Woodjam Ranch from Ellie and Louis.

"Ranching is all we've ever done... everything I know about cows came from my Grandpa" explains Chad when reflecting upon the generations of his family that have been in the industry. "My Grandpa was a true farmer, he didn't enjoy cows. I learned everything from my dad," says Ricky. While Ricky did spend some time as a nurse, the birth of their first child and her passion for ranching made it an easy choice for the family to pursue

ranching full-time.

Ellie and Louis still reside on the ranch with Chad and Ricky and their three children, Riata, Cooper and Renee. When asked about the benefits of having three generations on the ranch together, Louis states that “it is always good to have ideas about how things could be and keep an open mind about the future, and young people can have good ideas and give input.”

Ranch Operation:

The Woodjam Ranch includes 2,122 deeded acres and 80,000 acres of Crown grazing land. The cattle herd consists of 500 commercial Black Angus cow calf pairs, and the ranch raises about 80 replacement heifers annually.

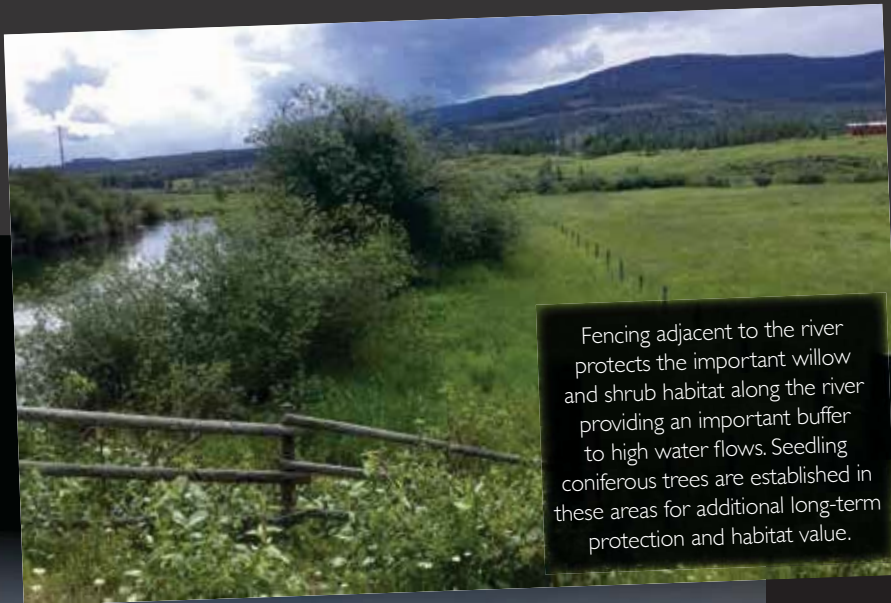
The ranch participates in Verified Beef Production and has a strict animal care and vaccination protocol to ensure herd health is excellent. They are an audited Verified Beef Plus operation, which also includes the Canada Roundtable for Sustainable Beef. They have also participated extensively in the Environmental Farm Plan Program for the last 11 years.

Industry Involvement:

Chad and Ricky are both actively involved with the cattle industry off of the ranch. Chad is the President of the local Horsefly Cattlemen’s Association and Ricky is the Secretary. Ricky is also the Beef leader of the local 4-H club and the Chair for the BC Cattlemen’s Association Public Affairs and Education Committee and sits on the Council for the Canadian Cattlemen’s Association Young Cattlemen’s Council. The family is also active in volunteering with the Williams Lake Stampede.

Extension activities are important to the family and the ranch has participated in the Winter Feeding Study for Nutrient Management, a water trough tour sponsored by the Williams Lake Indian Band, Steve Kenyon Grazing Seminar, Don Campbell Holistic Ranching, and the Cariboo Cattlemen’s Riparian Management Field Day for Cows and Fish Riparian Assessments. The ranch partners with Nature Conservancy to assist with their ranch management, and help Mount Polly meet their environmental objectives by jointly delivering habitat projects on the ranch.

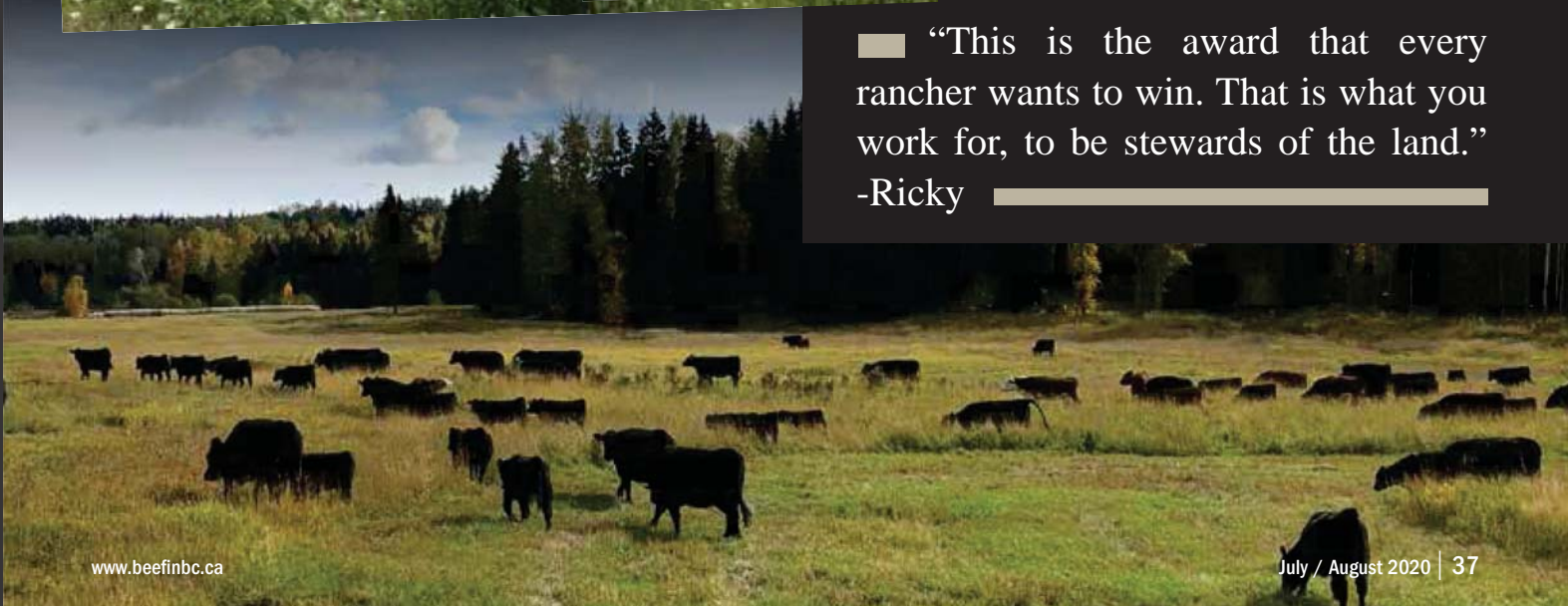
The Seelhof family are also active advocates for the industry and the ranch has been the site for promotional videos for the *We Heart Local*, the *Environmental Farm Plan Program* and *BC Ag Safe Tractor Safety*. Ricky has delivered “Speak Out” training on agricultural issues and is active through social media platforms for women in the industry. The family also participated at the PNE in Vancouver in 2019 talking to urban consumers about where their food comes from. “Our area isn’t really a ranching area, so people can be disconnected, so it is nice to talk to people about ranching and tell them what it is we do,” says Chad.



Fencing adjacent to the river protects the important willow and shrub habitat along the river providing an important buffer to high water flows. Seedling coniferous trees are established in these areas for additional long-term protection and habitat value.

■ “This is the award that every rancher wants to win. That is what you work for, to be stewards of the land.”

-Ricky





Three Generations at Woodjam Ranch (Left to right) Chad, Ricky, Cooper, Renee, Riata, Ellie and Louis

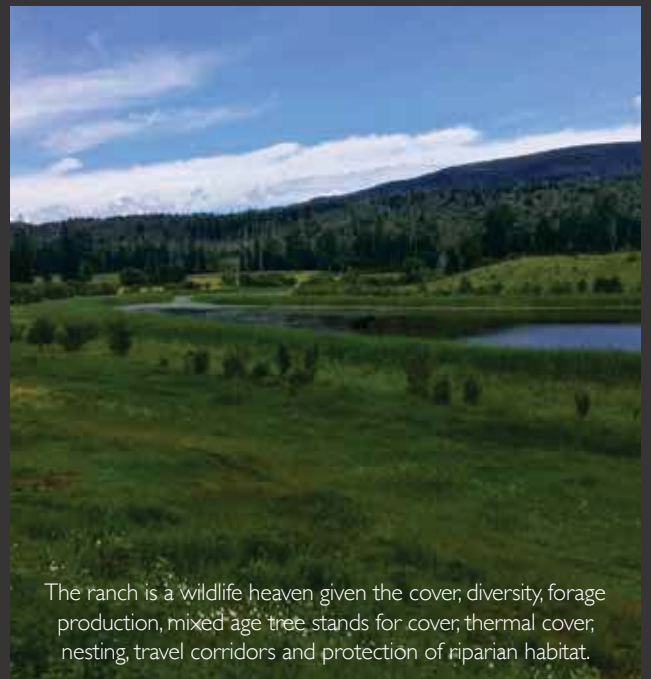
Water and Riparian Management:

The Seelhof's were drawn to the Woodjam Ranch because of the water. The proudest accomplishment for the family in regards to environment sustainability is their off-stream watering system and river restoration. The Horsefly River flows along the property, as well as 16 tributary creeks which bear salmon and trout. The ranch has completed riverbank restoration projects in collaboration with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, as well as fencing projects to prevent livestock access to Horsefly River, Kroener Creek and Woodjam Creek. They utilize permanent fencing along most of the river and stream banks, but also use electric fence to prevent wildlife entanglement. Over the last few years, the ranch has started utilizing gravity-fed waterers in some pastures where there had not been water access in the past. While water has been one of their greatest successes, it has also posed as one of their biggest challenges. The ranch experiences flooding of 50 percent of their hay fields every year, and river bank stabilization has been an ongoing project.

“We’ve learned a lot since moving here” says Chad, “nature will predict what happens to you. We can have all four seasons in a week, so you need to be prepared for anything and be well adapted.”



Streambank restoration



The ranch is a wildlife heaven given the cover, diversity, forage production, mixed age tree stands for cover, thermal cover, nesting, travel corridors and protection of riparian habitat.

“Water Management has been a big part of this ranch.” -Louis



Skidder-tire water troughs are installed to provide stock watering in various pastures by means of gravity flow in most situations. Off-stream stock watering locations help to protect stream habitat and encourage nutrient distribution.

Nutrient Management and Soil Health:

The rangeland areas of the ranch display maturing grasses in the uplands away from the hayfields, demonstrating excellent vitality. Not only does the retaining of cover and litter provide value for soil development, it also provides habitat for many creatures that dwell in the mature timber and riparian areas. Over time, the ranch has been selectively harvesting trees to promote grass growth for additional grazing land. Nutrients are not stored or handled and feeding is done in a manner to ensure run-off of nutrients is not a concern. Pens are not required for feeding or calving other than a remote shelter located in a calving field away from the homestead. Deadstock are buried and soil sampling is done semi-annually on key areas. There are very few weeds in the pastures and electric fencing is used to increase weed control and nutrient distribution. The ranch has hosted Cariboo Cattlemen Riparian field days to demonstrate this technique to others. Environmental Farm Plan funding was used to install pump and distribution lines to provide off-stream stock watering locations to protect stream habitat and further encourage nutrient distribution. All cattle handling is done with horses, which helps preserve the quality and integrity of the grasslands around the ranch. The ranch, like many other operations, utilizes rotational grazing for both forage and soil health.



Biodiversity:

The ranch has preserved tree cover throughout the operation to offer windbreaks and thermal cover for both cattle and wildlife. The treelines bordering the grazing areas provide habitat value for moose, deer, bears and the open fields and waterways enhance habitat for long-billed curlew and blue heron. To help protect the waterways and fish species, Woodjam has worked with forestry companies like Tolko to install proper culverts and bridges. The Seelhof family enjoys having the wildlife on their land, and are pleased to be able to provide valuable habitat while also providing for their cattle.



The BC Cattlemen's Association is proud to acknowledge our 2020 Ranch Sustainability recipients on their well deserved recognition.

Thank you to our sponsors for their partnership in acknowledging the hard work of the ranching community in environmental sustainability initiatives:

