



Beacon Hill Ranch

Langley, OK ▪ www.beaconhillranch.com

BLIZZARD OF 2011



Round one: 20 inches of snow leaves challenging roads, but a trip to the feed store in preparation for round two also means dinner at our favorite Mexican place.



Round two: 24 additional inches fall in 12 hours

Wind-driven snow pretty but this shows the way the snow was blowing





Annie and Fiona, our faithful ranch hands, leave their warm beds on the back porch to help with the daily chores.

Fatty Patty stays in the house to babysit Kenzie on days it's too cold for her to help.





A wind-break made from hay to shelter the young heifers and steers in the pens near the house.



These young heifers and steers, weaned but not old enough for living with the herd, live in a 20 acre pen near the house on a special diet for “teenagers”.

These young ones have constant access to feed and hay.
In this weather they're burning the calories!





The bulls have a pen of their own with access to a stall in the barn. Their work is done in 60 day sessions in the summer and fall . They live together in a “guys only” pen the rest of the year.

A photograph showing a herd of cows in a snowy field. The cows are of various colors, including brown, black, and white. They are standing in a line, partially obscured by a thick layer of snow in the foreground. The background consists of a dense line of bare, leafless trees under a grey, overcast sky. The overall scene is wintry and somewhat somber.

The cow herd finds some shelter in the woods, even so this is challenging weather. These are pregnant or nursing momma cows that have to be checked, fed and watered each day.

Round bales of native prairie grass hay stored after summer harvest until winter feeding time. Matt is putting out 7,000 lbs of hay per day in this weather.



Each of these bales weighs ~1000 lbs
Matt will put out 6 or 7 bales each
day for eating.

He'll also roll 1 out so the cattle will
have a dry place to lay down and
rest.

In this kind of snow that job will take
the better part of the day.... IF
nothing breaks or gets stuck in the
snow.





With a bale on the front and one on the back the tractor is usually heavy enough to make it through the snow. Even so it takes some skilled driving to get this done.



After each bale is dropped into place, Matt gets out to pull several strands of twine off of each bale. These cows are gentle but you can't forget they're 1500 lb hungry gals – all impatiently wading through the snow around you.

Each bale sits inside a heavy plastic ring that makes a feeding station keeping the cows from tromping through the hay and wasting it.



Even though well equipped by mother nature to deal with the weather, she still needs hay, protein supplement and someone to break the ice on the pond so she can drink every day. "Geisha" is a five year-old mature cow due to calve in the spring.



The herd includes nursing mother cows with fall-born calves that are 4-5 months old. Along with feeding, Erica and Matt check for signs of health problems each day.



Beneath the snow is a pond – both water source and danger zone - cows who walk on the frozen surface looking for a drink can fall through the ice.

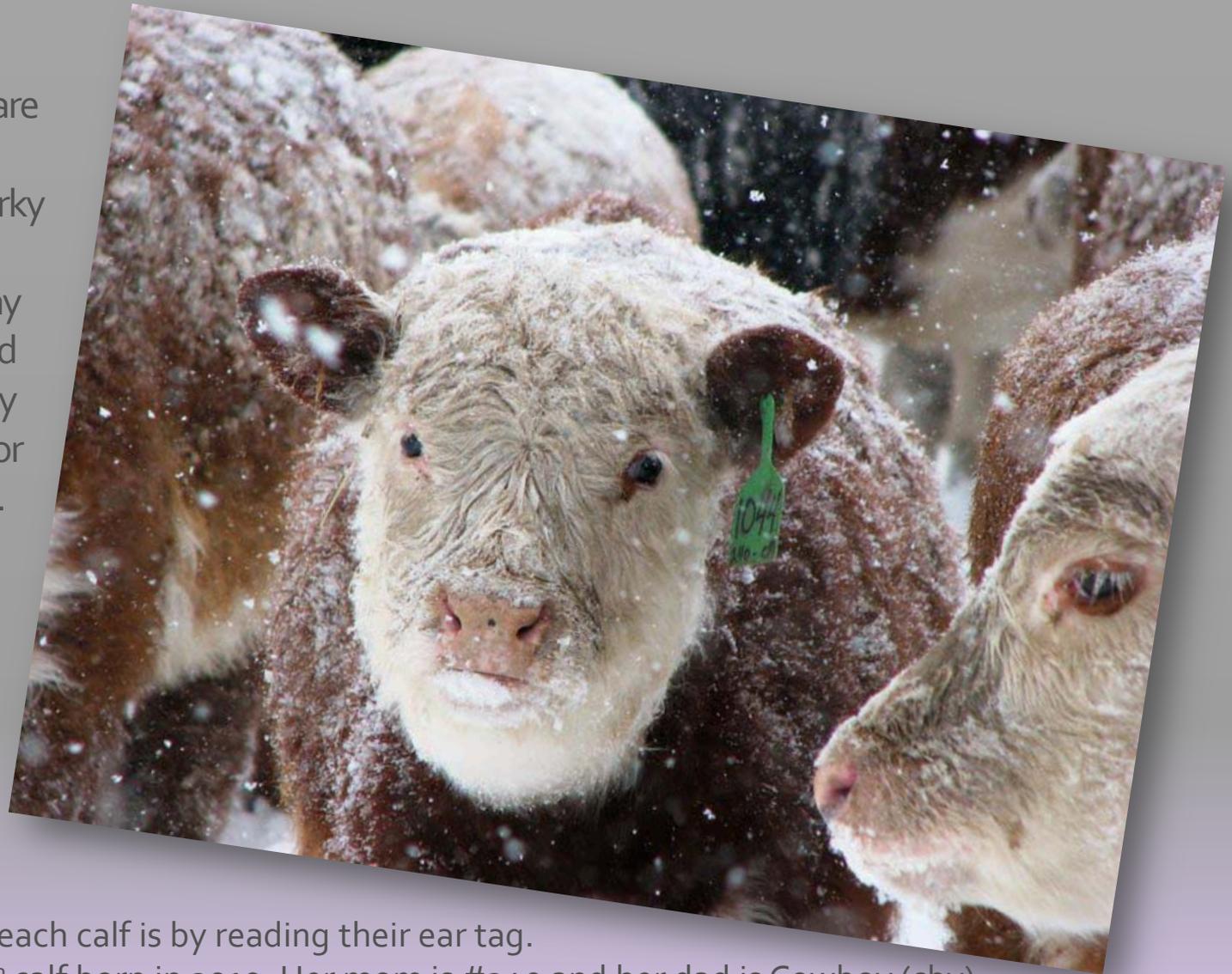




Break the ice and then dig it out to form a hole near the edge for drinking while standing on firm ground. The hole has to be long enough for several to drink at one time.



These babies are doing well. Bright eyes, perky ears, no runny noses. They play in the snow and then rest on hay. Matt rolls out for them each day.



We know who each calf is by reading their ear tag. 1044 is the 44th calf born in 2010. Her mom is #240 and her dad is Cowboy (cby). Erica has all the info right on the tag & a corresponding "1044" tattoo inside her ear ensures we always know even if the tag is lost.



An afternoon in the sun will melt the ice and dry the hair on their backs.
Until then their heavy winter coat does its job.



The night after the snow, temperatures dropped to -27 .
The next morning the fog was frozen in the trees.

Matt & Erica Boyer

5th generation cattle ranchers

Blizzard of 11 survivors!

All the cattle, even the calves, made it through the blizzard just fine.



Beacon Hill Ranch 102 years on the ranch ▪ 61 years raising Hereford cattle