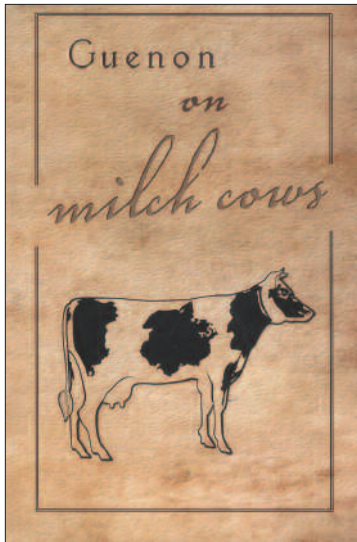


Book Review

Guenon on Milch Cows
Written by Thos. J. Hand

Reviewed by David L. Troyer



Guenon on Milch Cows is a book full of valuable information for any stockman, whether he has beef or dairy. Thos. J. Hand translated *Guenon's Treatise on the Bovine Species in General* in 1883. Ever since then there have been many admirers of this work, but only recently has it gained new exposure and was reprinted, making it readily available.

It goes into detail telling the reader what to do and look for to develop the ideal cow. Learn what the escutcheon on cows reveals to us. Learn before the cow freshens if she will milk late into gestation. Learn what it takes to classify cows and bulls for good production and components in their offspring, all in simple step-by-step pictures with explanations to guide you through.

The style of this old-fashioned book is very unique. The family farm can benefit from the phenotype gained from Guenon's self-explanatory methods in this small volume. A small second book in the back provides information on the combination of qualities to form the perfect type of cow. All packed in one unit of 134 pages. Try it without any regrets. You can gain time-tested and proven methods to better understand stockmanship. An insert is also included for linear measuring cows and bulls.

Available from Nathan Hershberger, 4282 Winklepleck Rd. NW, Sugarcreek, OH 44627 Ph: 330-852-9331 Price is \$12.00 plus shipping.

Revolution on the Range:
The Rise of a New Ranch in the American West
Written by Courtney White

Book review by
Richard L. Cates, Jr.

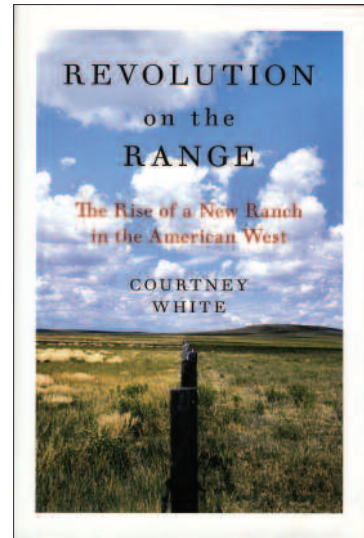
Revive, mend, soothe, rebuild, fix, regenerate, reinvigorate: these are the recurring adjectives and verbs that communicate the substance and spirit of Courtney White's inspiring and hopeful work *Revolution on the Range: The Rise of a New Ranch in the American West*. This is the vocabulary—and the attitude—adopted

by an increasing number of ranchers, conservationists, and others with a stake in the rural American West. Their stories of collaboration and their active efforts to find common ground and define a new environmentalism, fill the pages of *Revolution on the Range*.

By contrast, the defining terms of the environmental movement have long tended to communicate a mindset of defense or safekeeping: save, preserve, roll back, stop, protect, prohibit, enforce. These terms occur infrequently in White's book. Little more than a decade ago, bumper-sticker slogans—"Cattle-free by '93," "Cattle-galore by '94"—symbolized the acrimonious debates between environmentalists and ranchers, a schism that has long characterized land-use decision-making in the American West. The rethinking of environmentalism and the recognition of ranchers as "applied ecologists" represent a real movement away from assumptions of inherent conflict and toward creative resolution among the many diverse interests that share the landscapes of the American West.

Courtney White has been at the forefront of this movement. White is co-founder and Executive Director of the Quivira Coalition in Santa Fe, New Mexico. ("Quivira" is a venerable Spanish term sometimes translated as "the unknown territory beyond the frontier.") Since 1997, the Quivira Coalition has worked to break down the barriers separating ranchers, environmentalists, scientists, public land managers, and others. Wendell Berry's words serve as the unofficial motto of the Quivira Coalition: "You can't save the land apart from the people; to save either you must save both."

The concept of *land health* is at the heart of the Quivira Coalition's work, and of the stories in *Revolution on the Range*. In the 1940s Aldo Leopold defined land health as "the capacity of land for self-renewal," and conservation as "our effort to understand and preserve this capacity." Ecologists have since



elaborated the concept and come to a working consensus on its definition: the degree to which the ecological functioning and composition of a landscape or ecosystem are sustained over time. From this definition flows a key corollary: healthy land can support many values while unhealthy land undermines and diminishes those same values over the long run.

In its efforts to “save both” land and people, the Quivira Coalition has used innovative tools and, along the way, has invented a term: the *New Ranch*. Elements of the New Ranch include progressive ranch management, scientifically guided riparian and upland restoration, local food production and marketing, land health assessment and monitoring, collaboration towards common goals, and the strengthening of community relationships. White quotes Jim Thorp, a cattle rancher from New Mexico, who says it this way: “In the Old Ranch, the focus is on the cattle. In the New Ranch, ranchers have become applied ecologists, and the focus is on the grass and soil, and on how to diversify the business.”

As White describes various “New Ranches” across the West, he traces his own personal journey as well. Early in his career as a professional environmentalist, White “believed in the primacy of federal lands; the simple answer to the complex questions surrounding land use in the West was increased federal ownership.” Amid the vitriolic land-use battles of the 1990s, White came to believe that all good things develop on a

foundation of healthy relationships, and that enhancing the resilience of those relationships is the cornerstone to long-term success in conservation.

The stories White chronicles illustrate “how ranching and environmentalism are changing in the West.” “The people profiled not only ask questions of their own, they also form part of a pattern of solutions. Linked together, they are part of an intriguing mosaic of human creativity, energy, and hopefulness.” White provides a diverse set of salient case studies:

Sid Goodloe stewards his Carrizo Valley Ranch north of Capitan, New Mexico. Goodloe was likely the first rancher in the U.S. to implement planned short-duration grazing and holistic management in the late 1960s, using techniques he picked up from wildlife biologist Allan Savory in what was then Rhodesia. For the past fifty years, Goodloe has employed (among other practices) selected woody-brush thinning, prescribed burning, and planned grazing, and has developed a cross-breed of cattle better suited to the semi-arid mountain environment of the ranch. The result, White writes, is a landscape of sweeping savanna expanses and park-like stands of ponderosa pine—“a masterpiece” that elicits “awe and inspiration.” Goodloe, who shares the lessons he has learned with countless visitors, says, “I’m an environmentally sensitive rancher. It makes me money and I like it!”

After retiring from the U.S. Forest Service, Bill Zeedyk found himself busier than ever in a second career as a healer of degraded streams and riparian zones. Working on both private and public lands, Zeedyk has developed a toolbox of new techniques that he shares through field days, workshops, and publications. He has shown, for example, how short fences across the trails in canyon lands force cattle to meander in an S-pattern as they walk, encouraging the water to meander too, thus slowing erosion. As White notes, the standard solutions proposed for cattle-caused erosion are much more dramatic: “kick the cows out (if you are an environmentalist), ignore the problem and hope it fixes itself (if you a rancher), or spend a bunch of money on diesel-driven machines and other heavy-handedness (if you work for an agency).” But putting fences in the way of cattle and letting them do the restoration work is elegant, inexpensive, and accessible. And it works.

The 25,000-acre Sun Ranch boasts of the oldest brands in Montana. When Todd Graham took over as manager, a third of the ranch was set aside as an elk reserve. Cattle were excluded under the assumption, prevalent among conservationists, that wildlife and cattle need to be segregated. The trouble was that the elk had stopped using the pastures too because the grass was old and rank; the elk didn’t like the grass. So Todd, employing single-strand electric fencing and portable posts, “freshened up” the forage with short-duration cattle grazing during the growing season, again using the cattle as a conservation tool. The elk herds returned to the pastures of Sun Ranch.

Other ranchers are finding important new applications of their skills, knowledge, and animals. For the reclamation of sterile mine tailings, the cloven hooves of cattle are inexpensive

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and remarkably effective in breaking up impervious soil surfaces, thereby improving water infiltration, shallow seed planting, and fertility through the incorporation of manure. Ranchers have offered just such a reclamation tool for Teels Marsh, near Mina, Nevada, once a thriving terminal lake and now a lifeless salt flat. The Bureau of Land Management has so far said “no.”


Julia Davis-Stafford and her sister Kim, who along with the extended family own and operate the 100,000-acre CS Ranch in northeastern New Mexico, have employed a planned grazing system for a decade and a half that has allowed the ranch to flourish economically and ecologically. They told White the family has always held the land dear, and that “we didn’t change our ethics, we’re the same people we were fifteen years ago. What changed was our knowledge. We went back to school, in a sense, and we came back to the ranch with new ideas.”

Through these and reports from other New Ranches, Courtney White reminds us that ranching, when undertaken with respect for healthy ecological and human relationships, is a renewable and renewing way of living with the land. What he has noted through his extensive travels is that it “feels very much like ranching is being reborn, one ranch at a time.” It seems clear that with examples of progressive ranching proliferating, and scientific understanding of rangeland ecology and health greatly expanding, there is no longer an inherent contradiction between successful commercial ranching and regenerative ecological function on the range.

White’s journey brings him, and his readers, to the recognition that we cannot afford to ignore our stewardship responsibilities. Rangeland, he writes, “needs the active manager on the ground, watching for indicators of land health, fixing fences, and moving cattle around. Our land needs more care, not less—and less is what you get when people leave, live too far away, don’t have the necessary resources, or aren’t interested....Restoration is an active word—it needs human involvement, guidance, and maintenance. And it needs to be done by someone who feels affection for the land, who lives

there, and who is an eager participant.”

In summarizing his own vision, White introduces us to another novel concept, “mugido”—the Spanish word for the moo or lowing of a cow. Close in sound to “ejido,” the Spanish word for “commons,” White suggests it as a label for a potentially powerful new approach to the public commons. He envisions the mugido coming to signify equitable public-private partnerships, where the land would remain a part of the public commons, still influenced by national and regional goals, still owned by the American public, but operated by private entities in collaboration with the responsible federal land agency. White identifies five key elements of the mugido model: an overarching goal of promoting and sustaining land health; access to the entire toolbox of land management tools; positive incentives (including profit); encouraging government employees to be partners in innovation (not simply regulators); and engaging urban partners as stakeholders. Such challenging ideas, at once practical and innovative, are the hallmarks of *Revolution on the Range*.

As Wendell Berry reminds us, “we are not walking a prepared path” when it comes to restoring a sustainable relationship with our land and each other. Courtney White’s critical work points us in hopeful directions. 

The author would like to sincerely thank Curt Meine, Senior Fellow, Aldo Leopold Foundation, Baraboo, WI, for his thoughtful contribution to this review.

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