

No 'usual' days for this cattlemwoman

By JULIA HOLLISTER
For the Capital Press

GLENVILLE, Calif. — Rancher Sheila Bowen has a

full plate. She works on the family's commercial cow-calf operation, raises quarter horses and is president of the California CattleWomen.

"My husband's family has been ranching in Glennville (Kern County) since the 1870s," she said. "My husband, Jeff Bowen, manages

the Carver Bowen Ranch operation that is made up of English Cross cattle."

She grew up on a farm near Bakersfield, where her family raises cattle and farms cotton, alfalfa and some other rotational crops. The land has been in the family since the 1860s.

"Six generations have lived and worked on our ranch," she said.

Jeff and his sister, Cindy, manage the ranch with their parents, Carver and Alice Bowen. Jeff and Sheila's daughter, Alicia Bowen, works on the ranch as well.

Jeff's father attended Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo, majoring in agriculture. Cindy Bowen graduated from the University of California-Davis with a degree in animal science.

"Jeff and I both attended Cal Poly and majored in agriculture business management," she said. "All four of our children graduated from Cal Poly with various agriculture degrees."

The topography of the ranch is unique. The cattle run on rangeland from an elevation of around 500 to 8,000 feet. The cattle spend the winter at lower elevations and move to higher elevations in the spring and summer. The ranch has a U.S. Forest Service allotment where some of the cattle spend the summer.

Sheila Bowen sees a change in ranching today.

"I believe there are more



Courtesy of Sheila Bowen

California rancher Sheila Bowen works on the family's cow-calf operation in Kern County. She says in spite of the tighter regulations on the livestock industry, ranching is a wonderful way of life.

"It is getting harder and harder to ranch in California."

Sheila Bowen,
California rancher

women involved in ranching today than five years ago," she said. "This is the case on our ranch. Women outnumber men two-to-one right now."

Bowen said there are no "usual" days on the ranch.

"This time of year I help to gather cattle out of the high country, wean and process calves, and move cattle to lower range," she said. "Some parts of my day are devoted to working on California Cattle-

Women business."

As president of the 2,050-member organization — created to promote the beef industry — she has a variety of tasks that need to be done daily.

She says ranching in California is not easy, and the daily challenges are getting bigger.

"It is getting harder and harder to ranch in California," she said. "The regulations imposed by the government require more and more time and money in order to comply. Coupled with that is a five-year drought that has taken a toll on ranch resources including feed, water and cattle inventory."

Conversely, she said, cattle ranching continues to be a wonderful way of life.

"Living and working on the ranch provide unique opportunities to experience God's creation," she said. "Each day's work offers something different than the day before and each season brings its own beauty and set of responsibilities. We are committed to providing a healthy food supply through the proper care of the cattle we raise and provide for on this ranch."

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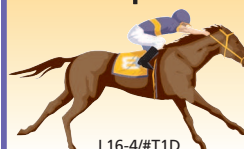
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