

Coleman family embraces ranch lifestyle

By **BRENNA WIEGAND**
For the Capital Press

Steve Coleman comes from humble beginnings.

The owner of Coleman Beef Ranch in Molalla, Ore., was one of 10 siblings who grew up poor on a family farm near St. Paul, Ore., where they all learned to work.

"As I grew up, I decided I wanted to rodeo and did that until I was 39 years old," Coleman said. "When I married Cathy and we started a family I rodeoed on weekends when I could as we worked toward a ranching life."

"We wanted a Western lifestyle," he said. "I was able to buy a sizable piece of ground in Molalla in 1984 and that made a nice start. We purchased additional property from neighbors here and there to where it made a sizable working cattle ranch."

He and Cathy raised five kids, who also learned to work from an early age, and furthered the strong rodeo influence that characterizes the ranch. All of them went to college on rodeo scholarships.

"When the kids were young, we built a big barn for a practice pen and an outdoor arena, so they always had an opportunity to practice. They were all real successful in high school rodeo and up into the professional ranks."

"During the rodeo season, trailer loads of cowboys show up at the ranch to camp and Cathy cooks and entertains them and takes care of



Brenna Wiegand/For the Capital Press

Steve Coleman at his ranch near Molalla, Ore.

them; she's quite a host," Coleman said. "Any of these rodeo cowboys that need a place to go and a place to put their horses up are always welcome here."

Coleman Ranch sells 650 yearlings and 500 head of replacement heifers a year, mostly through Western Video Market.

They run the heifers for a year, calve them the next winter and sell them as cow-calf pairs in the spring. Most of their bulls come from the

Bennett brothers near Hermiston, Ore.

"We enjoy the ranching lifestyle and the people involved and have been successful," Coleman said. "You're dealing with people like Western Video Market. They're just good people and we all work together."

Though Coleman can't imagine another lifestyle, the industry has its share of problems. It is currently under pressure after a devastating fire in August took out the Tyson

Foods plant in Holcomb, Kan., that was processing 6,000 head of cattle a day.

"There are now about four processors in the U.S., and they've taken advantage of the situation to jack the price up," Coleman said. "They're taking all the profit away from the cow-calf man and costing the feedlot operator \$200 a head."

"Our fat cattle market is down by about 13 cents a pound because of these packers beating the mar-

ket down."

An unexpected stream of income for the Colemans has resulted from the ranch's picturesque setting.

"People enjoy the place to film their advertisements," Coleman said. "We've had Boot Barn, John Deere, Ford, Yamaha — everybody comes out here to do their filming."

"Eventually this ranch will be run by the kids, and I hope it stays in the cattle industry forever," Coleman said.

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