



Ellen Morris Bishop
Liza Jane McAlister clamps an ear-tag onto a Corriente heifer that's only a few hours old. "Last year I used orange tags for boys and white tags for girls. This year I've gone with blue and pink. It's much easier to remember."



Adele Schott gets ready to help her ranch team rope calves at the Chief Joseph Days Ranch Rodeo.

6 Ranch and mother-daughter ranching

By Ellen Morris Bishop
Wallowa County Chieftain

In 25 years of raising Corriente cattle on their 6 Ranch, Liza Jane McAlister and her daughter, Adele Schott, have never had to pull a calf. Corrientes are lithe, athletic cattle, descended from animals brought to the Americas by Spanish Conquistadors. Their calves arrive as compact small bundles, easily and properly delivered head-first into the world. There has never been a need to assist with the delivery, a practice known as "pulling a calf" that involves reaching into the cow, slipping loops of a fine-linked "pulling chain" over the calf's front feet and assisting the birth by slowly pulling the calf out of its laboring mother. Mature cows whose calves are breach-birthed—presented for delivery backwards or sideways—need this help, as do many first-calf heifers. Pulling a calf is exhausting, but an essential process. Bovine midwifery is not an easy job.

And it's one that McAlister and the 6 Ranch has completely avoided for a quarter of a century, along with never calving in cold, snowy, freezing weather. "Our cows calve in May," McAlister said. "just like elk do. Cows and their calves have grass to eat, the ground is warm, soft, and easy to stand up on, and the weather is usually pretty nice."

This year is an exception. Last fall, McAlister invested her savings in 20 more Corriente cows from a trusted ranch in New Mexico. In New Mexico, elk calve in March when it begins to get warm and grass greens-up. So do Corrientes.

But now the New Mexico bunch are in Wallowa County, where March is cold, snowy, wet, and pretty inhospitable.

"I've been going out every two hours at night to check on them," a tired McAlister said. "There's no need to pull calves, but if they are born in the snow they might not be able to get up. If it's really cold they could freeze to death, or if

they are delivered into a big puddle, or their head is stuck under a fence, they are going to need help."

So far, each of the cows has moseyed into the barn and delivered her calf on a nice cozy bed of straw. No worries.

Like many successful ranches, the 6 Ranch does things differently. Their Corrientes are grass fed and hormone-free. Adele is the 6th generation of this ranching family. It's not that Schott

always knew she was destined to be a rancher. "When I was in high school," she said, "I was like a lot of kids here. I thought I was too big for Wallowa county. I wanted to get out and see the world and do other things." She spent her junior year as an exchange student in Argentina. "It was a different world," she said. "It was one I didn't belong in. It was urban. There were people everywhere." After high school, she tried col-

lege." It didn't really fit me," she said. "So I found jobs, mostly day jobs, on other ranches." Then she went to Culinary School. And then she came home. After spending a tough winter and spring calving out cows in six feet of more of snow near Troy, Adele came back to the 6 Ranch, along with her new husband, Mark Schott.

Like may younger ranchers, Adele and Mark are looking for a unique, and

more profitable niche, in the ranching business. "The most challenging thing about ranching?" Adele said. "It's how to make money doing the things I love." The Schotts have stepped away from the traditional cow-calf operation, and now buy young steers in the spring and raise them for grass-fed beef. "To succeed in ranching today, you have to think outside of the box," she said. "But doing what you love is priceless."

CASA advocates sworn in



Courtesy Photo/Erin Taggart
First-time Court Appointed Special Advocate, Michael Moore, takes the oath of duty from the Circuit Court Judge, Wes Williams in Wallowa County Circuit Court on March 13. CASA volunteers advocate for abused or neglected children in court or other settings. Joni Herb joined Moore as an advocate the same day. According to Wallowa County CASA director, Erin Taggart, the CASA team is now at 100 percent coverage, up from 60 percent coverage in August. The addition of the two will provide every child who comes into foster care in Wallowa County their own personal advocate.

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