

FAMILY

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“They get a good work ethic out of it,” he said. “It gets them out of the house, and you can turn work into fun if you do it right.”

Some of the duties for the older boys include helping feed cattle and moving pipes, as well as assisting when tags and vaccinations are done.

Ethan likes to practice roping, and he showed a 4-H hog last year for the first time at the Grant County Fair.

Brandon said his kids are given their own cows when they earn it and, after caring for the animals, enjoy receiving a calf check at the end of the year.

Sydney said some of their best times together, and a favorite for her boys, have been being on horseback in the summertime to check on cattle spread over 20,000 acres of land, sometimes having a family campout.

The Thompsons have faced their share of challenges, along with other Grant County ranchers, including drought conditions, lower sales prices and a higher death loss with calves.

When a winter cold snap hit, the family frequently brought newborn calves in their home to warm up by the wood stove.

During haying season, Brandon said it's not unusual for him to punch in a 20-hour day.

“It's not always gravy train,” he said. “Everything has its challenges. There are a lot of struggles. It's just a good way of life in my mind.”



Carson Thompson kicks the hay off the trailer, helping his father, Brandon, feed cows.

The Eagle/Angel Carpenter



Brandon Thompson ranches with his family in Dayville.



The Thompson boys, from left, Tyler, Ethan and Carson, ride up top on the hay bales for the afternoon feeding at the ranch.



Ethan Thompson bottle-feeds a calf an electrolyte mixture while it is recovering from an illness, as his sister McKenzie plays nearby.



Three-year-old McKenzie Thompson smiles as she passes by in the tractor with her father, Brandon.

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