

The Lawrence Family from Region VIII

by Cassandra Bennett



Congratulations to Cody Lawrence and his family for being named this year's Region VIII McCoy's Farm and Ranch Family! 19 miles south of Tilden, Texas, in the Brush Country of McMullen County, the Lawrence family own DML Cattle Company. Here, both a stocker cattle business is run, and a South Texas trophy deer hunting operation that offers free-range hunts for native white-tail deer, bobwhite and blue quail, and wild hogs. Not too far up the road, the Lawrence family own a small feed store and trailer repair business on the Pleasanton/Jourdanton border that services the ranching and horse communities of Atascosa and McMullen Counties.

With three businesses, 3,000 acres, 9 head of Quarter Horses, herds of registered Longhorn, Crossbred, and Stocker Cattle, and Oat Deer plots, days can get pretty hectic. Daily tasks on the ranch entail many hours riding fence lines, checking water tanks, shredding senderos, planting food plots, maintaining protein feeders, checking cattle and riding horseback. Having a successful deer operation involves close monitoring and recordkeeping of the

The folks at McCoy's Building Supply understand that it takes a lot of hard work and the whole family pitching in to get things done on a farm or ranch. That's why we'd like to take some time out to salute Texas High School Rodeo Association families who are farmers and ranchers. In our monthly Farm & Ranch Family Spotlight, we'll feature one family, sharing their story of how they work together as a family to make their farm or ranch successful. The spotlight will run for 10 months; each month will feature a different region. One of the spotlighted families will be selected to participate in a McCoy's Building Supply Farm & Ranch photo shoot in San Marcos, Texas. Each Regional McCoy's Farm and Ranch Family will receive a \$100 McCoy's Gift Card. The McCoy's Farm and Ranch Family of the Year will be receive a \$500 McCoy's Gift Card and will be announced at the 2009 THSRA State Finals.

deer population, all the while keeping up with extensive communication with hunters and the Parks and Wildlife Department.

It takes the whole family pitching in to make the family run business work, especially since there is only one employee outside of the family who helps out at the feed store. But as Donny and Melody Lawrence noted, "Having two teenage sons with drivers licenses helps!" Dee Lawrence, a former THSRA member and now a freshman at The University of Texas, and Cody Lawrence, a present member of THSRA and a senior in high school, help in the day to day operations of the ranch and have taken the biggest interest in the deer. They are responsible for filling deer feeders, checking fence lines and water, and anything else related to the smooth running of the ranch and keeping the deer population healthy. They also participate in biological deer surveys to maintain a health herd. In addition to ranching, they also work every day in the feed store after school and have learned the business from office operations, to dealing with customers, to manual loading of feed and hay, to spending time working in the trailer shop. Donny and Melody's other son Scott, was also a former THSRA member, and is a ranch manager on the ranch that raises deer near George West, Texas.

The family's McMullen Family Ranch was established in the 1930's, while the feed store and trailer repair business were opened in 1989. Choosing the ranching career instead of the typical 8 to 5 job affords the Lawrence family to work together in a lifestyle that they love, and to work with and around great people, all the while, with an appreciation for the land, wildlife and livestock. "It allows us the freedom to follow our passion for good horses and rodeo, whether it be at THSRA rodeos with the boys, or at a good roping where Donny can rope as well," says Melody Lawrence.



When it comes to their involvement in THSRA, this Region VIII family's efforts are huge. Donny Lawrence, once a THSRA member himself, has served as Region President for five years running, as well as serving as a State Director. Melody Lawrence, also a former THSRA member, is now the Region VIII Announcer for all rodeos, a State Grand Entry Organizer, and helps with Region VIII themes and planning. The Lawrence boys have served as Region Officers and were on Wrangler All-Stars as Representatives. They've competed in Calf Roping, Steer Wrestling and Team Roping and have many region event wins under their belts.

"High School Rodeo and our extended rodeo family have been a huge part of our lives the last several years. We have spent many hours practicing and preparing for rodeos, driving to rodeos, flying to high school rodeo meetings, running rodeos, and fellowshiping with our rodeo friends. (Do you see a theme here?) It has been the common bond of our family which has strengthened our relationships and hopefully instilled in our sons that it's really not just about the sport of rodeo, but all the benefits that surround it—Great Sport, Good Friends, and Goals Achieved through hard work and dedication."

