

ANGUS

Hawaiian Style



If you think raising Angus cattle in Hawaii would be the ultimate ranching experience, you could be right. That is if your great, great, great grandfather began a cattle dynasty on the Big Island 150 years ago or if you would have had the foresight a famous movie star demonstrated in the early 1960s. Building a cattle empire in Hawaii today would be a different story. Land prices are high, the environment creates unique problems and marketing is difficult. However, the paniolos (Hawaiian cowboys) who work Parker Ranch and Hoomau wouldn't have it any other way.

Story & photos by Barbara LaBarbara

THE PARKER RANCH

Cattle Kingdom

It was December 31, 1814 when John Palmer Parker, sailor turned cowboy, jumped ship on the Big Island of Hawaii.

Parker was 25 years old and knew without King Kamehameha's approval he could not realize his dreams of a successful and prosperous cattle empire.

When the King commissioned him to supply garden vegetables, meats and hides for local and foreign consumption, Parker saw it as a great opportunity.

He instituted simple irrigation methods and planted crops. With the help of the temperate climate, his gardens grew profusely.

Years earlier British explorer, George Vancouver, had debarked a few Mexican Longhorns on the Island. They greatly multiplied and were running wild when Parker arrived in Hawaii. He set about taming them for meat and their hides.

Impressed, the King offered Parker a parcel of land. In 1916 Parker married Kipikane, the King's granddaughter.

The Parker Dynasty was born.

Parker continued to pursue his dreams with enormous vigor and imagination. He was determined to acquire more land he could call his own.

Today Parker Ranch is known as the largest singly-owned cattle operation in the United States. It consists of 215,000 acres of which 165,000 are deeded. The ranch surrounds the small town of Kamuela in northwest Hawaii. Ranch headquarters, museums, shops and garages are located on the edge of town.

Richard Smart, the great, great, great grandson of Parker became the sole owner in 1943. He has two sons and is in his late 70's. He lives in Honolulu and frequently visits the ranch. Recently he placed the ranch under a revocable trust to assure it will remain intact for perpetuity.

In 1899 A.W. Carter took the helm of a ranch that had deteriorated after Parker's death in 1868. Once again it began to prosper. He led the Parker regime into the 1940s. Much of

"This is not a white fence operation. We have to keep things simple and work hard because we are so big."



Robert Hind explains Parker's three-way crossbreeding system.

the success of the ranch today is attributed to Carter's dynamic leadership.

For the past eight years Robert Hind, the current Parker Ranch livestock manager, has shouldered the awesome responsibility of leadership at Parker Ranch.

The ranch maintains more than 55,000 head of pipi (cattle). They breed 19,200 cows and heifers each year. Of those, 18,000 are commercial; 400 are purebred Angus, Brangus and Hereford.

"I use the three breeds to supply my bull power needs for the commercial herds," says Hind. "I buy semen and herd sires for the purebred herds so I can control the genetics."

When Hind came to Parker Ranch he introduced Angus and Brangus and a three-way cross program for the commercial herd.

The commercial herd is divided into three groups of 6,000. The females in one group are 5/8 Hereford, 1/4 Angus, 1/8 Brangus. They are bred to Brangus. The replacements from that group move to the second group and are bred to Angus bulls for their lifetime. The females in the second group are 5/8 Brangus, 1/4 Hereford, 1/8 Angus. They are bred to Angus. Those replacements move to the third group and are bred to Herefords. The third group of females are 5/8 Angus, 1/4 Brangus, 1/8 Hereford. They are bred to Herefords. Those replacements move to the first group and are bred to Brangus.

"We breed to the least amount of blood to take advantage of individual traits from each breed," says Hind. "We match our cow herds to the environment."

Their commercial cows average 1,000 pounds and are efficient in their environment. The ranch's forage quality is not sufficient to support a large beef cow.

"Our purebred cows tend to be closer to 1,200 pounds," Hind says. "I don't want too much size, too much milk, too heavy or too light birthweights. Still, it is hard to cull out your biggest female calf."

The breeding season on



Parker Ranch is 75 days. The bulls go out with the heifers in February and with the cows in March. Approximately 300 cows are artificially inseminated each year.

Weaning weights on their steers average 600 pounds at eight months of age with no supplement. The heifers average 550 pounds.

Cows are culled at the age of eight and go to the slaughterhouse. There is no market for bred cows in Hawaii.

The paniolos ride the cow pastures once a week. There are few health problems on the ranch. Lack of minerals in the grass is overcome by feeding minerals free choice. The calves are wormed, but the majority of the cattle are parasite resistant.

Hind introduced 10,000 acres of the ranch to the Alan Savory Plan of controlled grazing. There are four 300-acre cells. Each cell is divided into 30 ten-acre paddocks. The cattle are rotated each day. The grass is grazed only 12 days of the year. Carrying capacity and production has doubled on each cell.

The ranch has taken an offensive position in working with environmentalists and animal rights activists. Among other things, their agronomist works on erosion control. They plant 20,000 trees a year and have a continual reforestation program.

"We try to work with them," says Hind, "But common sense has to prevail."

Marketing in Hawaii is changing. Economics drove the ranch to close their packing plant and curtail activities at the feedyard.

"We used to market everything through our feedyard and packing plant," says Hind. "Now Iowa Beef Producers (IBP) can ship a piece of meat here and put it in the grocery store cheaper than we can produce it."

The last two years Hind has sent calves to Canada where they are put on leased pastures. The cattle are fed and marketed in Canada because the ships Parker use sail under foreign flags. The Jones Act says a foreign flag vessel cannot sail from one U.S. port to another U.S. port.

They work 800 head of calves a day to prepare them for shipping. There are four blood



Vast rolling hills beautify Parker Ranch.



We try to
work with
environmentalists.
But common
sense has to
prevail.

tests and many restrictions. It costs \$12 per head, not including labor. If the calves could be shipped directly to California, the cost would be \$2.

Two thousand 500-pound calves can be loaded on each ship for the eight day trip. The ships are air conditioned and the pens are cleaned every day. There is a 10 percent shrinkage which is recouped within three weeks.

Last year they shipped 10,000 head

and only lost two. One bloated and one jumped ship and drowned. This year they will ship 14,000 head.

The chain of command is much like any business. The ranch is divided into four divisions; each with a superintendent who answers to Hind. Each division is divided into two sections. A foreman is in charge of each section and a crew of men.

Each summer Hind hires 15 young people. He believes it is a good way to introduce them to ranching and let them get hands-on experience.

Sixty-five full-time employees work Parker Ranch; 35 paniolos, truckers, a fence crew, welders, mechanics, water people, a saddle maker, an agronomist and secretaries.

"They are all efficient," says Hind. "This is not a white fence operation. We have to keep things simple and work hard because we are so big."

The ranch has 400 horses and each paniolo is allowed eight. They can also have two horses of their own.

If an employee works for Parker Ranch for five years, they are eligible to buy a piece of land from the ranch. The ranch charges them only for the cost of developing the land. If the employee builds a house on the lot, they receive a housing allowance. At the end of 20 years, the ranch forgives the original cost of the lot. In reality, if an employee works for the ranch for 20 years, their land and house are virtually free. It contributes to the longevity of employees.

It is Smart's wish for the ranch to remain a solid, lasting cattle kingdom, a monument to its founder,

John Palmer Parker would be proud.

HOOMAU RANCH

Raising Angus in Paradise

Sky and ocean appear as one on the distant horizon in the extreme south corner of the Big Island of Hawaii. Ocean breezes blow soft and cool as they drift through forests to reach the mountain tops. Macadamia orchards line lush green, clover filled pastures. Rock fences tell of days gone by.

This is home of Hoomau, (pronounced Ho-o-maw) a top quality Angus ranch that just happens to be located in paradise.

In 1960 actor Jimmy Stewart purchased his first land in Hawaii. He chose the name Hoomau because it means "with understanding, continuous forward growth." Stewart immediately began clearing it for pasture. He raised Herefords and introduced Angus to the Island in 1966.

About that time actress Julie Andrews purchased 50 acres adjoining Stewart's ranch. She named her small ranch Hookalana which means "beauty."

George Schattauer managed Kona Property Management Inc. in 1960 and Stewart was one of his accounts. He later became a full-time ranch manager for Hoomau. There are two paniolos

Jimmy Stewart chose the name Hoomau because it means "with understanding, continuous forward growth."

(cowboys), John Replogle and Byron Kukua, who assist Schattauer.

In the early years Schattauer and Margaret, his wife, gathered clover seed and spread it throughout the pastures on horseback. Clover is now prolific on the ranch.

Today Hoomau consists of 1,500 beautiful acres. The elevation of the ranch runs from 1,600 to 3,200 feet.

Schattauer and the paniolos built two reservoirs and installed water lines to cattle tanks and houses on the ranch. The reservoirs have a holding capacity of three million gallons.

There are 40 acres of Macadamia trees which Schattauer also manages. Fifteen Hawaiian natives work the orchard at harvest time.

Schattauer has enjoyed every minute of his career. In 1853 Margaret's missionary great grandfather built the house where they live. It is 26 miles from the ranch.

They used to run 250 head of cattle mauka (upland in the mountains) and another 100 below. Currently they are running approximately 200 cows.



(left) George Schattauer, manager of Hoomau Ranch.

(above) Hoomau cattle can barely be seen in the lush, mystic forests.

The average weight of the cows is 1,300 pounds. The cows are bred when they are two years old to calve at three. Breeding to calve at two does not work in their environment of weak grasses and slower growth.

Artificial insemination was first used on the ranch 10 years ago. They breed to calve in March, April and May. Currently they are using Emulation, Top Dog and Rito 2100. Schattauer likes having a gene pool that is a little different. American Breeding Services provides the semen and Replogle does the insemination work.

"John is the best AI man in the state," says Schattauer. "I used to think I was good but he is better."

They have not bought cattle from the mainland since the early 1970s. Many of you might remember when Stewart and Andrews bought a record high selling bull in 1967 at the Bonanza Bull Sale in California. They paid \$9,100 for him.

They raise their own replacement heifers. The cows are culled when they get older and their performance begins to decline.

There are no particular health problems with the herd even though the grass lacks nutrition. Schattauer says the grass looks green and beautiful, but a 365-day growing period for grass is not good. They feed minerals free choice.

Only the bulls they use for breeding receive extra feed. They are only fed supplements for four months because it is very expensive.

Schattauer says one of his unwise decisions was discontinuing pedigree registrations with the American Angus Association. When he realized the value of pedigree records, he activated the old registrations and brought the entire herd's pedigrees up to date.

Robert Hind, Parker Ranch, and Brent Buckley, University of Hawaii agree that Hoomau has the best Angus in the state.

Hawaii traditionally has been Hereford country. When Stewart brought Angus to the Island, local ranchers wanted to know why they did not raise something that was marketable.

"We just kept plodding



Hoomau Angus bulls

"If there were more Stewarts in the world, the world would be a better place."



Kona Hilton Hosts Angus Travelers

The ambience of ocean waves slapping against the lava shore and the congenial, gracious people at the Kona Hilton quickly soothe a weary traveler.

It is located in central Kona within walking distance of leisurely shopping, historical sites, restaurants and The Ocean View Inn — the locals favorite cafe.

This hotel is one stop on The American Angus Association Tour of Hawaii that leaves February 20. To see if you can still reserve space, telephone Terry Steele at All About Travel, 1-800-544-3019.

Soft, gentle breezes lull you into the peaceful, lazy mood of Kona. Beautiful rolling hills, hedges of poinsettias, brilliant flowers, cattle ranches and smells from coffee plantations tell you there is more to this mystic Island.

As you discover the rare, beautiful, awe-inspiring secrets of Hawaii, you will want to return or perhaps you will not want to even leave.

along with our Angus," Schattauer says. "Now a good portion of the cattle on the Island are black."

Hoomau is mainly a Lahu (bull) operation. Ranchers come to the ranch and choose the bulls they need. Parker Ranch has always been a big customer, but recently cut back because they are raising their own breeding stock.

One time Schattauer told a prospective buyer

he had some bulls that produced small Keikis (calves) meaning light birthweights. He never heard from him again. He laughed and said he wouldn't do that again.

"We have been fortunate in marketing our cattle," says Schattauer. "I don't think it will continue because slaughterhouses and many feedlots have closed. This year the feedlots will only buy on consignment. We may be shipping to the mainland for the first time ever, but hope we don't have to."

The environment at Hoomau is different than any other part of the Island. Because they are close to the volcanos, their deepest soil is eight inches. The soil at Parker Ranch, on the opposite side of the Island, is 20 feet. Acid and fumes from volcano eruptions rust their wire fences and equipment.

The native trees have no tap roots and if grazing is not monitored properly, the cattle can cause damage to the trees. It is hard to establish pasture grasses but once they are started they are good forever. Schattauer and Stewart are cognizant of the environment and Hoomau is

environmentally healthy.

Hoomau is not bothered by the few tourists who visit the Big Island because they are on an old road that is off the beaten path.

Stewart and Schattauer plan to raise the best Angus in the state of Hawaii "with understanding and continuous growth forward" until the sky and the ocean no longer meet on the horizon.

"I might add," Schattauer says, "If there were more Stewarts in the world, the world would be a better place."

I have a feeling Stewart would say the same of Schattauer.