The horses are blowing softly at the head of Arastas Creek. They rest. And during the morning stillness, only the pleasant creak of saddle leather can be heard as someone shifts position.

Then—"Did y' hear that?" An elk whistles . . . somewhere, from one of the many timbered ridges that break right and left and tumble off into the river far below.

The sun's rising over the Madison Range and its peaks: No Man, The Wedge, Echo, Dutchman's, Sawtooth Ridge, the Sphinx. The morning light bathes a web of irrigation lines far away, silver filagrees on fields of gold and emerald velvet.

Kevin Schulz represents the fifth generation. He's a scion of a family who began ranching across the Beaverhead's ranges in the early 1900s and who revere Montana as a matriarch.

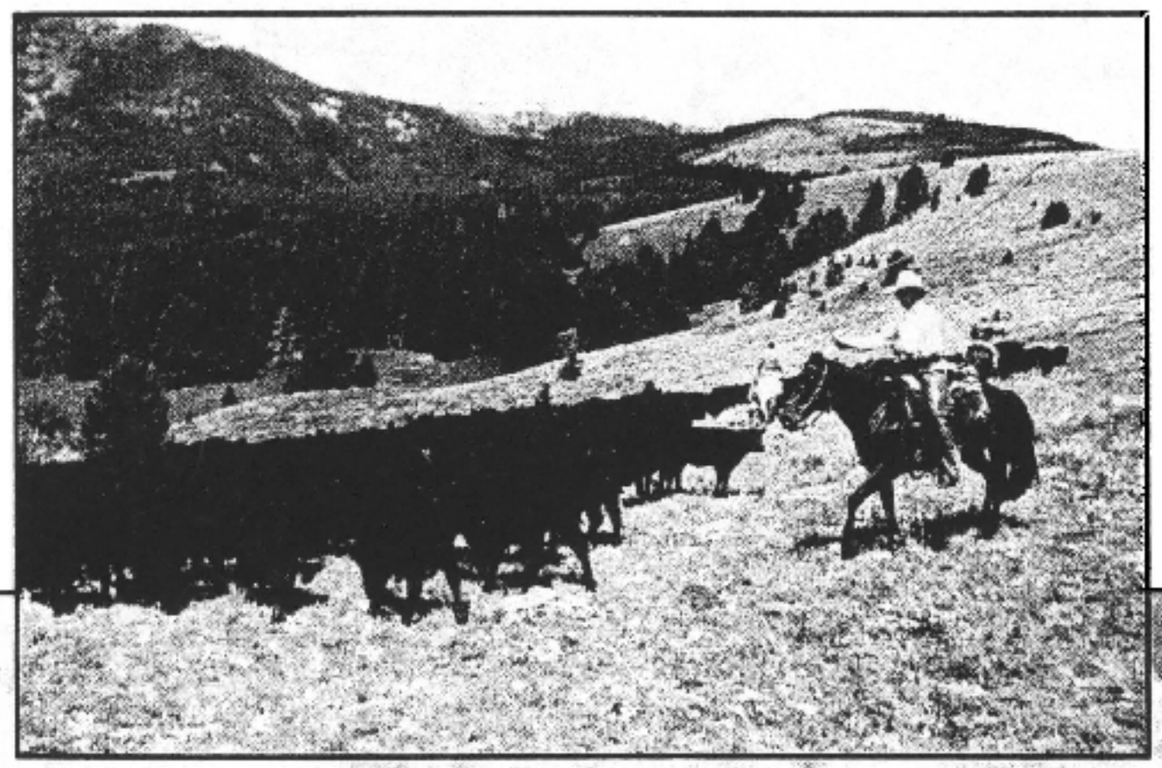
"That's Bear Creek Ranch," one of the party says. "Most of their water is gravity flow. Quite a development."

Little streams of Angus cattle flowing together now. By mid-morning the gather will be complete, and a river of black bodies will flow up, up to higher ranges still, up and against the forces of gravity, their natures, and maternal instincts. Calves turn back, seeking where they last suckled, thinking "Mom" will be there. Riders spur after and cuss them back to the drag.

But the cows move on, not without complaint. A whip snaps through the forest of pine, spruce, fir, cracking just like your old favorite .22 and finally it's open country and bedlam. The sun's higher, and the bawling no less lusty as the herd's held for mothering up. Riders take turns watching the process while others go to lunch. It's been six to seven hours in the saddle and more to come.

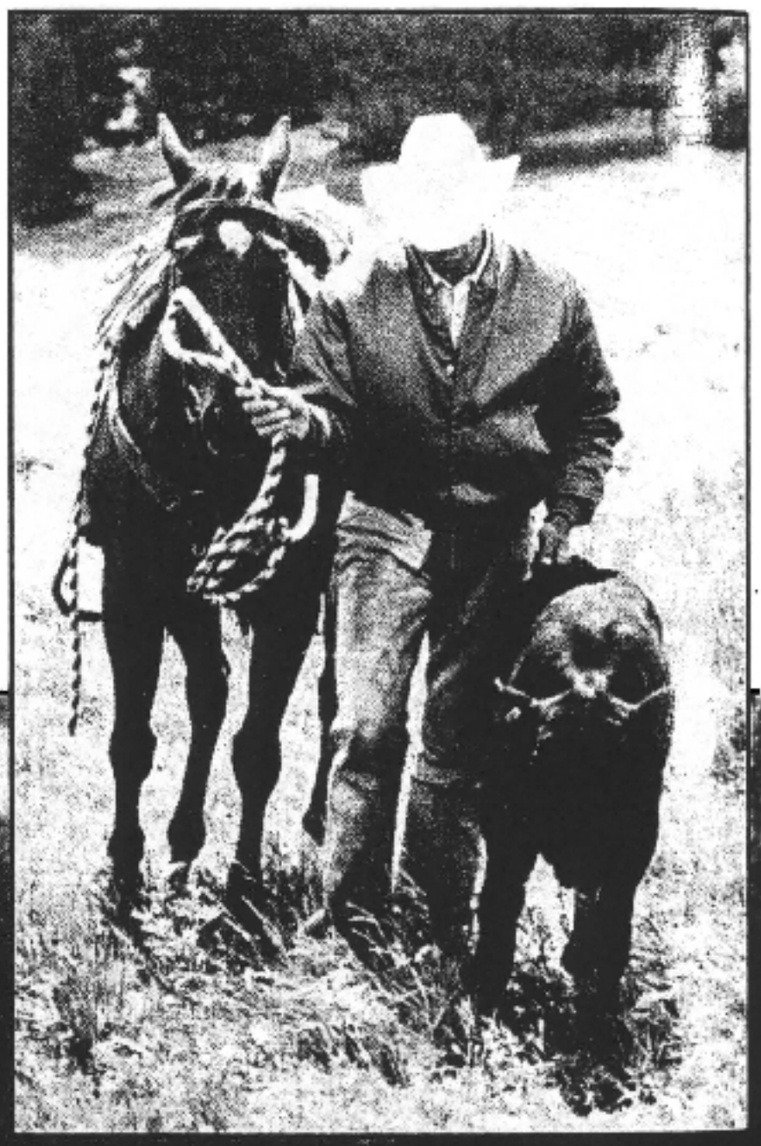
Angus cattle work here. This is where they produce. The elevation might average 6,900 feet. The season is short but riotous in grass if there's any decent moisture at all. It's been a good year, and this particular "factory" should meet its quota.

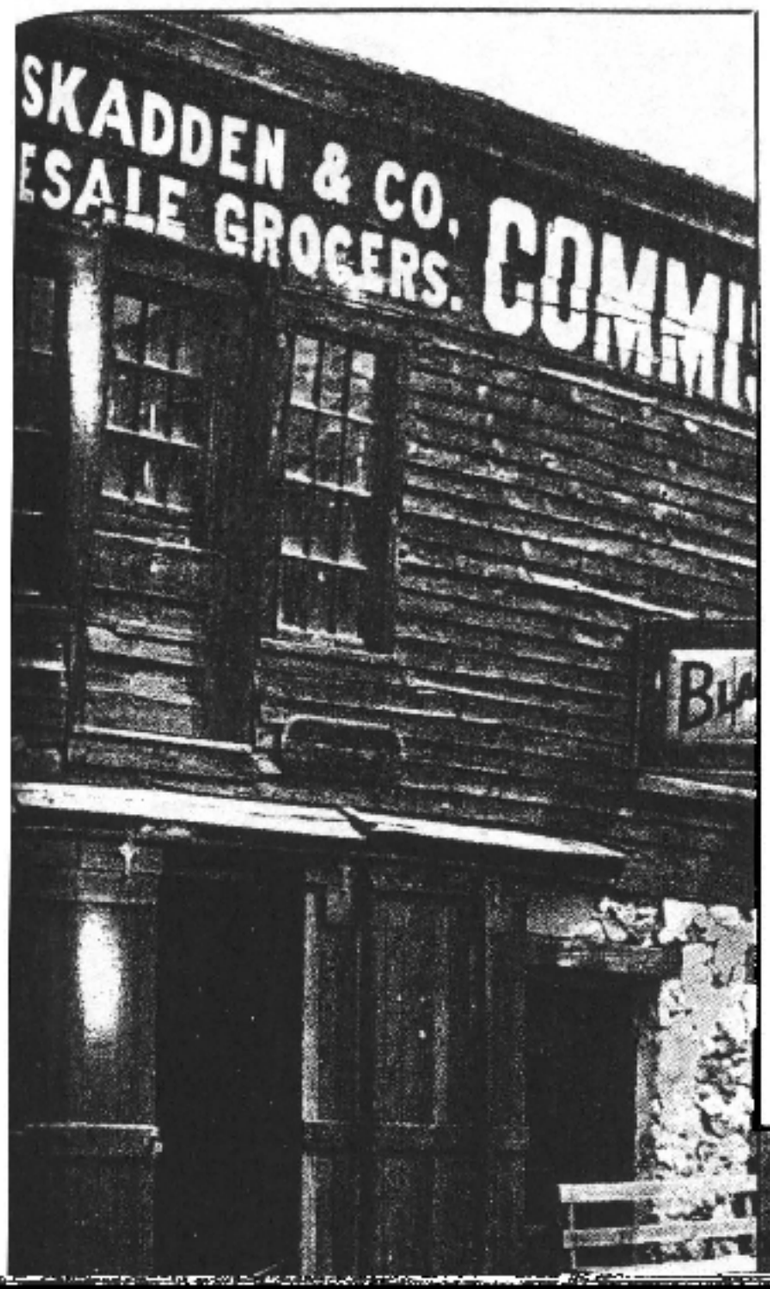
Angus by the hundreds, yes, even the thousands make this their summer home, this Beaverhead



With a herd and drive of this size, there's bound to be one needing a shot of Combiotic.

In keeping with a drover's tradition, the Schulzes use whips, both for the noise and the occasional stinging rebuff to a bunch quitter's attempt.





Virginia City is a ***preservation,*** *not a* ***restoration****. The Historic Landmark Society, spearheaded by Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bovey, rose to the challenge of preserving anything and everything of Montana's past that could be found. The Boveys assembled artifacts and patched, refurbished, and saved the buildings so they'd retain their original appearance. The work was begun in the 1940s.*

Black cows doing what's come to be expected of them, these matrons from the ***Goggins Angus Ranch****, Billings, Mt.*

"Heifers are duck soup. They've got nothing else to do but breed, if they're in proper condition, as there's no calf sucking. We bred between 1,100 to 1,200 head A.I. this year." Those with their first calf don't get bred A.I. for these, in the Sitz program, warrant special attention and get a year of grace during this

improve what you've got."

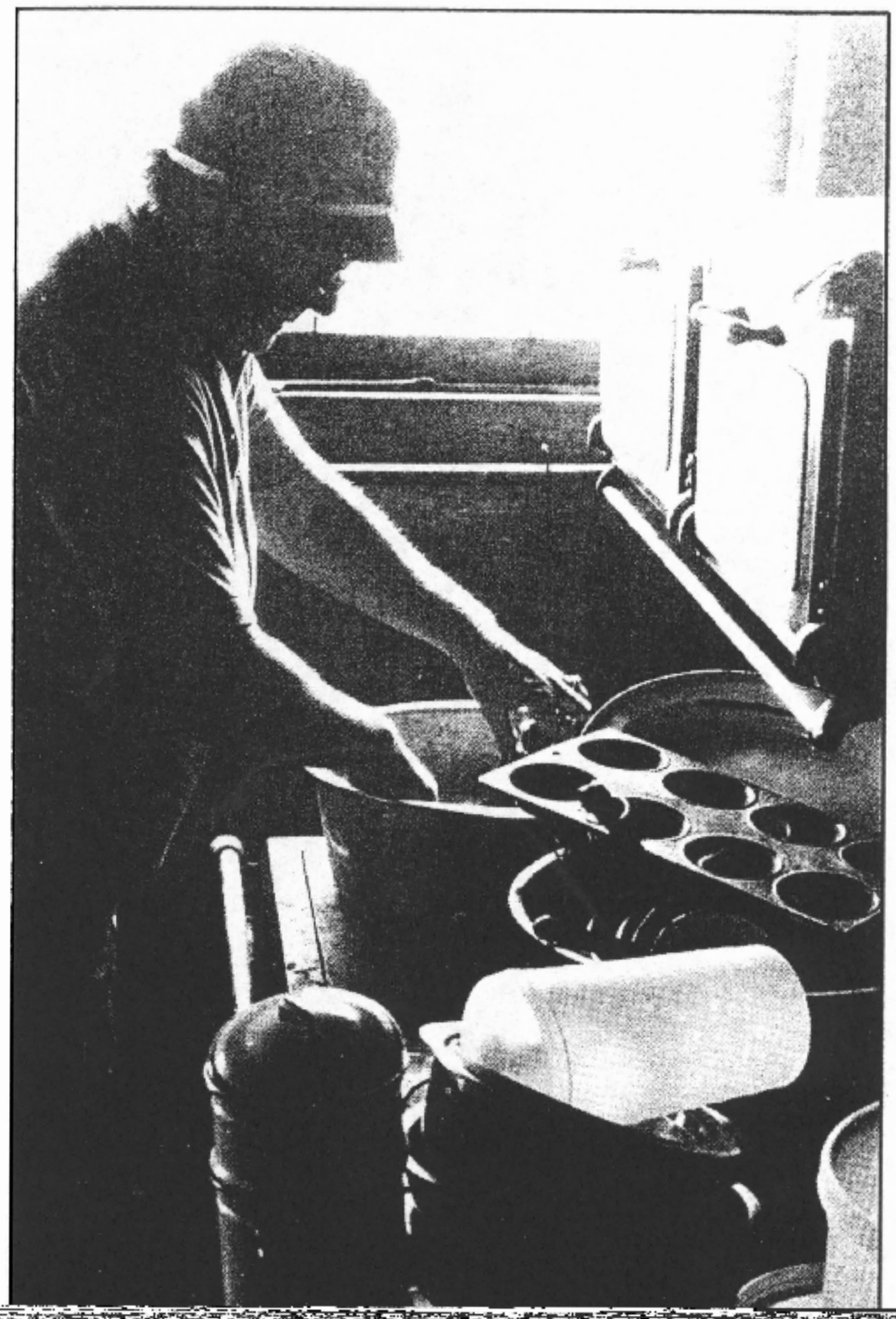
Jeff hopes to triple the hay tonnage of last year by harvesting almost a green chop alfalfa and grass mix and bagging it in plastic. If it works, he could be storir ose to 4,500 tons for next winter.

C s becomes the passion. Whether it's raised under intensive management or by letting nature take its course, Angus on the Beaverhead, Angus traversing the ridges of the Gravelly Range, or Angus grazing under the spray of mountain-fed sprinkler systems make a powerful contribution to the economies of Ennis, Sheridan, Harrison, Virginia City. The strength of these communities comes from these hills.

The afternoon skies turn threatening, and soon the light becomes a gloomy blue and flat. Lightning to th vest, the north, the southwest. It rains but not torre ally. The heifers from the Sitz herd find the water tank and can be left. Antelope jump from the sage, now pungent from the passing shower. Their white rumps bob along and away from the danger they sense. Someone guesses the buck's trophy potential.

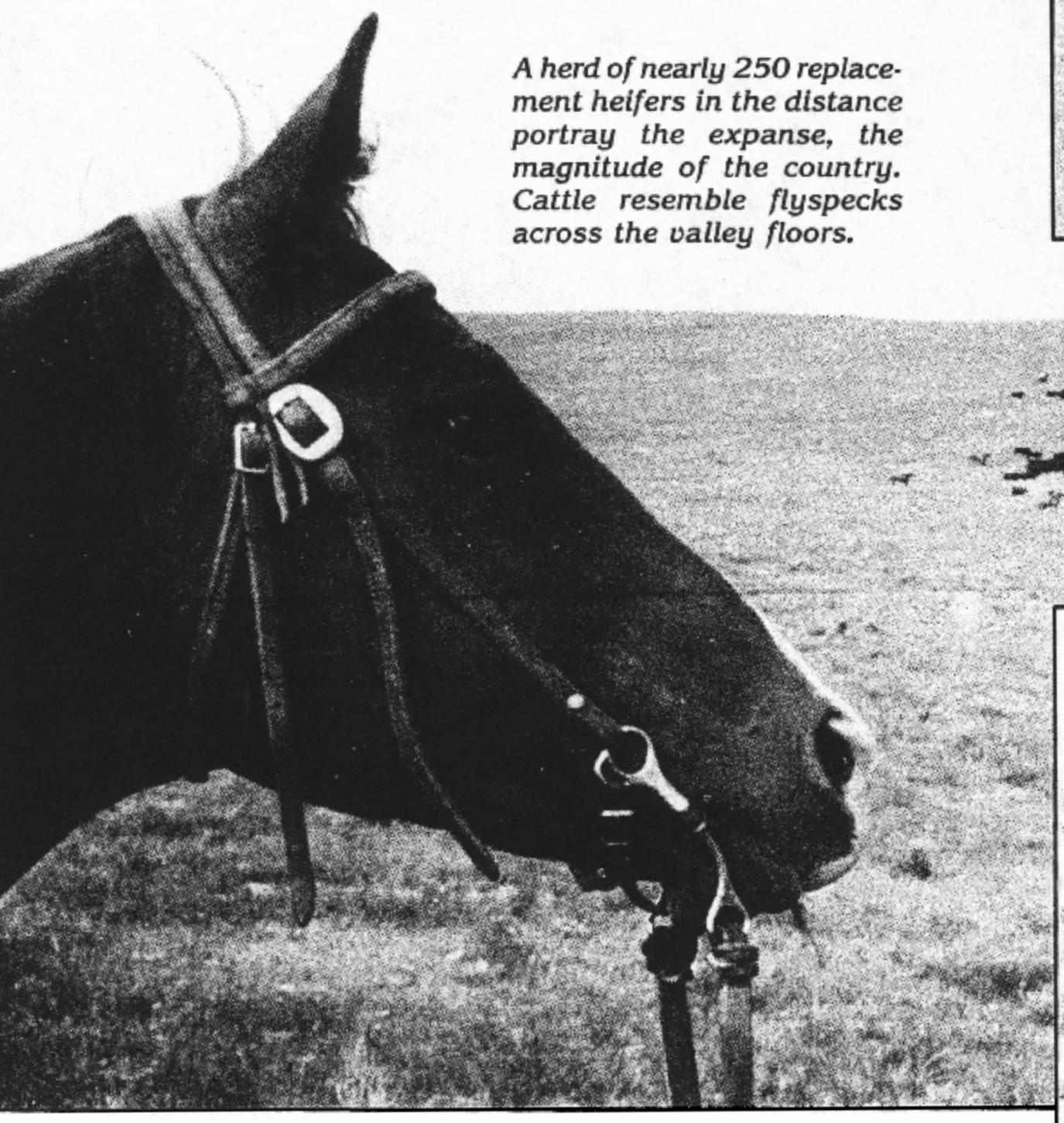
The horses jog freely; the topics are the grass, weather, storms. "We lost five in one shot up here to lightning. We lost three in the same spot another year, so we decided we'd put the salt some place else," Bob Sitz remembers. "We had about two feet of snow right here, but they travel through that all rig Now, if we get a half inch of rain here this afternoon, we'll see just how greasy that road can get."

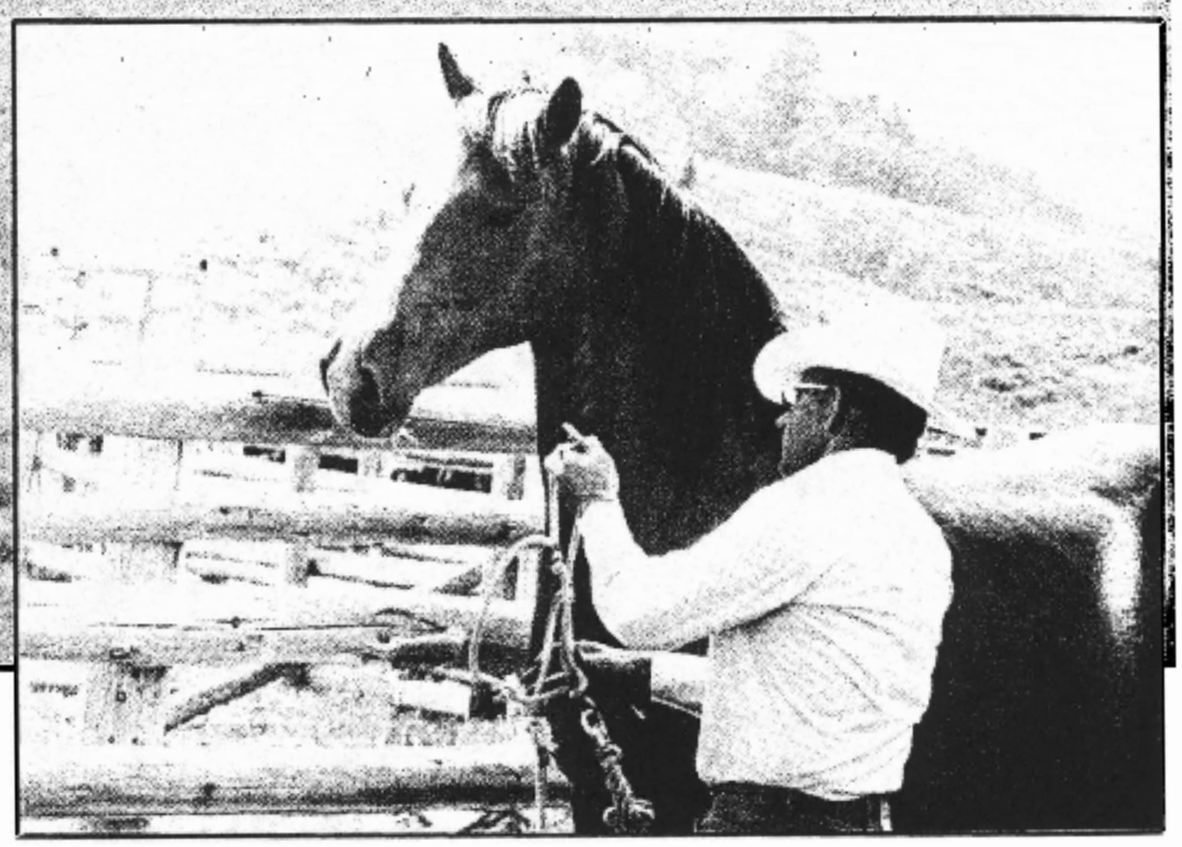
Bad roads, tempestuous weather, and sheer



American Angus Assn. Regional Manager ***Bruce Weeter*** *and Bob Sitz survey the results of decades of selection.*

A herd of nearly 250 replacement heifers in the distance portray the expanse, the magnitude of the country. Cattle resemble flyspecks across the valley floors.





"Have to handle this one just right, or he'll give y' a ride." ***—Bob Sitz, Sitz Angus Ranch, Harrison, Mt.***

takes close to 800 head to fill these two permits. We come off the forest the 21st of October. Then we move down onto some private ground."

Russ Schulz: "It's 60 miles from the ranch to here. We have to be off the fifth of October. We go right to Virginia City Hill where we've got trucks waiting for us. We'll just wean the calves and take them to the ranch. The cows are winterized—shot, poured, preg-tested, and then we leave them on Virginia City Hill until the snow drives us out."

Bob Rice: "We drive most of our cattle, 700 pair, to a range between McAllister and Virginia City. This is a distance of 21 miles, which is a two-day drive. Three hundred pair are hauled 52 miles to a pasture 15 miles south of Cameron (or 25 miles south of Ennis). Our steers are run on a pasture between Norris and Ennis, which is a one-day drive. Our range next to the Beaverhead National Forest is all private except for some BLM (Bureau of Land Management). This range is all in one block and covers 20,000 acres."

Bob Endicott: "This is all private right here, around 3,000 acres. We have very close to 600 head of cattle here this summer, first-calf heifers. This year, Pat also brought 80 cows and calves. It's a 240-mile haul from Vermilion at Billings to here."

It may seem odd that most of the cattle are bred by the time they get here to either the Beaverhead or the private ranges that surround it. This may not b true of all permittees, but for Messrs. Sitz, Rice, an Schulz, hassling bulls into the management agenda just complicates it too much. As turnout date onto forest ranges is mid to late June, breeding can be accomplished down lower at the home place. Sitz sent only one bull for every 250 heifers this season. He A.I.'s and doesn't worry about it. Like Russ Schulz, he achieves a success rate in the middle to high 90s. Says Russ Schulz of his practice:

"We pulled the bulls in just the last two or three days (June 22). We have a 60-day breeding season. and it's been working pretty successfully." Bob Ric states most of his cows are bred before they leave or the range. "Those that are bred there pose no concern since our breeding rate runs at 97 percent or better. We do not pregnancy test because we have so few drys."

Sitz appears to have the approach well-defined: