

Marketing the Finest Ranch & Recreational Properties

## Creating Ranch Value

*Zwicker Home Place Ranch*



BY JACK KAVANAUGH

Running a ranch operation tends to keep one focused on the day to day needs of the cattle; and we all know that they have needs enough to keep a person busy from sun up till sundown, and sometimes beyond. There often doesn't seem to be time enough to look up and enjoy what keeps you on the ranch in the first place. Nature's glory and the grandeur of wide open spaces are the rancher's cherished heritage.

Ranchers were, and still are, our country's primary conservationists. However, it is easy, on occasion, to overlook the fact that ranchers are also stewards of the land and the environment that makes the ranching lifestyle so dear to us all. Being a conservator, as well as a rancher, can put money in the pocket. Today, it is no secret that ranches with live water, fishing, and hunting potential are selling for prices far in excess of agricultural value. Even



*Lazy V Ranch*

if you are not considering selling today, it makes sense to preserve and enhance those features of your ranch that are attractive to the conservation oriented recreational sportsman and rancher who may want to purchase your property in the future. Gently grazing

*Continued on the next page*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### PROPERTIES

#### North America

Arizona . . . . .	3
Colorado . . . . .	3 - 8
Wyoming . . . . .	9

#### South America

Argentina . . . . .	10
Chile . . . . .	10 - 11
Sold Properties . . . . .	12

### ARTICLES

Creating Ranch Value . . . . .	1
Your Ranch — A Monument . . . . .	11

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or fencing riparian areas not only makes for better forage, but also greatly increases the value of a ranch when and if the time comes to sell. Many conservation and preservation techniques are simple to do and can actually increase ranch production and profits.

The USDA has programs such as EQUIP and CRP which provide technical, educational and financial assistance to eligible farmers and ranchers for range restoration, tree planting, erosion



control, as well as stream and riparian enhancement. Uncle Sam may pick up as much as 50% of the costs associated with such improvements and also help with the planning. Shelterbelts and living snow fences not only offer shelter to cattle, but to wildlife as well. These features also enhance the aesthetic appeal of ranches which is an important consideration when selling.

Plugging leaky ditches not only gets more irrigation to where it's needed, but also allows more water to stay in

the river. The resulting good instream flows encourage more trout which greatly add to the value and desirability of ranches. Some ranchers along the Jefferson River in Montana have had good experience with ditch sealants, which can get as much as 50% more water from the headgate to the fields. In drought times this could be a significant and cost effective benefit to both production and stream preservation. A visit with your USDA District Conservationist could be an eye opening experience.

Fuller Western considers vibrant and healthy streams an important part of the appeal of ranches that we market. In addition to doing a complete assessment of the agricultural operation, we do a thorough evaluation of the recreational and conservation potential of each ranch. In this process the services of fishery biologists, hydrology engineers, and riparian restoration experts as well as federal and state government offices might be engaged. All of this helps us present ranches in the most attractive light to today's recreation and conservation minded buyers.

### Ouray Pointe



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