

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Diana: Today is November 23, 2020, and we're doing a Cattle Ranching in Clark County interview with Mark and Terrie Luckie. What is your full name?

Mark: Mark L. Luckie.

Terrie: Terrie Elaine Tuttle Luckie.

Diana: Where do you live?

Terrie: We live 13 miles south of Sitka on the state line.

Diana: When did the family come to Clark County?

Mark: Terri's great-grandfather acquired the property, I believe, in 1923.

Diana: What was his name?

Mark: John B. Grieves.

Diana: How did he acquire it?

Mark: It was acquired on a bad debt. He loaned a man named John Edwards money, and he defaulted on the loan and that's how he acquired part of the ranch, Snake Creek Ranch.

Diana: How long has it been called Snake Creek?

Mark: At least two previous owners to Terrie's great-grandfather. That would be, I believe, John Edwards' father-in-law called it Snake Creek Ranch.

Terrie: He was in the Service, wasn't he?

Mark: Colonel Perry?

Diana: Is that like the Perrys that had the Harper Ranch? Were there Perrys over in Englewood?

Mark: I think the Perrys at Englewood. It was told to me, and I don't know that it's true, that John Edwards acquired it by marriage, Colonel Perry's daughter.

Diana: So were there any schools on the property?

Mark: Yes, right at a mile north of the Kansas/Oklahoma border on 183, there is still a foundation and a storm shelter and a well. It's not in good repair, but there was a school there.

Diana: Do you know what it was called?

Mark: No, I do not. I know some of the Randall children were students there, but I don't know what it was called. I think Paul Salyer was a teacher there. Old Paul, senior, not C.P., Charles Paul,

Diana: But his grandfather.

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Mark: Yes.

Terrie: And what was the story someone told us about how Paul showed the kids how to do math and add by rolling dice and adding up the dice?

Mark: Sounds reasonable.

Diana: Yeah, it's a good way to learn. So is the headquarters at the same place that it was?

Mark: As far as we know.

Diana: Do you know how many acres it was originally?

Mark: I do not.

Diana: And have you acquired acres since the original?

Mark: When I joined the family in '74, it was told to me that it was 17,000.

Diana: Is it all...

Mark: it's continuous.

Diana: And it's all grass.

Mark: No. There's about 2,500 acres of farmland, 2000 acres of farmland.

Diana: So what are the crops that are grown? They've been the same?

Mark: Wheat, forage for the cattle, milo, alfalfa... Not necessarily still grown, but in the years past.

Terrie: Some was grown for the horses that were used too.

Mark: There was a barn there that was built of cement and concrete, and it looked like it was hand poured, it was crude at best, but inside there were, I think, about 20 stalls that housed workhorses. And when I moved there in '74, '75, there was still harness.

Diana: What would they have used as workhorses? Would they use like Percherons or something like that or mules?

Mark: Yeah, I have no idea.

Diana: My grandfather used to use mules, so that was very common. So what type of livestock?

Terrie: I think we have bill of sale from my grandfather, in the Dirty Thirties he went back and he leased it to Pearl Abell, I think, and sold his cattle.

Mark: He sold the cows, calves, and it specifically called for X number of cows and X number of

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calves, X number of workhorses, X number of milk cows. It showed the whole inventory and we've still got that contract.

Diana: So was there a specific breed of cattle that they grew?

Mark: At that time Terrie's grandfather had Polled Herefords, because there's pictures. That the only reason I know there were Polled Herefords.

Diana: So they've gone through a whole bunch of different types of animals through the years. Do you have a different breed now that is very common?

Mark: Most of ours are Angus based, yes.

Diana: So tell me about the land. What's the geography of the land?

Mark: Rolling sand, with some harder ground, but most of it is rolling sand hills.

Diana: Right on the river. Do you have a lot of tamarix?

Mark: No, we're a mile and a half off the river.

Diana: Did they grow a lot of a garden?

Mark: I have no idea.

Diana: Did you hire outside help, did they use....

Mark: There were houses all over. We have a pasture called the Yellow House Pasture, a pasture called the Brown House. We have a pasture called the Reed, and it would go back and in the Reed Pasture, there is a windmill with a concrete base around it.

Mark: This concrete base said, "Reed Brothers, Fourth of July 1919." Frank Reed, who was the welder in Ashland for forever, brought his aunt out there and she said she remembers that and she pointed to the northeast and said, "I used to play with some kids over the hill in that direction." For the life of me, at that time, I could not remember. I couldn't get that together. But it happened to be where there's an old foundation and a windmill! I'm sure, you know, putting two and two together, if Auntie said that, "I used to play with kids over the hill," and she pointed in the right direction...

Mark: And there were people that lived in the garage.

Terrie: Yeah, we converted an old building into a garage, but people lived it. There was plumbing in it. The Nicholson House and then, of course, the Stegman House, I remember, had people that worked on the ranch. And then in Oklahoma, there was a homestead...

Mark: The Richardson place, and I don't know when he acquired that.

Terrie: How far away was that?

Mark: A mile?

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Diana: So was that part of their pay, was to have a place to live?

Mark: No, I just don't think that they could... it was the time of horse and buggy, right? I just don't think people traveled to go to work. I think they got up and walked out the door. Yeah. And I'm sure they probably got the whole sum of a dollar a day or whatever.

Terrie: When I was a child, we used to have people that would drive through our driveway, and it is because their dad used to work here and now he's in his 70s and he wanted to see where he used to work. That happened all the time. That doesn't happen much anymore.

Mark: There was one family that stopped in the last six months and said, "My great-grandfather worked on this ranch."

Diana: So is half of the ranch in Oklahoma and half of it in Kansas? Or has it just expanded.

Mark: No, the Richardson Place is basically 200, 300 acres, and it was in Oklahoma at that time. The rest of it is in Kansas, and it's the first two miles north and south in Kansas and half of it is about Highway 183. So there's half on each side of the highway, it's basically two miles north and south and 14 miles east and west.

Diana: So about how many cattle do you run now?

Mark: Oh, our cow herd will consist of about 900.

Diana: Are you cow/calf or steers?

Mark: Both. Backgrounding and cow/calf both.

Diana: Do you keep a lot from one year to the other, or do you...

Mark: We'll keep a cow until she's 10 or 11 years old. She'll start production as a two-year-old. She'll start raising a calf.

Diana: So what type of things do you use to feed them? Do you just give them grass or do you hay a bunch?

Mark: We don't use a lot of hay. They will get hay if the ground is covered, otherwise they get protein cubes and fresh water.

Diana: So do you start the cattle from calves and then take them all the way and finish them out before you go to the sale?

Mark: That is correct, but we don't go to the sale. We sell them... most of our cattle are sold through U.S. Premium Beef right now. Actually, we own them until they are slaughtered. Yeah.

Terrie: But it has been other ways, too.

Diana: Do you purchase cattle from buyers and bring them in or do you...

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Mark: Yes, we do. Those will end up being backgrounded and grown and then sent to the feed yard. They'll be finished there and go to slaughter.

Diana: Do you do a lot of A.I.?

Mark: We artificially inseminate our first-calf heifers, and that's all we usually artificially inseminate. We synchronize them, and A.I. them one time and then turn them in with the bulls and the bulls get their shot at them one time and then in 45 days we will pregnancy test them. Then the rest of them that did not breed and will go to the feed yard.

Diana: Are you establishing your own feed yard now? You said that you kind of have the whole gamut from start to finish?

Mark: We're talking about a grow yard right now.

Diana: So how do you work cattle? I mean, like branding and doctoring?

Mark: Most of the time, we run calves through a calf cradle. We have corrals centrally located within... the corrals are located like at the corner of three pastures or four pastures, there'll be a set of corrals, and there's five sets of corrals on the ranch.

Diana: So it's not very far that you have to take a group of cattle to actually...

Mark: A mile and a half or two miles.

Diana: Do you brand and doctor and...

Mark: We castrate and vaccinate. Most of the cow/calf deal, you don't have to "doctor". It's only the purchased cattle and the calves when we wean that will have a small amount of sickness but most of the sickness that we have are purchased cattle.

Diana: Do you have a small death rate from those?

Mark: Oh, it's like one percent.

Diana: When you work cattle, do you bring in extra crew?

Mark: Sure, we hire out.

Diana: And then they do most of the doctoring for you? How does that work?

Mark: We have cowboys that we've hired on a daily basis that take care of the cattle.

Diana: Then you bring in extras for when you...

Mark: When we're working calves, when we're processing calves that are nursing their mothers, yes, we'll bring those people in.

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Diana: So how have the cattle that you raise changed from when you first started, like back when you first joined the ranch? Are they a different size?

Mark: They are bigger. I would say most of the cows in 1974 or '75, most of the cows in good condition would weigh 1,000 or 1,050. Most of our cows now will weigh 1,300 or 1,400, and that's something that we strive to make smaller. We don't need a 1,400-pound cow that takes more to feed them, takes more grass.

Diana: Do they have larger calves?

Mark: Yes, they do. We weaned some steer calves the other day off of their mothers that weighed 722 pounds. I can remember the first time that we ever had a set of calves weigh 500. So that's a lot of difference, that's a lot of pounds.

Diana: So you breed them to be bigger. Are you working for a specific market when you sell them?

Mark: Hanging on the rail, yeah. The beef market.

Diana: And to be Choice, or a high-grade type of cattle.

Mark: Yes.

Diana: Do you plant stuff still? Do you do wheat and that type of crop? Do you harvest yourself or do you bring combines in?

Mark: The last couple of years, we have used triticale as a forage, and then when it got more mature, headed out, then we would chop it for silage and put it in a silo or in a plastic bag and then that is our winter forage for livestock.

Diana: So does triticale have a better nutrition count?

Mark: It's sheer volume. It grows faster than wheat.

Diana: And taller? Doesn't it have a bigger head or something?

Mark: Oh, we're not worried about the head; we're not worried about the grain in the head. We're more worried about pounds of forage. Two years ago, we had some triticale. It was an exceptional year, but we had some triticale make 14 tons to the acre. This year, ours made seven tons to the acre.

Diana: So how long does that last when you're feeding it out to your cattle?

Mark: You know, like a cow would get three percent of her body weight, up to 40, probably up to about 40 pounds a day. So, you're using the number of cattle times 40 pounds, and then your yearlings that you're growing, they'll get about three percent of their bodyweight, so let's say they weigh six. That's 18 pounds. And then you can put a little grain with it and make it a little nicer. And even if you don't have wheat pasture, you can get along for a long time.

Diana: Do you usually use wheat pasture?

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Mark: Yes, or we use triticale as pasture.

Diana: Because it works pretty much the same.

Mark: Yes.

Diana: Do you feed your cattle in the morning or in the evening?

Mark: Sometimes both.

Diana: Depending on the weather?

Mark: No, it has more to do with... Well, we have 167 heifers at the house. The reason we're feeding them twice a day is because of the volume, the bunks won't hold the volume. So it's just a... We don't want to pour it out on the ground. So, yeah, we're feeding them twice a day.

Diana: So when do you calve?

Mark: March or April, usually.

Diana: Do you have any trouble with weather then? Do you bring them in to a special place?

Mark: Only the first-calf heifers.

Mark: Do you have a good percentage of live calves?

Diana: A good percentage? I would say so, yes.

Diana: You don't lose very many a year?

Mark: There has been one year, out of 40 some years that I've watched heifers, that I had a 100% death rate. One year. If they can die, they will. Just strange things happen.

Diana: Yes, it does. The ranch would have been around when there was the Depression. Did the Depression have any effects on the operation?

Terrie: Yes, it did. Enough that my grandfather went back to Bartlesville, he was in the oilfield before he inherited the ranch on a whim. Before that, he had done some major, what would you call it?

Mark: He was a wildcatter.

Terrie: He worked on the infrastructure. The original buildings were the calf shed, the shop and the barn, and then he built a grainery, a long machine shed and the house.

Mark: And the bunk house.

Diana: The two story brick house?

Terrie: Yes, and the bunk house, too.

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Diana: And when would that have been? What year?

Terrie: In the 20s.

Mark: He built the house in '27.

Terrie: The buildings were built by a Seventh Day Adventist. My dad used to say it made him mad that they wouldn't work on Saturday. Since he was in the oilfield, he could run his oilfield trucks to the train at Sitka and pick up the building supplies and bring them the 14 miles, on probably not very good roads back then.

Terrie: We ought to list at least some of the people that used to lease the ranch.

Mark: You mean after P.G. Abell was finished with it?

Terrie: Earl Alexander rented it, or leased it, and then Jim Barth, Jim Bisel, George Broadie, Raymond Broadie, Julian Clawson, Less Cooper, Harold Daily, Charles Davis, Glenn Nicholson, Bob Rohrer, Charlie Rohrer, C.E. Rohrer, Tom Salyer, and Denny and Gabe Stegman.

Diana: Did they rent all of the ranch or just portions of it?

Mark: They rented pastures, and I don't know how they got separated or split up or who got what and why or how. I think Gabe started working for Earl Alexander, is that not correct?

Terrie: I'm not sure.

Mark: And that's how he got on the ranch. Well, when Earl was done with it, I think Gabe got an opportunity to rent some farmground.

Diana: So where Stegmans lived, was that part of the ranch, right there on the highway?

Mark: Yes.

Diana: I want to go back to a question on cattle. In the early days, did they market them, bring them to Sitka? Do you know? Or did they take them to Buffalo?

Mark: I think Sitka had a railroad before Buffalo did, so probably there.

Diana: And they had cattle pens there?

Mark: Yeah, I would think that they would have been put on railcars and taken out that way.

Diana: Besides cattle, did they have sheep or hogs or lots of horses?

Mark: There is a pasture on the ranch that they call the Sheep Pen and there was woven wire around it. I don't know who ran the sheep, or if there were sheep there, and I don't know when they ran the sheep. So, yes, I think there were sheep there. But when, or who? No telling, it was long before my time.

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Diana: When would they have brought the land back into the family, where the family actually started to run it again?

Terrie: Well, Dad ran part of it, but he was one person. He came back after he quit college and he and Mom got married.

Mark: He came out here in 1954 or '55?

Terrie: They got married in 1955. They'd both grown up in Topeka, but they thought they would give it a shot. And so he came out here and I was born in '56.

Diana: So he was interested in trying his hand at ranching and he was pretty successful at that, right?

Terrie: Well, he... it had been kind of neglected, I guess you would say, and so he did a lot of maintenance work, I would say. And then, you know, he built his equipment. He started out with a tractor with no cab. Back then you had a sun bonnet, if you were lucky.

Diana: Was he mechanically inclined?

Terrie: He was pretty well self-taught. He taught himself to weld. He just, he enjoyed it, you know, from being a city kid and going to western Kansas, he didn't do badly.

Diana: Was he in the service?

Terrie: No, he was kind of in- between. He graduated from Topeka High School in 1950.

Diana: Then did he go back to school there, to Topeka, to college?

Terrie: Oh, he tried K.U. for a while and he tried K-State. Then he went out to the University of Wyoming. He went out with a friend one summer and stayed for the winter.

Diana: So how did your parents meet?

Terrie: At school.

Diana: So they were like high school sweethearts. Did your mother have a job outside the home or was she...

Terrie: Not here. When she lived in Topeka, she worked for Southwestern Bell.

Diana: As an operator or secretary?

Terrie: Secretary.

Diana: And then she became a ranch wife. Was she involved in any community activities? Were they a part of organizations and things to help?

Terrie: You know, 20 miles in the country was just a little far. You know, she would go to church on Sunday, and that was probably it.

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Mark: She had some social...

Terrie: She was in P.E.O and the 20th century and the things women did back then, you know, we didn't do 4-H, but she was a Girl Scout leader. And then she was really involved in driving my brother back and forth to football practice and basketball practice.

Diana: All the practices, but she had several talents, didn't she? She was very creative.

Terrie: Oh, you mean the flower shop? Well, that was later in life. Yeah, I don't think she really knew...

Diana: She didn't do any of that when you were younger. She was mainly just Mom?

Terrie: She cooked.

Diana: Did she have to cook for hired hands or just for the family?

Diana: You know, when we were kids, we really didn't have hired hands. We had... Oh, Ron Salyer worked for us when he was in high school in the summertimes and a few years when he was in college. That was about it, really, Dad didn't really have any help.

Diana: Talk about disasters, like snowstorms or tornadoes or floods or anything. Do you remember any in your lifetime there or any that they used to talk about?

Terrie: Anything prior to the snowstorm?

Diana: Like in '71.

Terrie: I was a seventh grader.

Diana: No, I was a sophomore.

Terrie: Well, I must have been a freshman. I remember that night, I had gone to the movie in Ashland with Mary Lee Haydock and Rhonda Stegman. Mary was going to stay all night with me. And after the movie, we left. Were you in town that night?

Diana: I don't remember being in town that night, probably, maybe.

Terrie: The snow started, but by the time we got to Sitka, it was getting serious. So we stopped at the weigh station, and there was somebody who lived there.

Diana: O'Blennes.

Terrie: Mary Lee went in and called her dad. We woke him up and told him we were going to go on. By the time we got to Rhonda's house, the ditches were the same level as the highway. The only way you could tell where you were was with the top of the fenceposts.

Terrie: So Rhonda had to take us on down to my house. My parents had gone down to Spearville to visit the Salyers and there were no adults there when we got home. They got home not long after

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we did, driving in the same snowstorm. And Rhonda had, of course, to drive back home the two or three miles.

Diana: So were you pretty isolated at that snowstorm?

Terrie: Yes, we were, I think the phone worked.

Diana: Our phone worked.

Terrie: I remember someone in town calling to tell me something, but we were a little short on food. I remember my brother Mark was still... He was still a baby.

Mark: He was two or three years old?

Terrie: Yes. I can remember, Mom made, we never had this before and I've never had it since, but fried baloney? It was like whatever you had.

Terrie: Tom Salyer made his way out, it was a matter of the cattle were... they weren't starving, but they didn't have any water and they don't eat snow. And so the men are trying to get to the cattle to break ice. And it just wasn't possible.

Diana: Did they airlift any hay to them? Were you part of that, where they did the airdrop with the helicopters?

Terrie: I assume we did, Mark was part of that effort.

Mark: But that was out of Buffalo.

Diana: So where did you take feed to then?

Mark: I can't tell you.

Diana: You can't remember?

Mark: Well, I just... You know, unless you specifically say, "This here." All we were in charge of doing was loading and unloading.

Terrie: But you were on a helicopter.

Mark: Yes.

Diana: Where did they get the hay from?

Mark: Farmer stacks. That was when everyone had small squares. You take 15 high school kids, you can destroy a haystack with a big helicopter because you could load, you know, you could load every 15 or 20 minutes. They'd sit down beside it and we would just hand them in there and hand them out and they'd go drop them off.

Diana: So what do you think they could carry in a load each time?

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Mark: Close to 100 bales.

Diana: And then what, they just kicked them out?

Mark: They had a specific list of people who wanted their cattle fed and they would go to those pastures and dole out so many... But like Terrie said, I think it was more a lack of water than starvation.

Diana: So how long did that take? I mean, how long did they have to feed?

Mark: We were out of school a week.

Terrie: But I think we lost 13 head out of that, and that seemed like a lot back then.

Diana: It's nothing like what the Duvals lost on pigs, I guess.

Terrie: Yeah, nothing like that.

Diana: The snow went up underneath the sides of the the buildings and suffocated the pigs. They took high school kids out there to help dig out the pigs.

Mark: That was 50 years ago?

Diana: Yeah, long time. So do you remember any tornadoes?

Terrie: I remember getting in the basement a lot and we had a really nice big basement under that house.

Diana: But when it was when you were younger, in like grade school.

Terrie: Yes, and we also had a cellar on the place, and every year we opened up the cellar door and would sweep it out and knock down the spiders. I don't know if we'd ever go in there.

Terrie: My dad said my grandfather saw a tornado come by and blow down a house that would have been south of us on the hill, and he had just had the cowboys fill in the storm cellar with dirt because he didn't think, with that house's basement, he'd never need that cellar. So he saw that house blown away. And it was Bonvour's house, and they had to dig that cellar back out!

Diana: So any floods, did you see the river come up high?

Mark: We're not close enough to the river.

Terrie: It seems like it used to rain more.

Diana: Yes, so what about the big fire, how in 2017 did it affect your operation?

Terrie: You know, if it'd been just us, we would have felt we were impacted a lot, but compared to what other people lost, we...

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Diana: Yes. Did you lose cattle?

Mark: We lost a few baby calves, and the main reason is they were standing on black ground and we had to move them. They weren't very old and we walked them home about five miles and put them on wheat pasture. Stress... We lost a few babies.

Diana: Did you have to have alternative feed then? Did you lose a lot of grass or did your grass come back pretty well?

Mark: We lost about 12 out of 17,000 acres, but if you remember it started raining right after that and we weren't totally out of grass and we put a lot of our cows... We dedicated the whole wheat pasture and the whole wheat crop to keeping our cows alive. So by the time that wheat was finished being grazed, we were back in the ranch business.

Diana: And the wheat that year was pretty good.

Mark: We don't know, we put it all through cows.

Diana: Well, it looked like it was going to be good. How has your current operation changed since you began, like 40 years ago?

Mark: Well, when I went to work for Terrie's dad, he had just shy of 200 cows and 600 acres of wheat. And now we farm about 2,500 acres and have 900 cows. We didn't feed cattle in the feedyard back then, we do now. Like I said, I remember the first time we ever raised a calf crop that weighed 600 pounds, and I thought that was a phenomenal goal, but it's easily attained now.

Terrie: I think you asked the question about when we took back all the land we were leasing, did we cover that?

Diana: No.

Terrie: Well, Mark went to work in 1975.

Mark: October of '75.

Terrie: In '82, my grandmother was doing some estate planning and she decided to incorporate the ranch. And so in '82, we took all the land back and suddenly we had to stock all that land. And that was an adjustment. About that time you did get a hired hand, someone to help you.

Mark: Yes.

Diana: So how's your equipment changed through the years?

Mark: Oh, my. When I went to work for John, we had a 4020 John Deere, which was 95 horses, and we had a 4430 John Deere, which was 125 horsepower, the 4020 had no cab, at times when it was really hot in the summertime, we would run the tractor with the air conditioner... We would never shut it off. We would run it 24 hours a day. John would run it. Johnny would run it, and then I would run it in just in shifts.

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Mark: Now we have 400 horsepower tractors with... We had a 15 and an 18 foot sweep, and we do a lot of no-tilling now, so the sprayer has 100 foot booms. So it's changed tremendously.

Terrie: So I can remember, I think I was a junior in high school when we had a family meeting and Dad was going to buy his first tractor with a cab on it and it was a big deal.

Diana: So do you have several people in your establishment that are dedicated to the cattle and several people dedicated to just the farming?

Mark: Basically, that is correct.

Diana: Do they have to switch back and forth sometimes?

Mark: Oh, yeah, everybody's got to fill in the gaps. But we have one man who's basically dedicated to the farming end of it and one man with help on the cattle end of it.

Diana: Do you find they're better employees if they like what they're doing?

Mark: If they're a farmer, it's they don't care about cattle. If they're cowboys it's a little hard to get them to drive a tractor. And I don't know why that psychology is there, but it's always been there.

Diana: It has, hasn't it. In cattle, has the medical needs and the way that you doctor changed since the time that you started?

Mark: There's a lot of drugs that are not on the market anymore that were useful, I don't know whether they were beneficial to human nature. I mean, there's drugs that I wished I had on a daily basis.

Diana: That would improve how your cattle were doing.

Mark: Yes. Mainly antibiotics, and antibiotics, you know, when I went to work for Terrie's dad, a bottle of terramycin or a bottle of penicillin, was about all you had. We went through a lot of antibiotics since then, they've taken some of market. But I would venture to say you might have trouble finding 1,000 cc's of penicillin for livestock in this town right now, and penicillin used to be The Answer.

Diana: Do you do most of your own doctoring? Or do you use the vet a lot?

Mark: We do most of our own doctoring. It's under the supervision of the Fed, but, yeah.

Diana: But basically, you do it yourself, right?

Terrie: He's capable of doing his own , _____.

Mark: But that's a semon evaluation rating service exam???????_____

Diana: So do you keep your bulls a long time or get rid of them after so many years?

Mark: We go through a lot of bulls. It seems like we go through too many bulls, but we have on the

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either side of 50 bulls, so. When you grow up and you've got six bulls, that's oh, yeah, once in a while you lose one. When you got 50, it seems like one of them is hurt all the time.

Diana: And how do you check on your cattle? Do you use horses or three wheelers or four wheelers or a combination?

Mark: We use horses, side-by-sides, four-wheelers.

Diana: What determines what you're using? Is it the lay of the pasture or where the cattle are?

Terrie: The person.

Diana: How they like to...

Terrie: How old they are!

Diana: So any trouble with neighbor's cattle getting in with your cattle and having problems with fences?

Mark: If we ever had a problem, the fire of '17 eliminated a lot of fence problems in Clark County. There's extremely nice fences in Clark County. Now, if it didn't burn and the government didn't help you build a new fence, no, they're just like they were. But there's lots of nice fences in Clark County anymore.

Diana: So that kind of helps with...

Mark: Yes, that keeps the migration down on the neighbor's cattle. We don't have neighbor problems per se. We have good neighbors.

Terrie: We've always tried building a good fence, too.

Diana: Did they partner with the neighbors on building the fence?

Mark: Usually, but once in a while we've had a neighbor who just can't afford it. Or didn't feel like he wanted to do it. I wouldn't say much about it.

Diana: How would that work, if you partner with somebody?

Mark: You basically build the fence and split the cost.

Diana: Like one person builds it or you build it together?

Mark: We've done all of it. The old rule of thumb is you walk up to the middle of the fence and the right hand side is yours. Everybody agrees with it, and there's never been as far as property, the lines and all that, there's not that big a deal. You know, if you move a fence two feet or three feet, it's not that many acres.

Diana: So what do you use for gates? Do you use cattle guards, or do you have actual gates?

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Mark: We have a lot of cattle guards, and we have steel pipe gates and we have wire gates. We have all of the above.

Terrie: Yeah, he's lucky to have a lot of oilfield activity. So we've got a guy that traded for a lot of cattle guards. He didn't like opening gates, anyway.

Diana: So you have a lot of grass, do you have some management tools that you use to make sure that your grass is always in tip-top condition?

Mark: Oh, we have. Routinely, we don't spray for weeds and whatnot, but we have in the past. We give our cows plenty of room. You know, we used to give them 14, 15 acres, now we're up to 20. But the cows are bigger, and bigger cows are going to eat more grass. So they require a bigger...

Diana: You rotate from all the pastures? Do you leave some of them down.

Mark: No.

Terrie: We space the windmills.

Mark: We basically take care of 40 windmills. About half of them are solar powered anymore, solar pumps. We do have some concrete reservoirs that store water.

Terrie: They were built by my great grandfather and have been maintained all this time.

Diana: So about how many do you have, do you know? The concrete reservoirs?

Mark: Seven, 12, 16, 22. Those are numbers of windmills that go with a reservoir. I was just counting the numbers off that have reservoirs.

Terrie: All the windmills are numbered, so that you can tell when somebody needs to go fix one.

Diana: Which which one to go to?

Terrie: Which windmill you go to.

Diana: So they have to have a map of the ranch, so they know just exactly where they're going.

Terrie: Yes.

Diana: So do you have a lot of breakdowns on your solar windmills or on your old fashioned ones any more?

Mark: Not anymore than the windmills themselves.

Mark: Yeah, I've got solar wells that haven't been out of the ground in five years and I've got windmills that haven't been touched in four or five years. They all require maintenance.

Diana: Do you have trouble with not being able to pump water because it's cloudy with the solar?

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Mark: I converted a windmill six months ago to a solar and in hindsight, I kind of wish I hadn't because the windmill pumped every time the wind blew. With the solar well, it's only pumping when the sun is out. And it's not keeping up like I'd like to see it. But we're challenging it right now. We have more cattle in there than what we should have, and that will change within 30 days.

Diana: So do you have to carry water to them sometimes?

Mark: Yes, we've probably hauled more water this year than we ever have since I've been on the ranch.

Diana: So in all the years that you've been on the ranch, looking back, what's the smartest thing you ever did?

Terrie: Marry me.

Diana: That was good.

Mark: There is no good answer for that.

Mark: And what would you change if you could?

Terrie: We need more rain, can you work on that one?

Diana: Yeah, we'll try that will address that.

Mark: When you said "manage grass", I did leave something out. We do a good amount of prescribed burning for weed control and brush control and it improves the grasses.

Diana: Do you have cedars?

Mark: No, we do not. We have a sprinkling of cedars down along the creek, but that's about all. And we've got cedar tree rows, we should have cedars, but for some reason we don't, and we didn't lose our tree rows in the fire of '17. Lots and lots of people lost cedar tree rows. And cedar tree rows, if you've ever seen one burn, you'll never forget it.

Terrie: The tree rows were planted by my dad and Jim Bisel.

Diana: Do they do the soil conservation program to plant trees?

Terrie: When Dad and Jim Bisel were waiting for the tree planter, the contraption they used to plant them, Henry Gardiner was planting the tree rows around the new high school. So we were waiting in turn to get that. Everyone was planting trees at that time.

Diana: Did they have trouble keeping them alive?

Terrie: It must have rained.

Mark: The last tree rows we established, probably would have been in the... When did Jessie graduate high school? '94? The late 80s is the last year and we used filter fabric and used drip

Mark and Terrie Luckie

irrigation on them, and those are excellent tree rows. The tree rose that John planted back in the 50s, 60s, they're about worn out.

Diana: So are you considering replanting them? Is it as necessary as it used to be?

Mark: Yes, it is. If you're on a big brisk, windy day and the wind's coming out of the north, and it's really raw, you can get on the upwind side of the tree road, and be miserable. You can get on the down side of the tree row and really be a lot more comfortable.

Diana: So you have trees that protect your house?

Mark: That's where I'm talking about, that's our tree row.

Diana: You have a different house than what you started out with, did your folks build your house for you when you moved back, when you started on the ranch?

Terrie: No, we lived in the old Nicholson house.

Mark: That was the original house on the ranch.

Terrie: And someone told me they built everything from the house to the chicken house.

Diana: Was it one story?

Terrie: Yes. It was pretty basic. And then we decided to remodel the old bunkhouse, which was a brick building with a green tile roof like the big house, and we lived there about six months before we had a gas leak and it burned down.

Diana: Where did you live while you were getting it done?

Mark: We moved a mile south on the highway, C.B Rohrer's house. And then we had this house built in Mound Ridge and they brought it out and set it on our basement

Diana: Did you have to build the basement or was it there previously?

Mark: We had the basement poured.

Diana: What did you learn most from having your house burn down? I mean, what kind of takeaways?

Mark: Save your pictures. Everything else can be replaced, but save your pictures.

Terrie: It was just material stuff. Our kids got out. Everybody got out, but it was a big deal. When you have is your underwear and the nightgown you have, it's a big deal. It's a lot to replace.

Diana: Did you have trouble remembering or knowing what you had?

Terrie: Not at all.

Mark: Because we'd only lived there six months. We had just moved.

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Diana: So it was easy.

Terrie: It was pretty fresh. Yes.

Diana: So you didn't have any trouble knowing what was in the drawers or anything like that?

Terrie: I did not.

Diana: So how are you preparing for another generation to run your operation? Is that part of the estate planning that your grandmother did, did she pretty much set that up? Do you have a good succession plan?

Terrie: Well, we worked on a succession plan for a long time now and I guess we are turning it over to the next generation, not only Jesse, as our son who lives there, but as my cousins, who live in Kansas City.

Diana: So your operation is a corporation, right, so you have corporate meetings and stuff that actually decides what everybody's going to do. How often do you have a corporate meeting for the ranch?

Terrie: We used to have them at least twice a year and then we can we have phone meetings too. Especially since Covid.

Diana: So how has the coronavirus affected how you do your operation?

Terrie: Not much.

Mark: Not right now, we've had one employee test positive for Corona, and he basically, if he felt like coming to work for two weeks, he did, but we gave him a job that he could do by himself. So he could isolate himself off and we may or may not have more Coronavirus run through the ranch.

Diana: What about going in and picking up supplies or anything? Are you pretty much self-sufficient or do you have to go get feed?

Mark: The feed is delivered by semi-loads and I suppose the thing that I have to go do is when they basically shut things down during the first of the Coronavirus, we had to make arrangements for somebody to make lunch. So we've eaten a lot of ham sandwiches.

Diana: So you used to go to the cafe for something.

Mark: But when everything was closed up...

Diana: That wasn't an option.

Mark: That wasn't an option.

Diana: So is there anything we've left off? Anything you'd like to say?

Terrie: Was this trying to record history or current work or what it was your goal here?

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Diana: The topic was cattle ranching in Clark County since 1920. So most of us haven't been around that long, but we've been involved in cattle ranching for 40 or 50 years of our lifetime.

Mark: We have been here a little longer.

Terrie: Our experiences have as much historical value as the stuff that went before, you know, we maintain the land. There hasn't been much change in the people here, although in other parts of the county, older families that have been here aren't here anymore and new families have moved in. So that's another challenge.

Terrie: You know, I mentioned our neighbors, you started on the neighbors, and we didn't draw that out.

Mark: And you know, something that's that I've noted that has really changed in my work history on the ranch is the Peruna School, which was south and east of our house, and the Willard School, which was south and west of our house.

Mark: We had enough neighbors when we moved out there that each of those schools would have a once a month card party and it was potluck. There was people playing dominoes, there were just people playing pitch, there was kids running around. And all of those neighbors are gone. They've passed away. Mostly passed away as opposed to moved to town. And, you know, if you ran out of gas or had a flat, and you didn't have the right equipment to change it, you had to walk a mile. Now you can walk six, seven miles and never see a neighbor.

Mark: Like from our house. You start down the road and there was Victor and Edith Harmon, Jim and Nancy Bart. Now Jim and Nancy's daughter lives there, but you go on over the hill and Harry and Mary Painter and then you go south and Wayne and Leona Bates, and Dean and Ava Painter, and the Hieronymous's and the Pullards. There's just no one out there anymore.

Diana: And there's nobody really north of you either.

Mark: No.

Terrie: There never has been.

Mark: Well, the Harper Ranch.

Diana: Yeah, that's about the closest, someone at the Harper Ranch.

Terrie: You can think about the kids that used to ride the school bus with us. Those homes are not there.

Mark: And that's something that has really, really changed in "our neighborhood", is the lack of people.

Diana: So what do you think the future of farming/ranching in Clark County is?

Terrie: It's kind of scary when you think about all of the state hunters buying the land for prices local people can't afford.

Mark and Terrie Luckie

Mark: And it takes a lot of acres to make a living. You know, there used to be... well, the Homestead Act was 160 acres, and you could make a living off of 160 acres. There's no way. Today you can't even start anything, and number one, you can't generate enough cash to pay for it.

Terrie: That's true. So somebody starting out, new young farmer or rancher,?

Mark: Can't do it unless you have a family that has money or land or equipment

Diana: Or have a mentor that has it.

Terrie: You know, another thing we're going to be missing is the oil and gas activity. That was a nice little bonus.

Diana: Kept a lot of people going when their cattle weren't doing well. So, yeah, we haven't talked about the cattle market. Is it good, bad, indifferent now?

Mark: It's not been good since the coronavirus. It's not just devastating, but there's not much profit in it.

Terrie: Since the coronavirus, or since the China tariff issues?

Mark: I would say it was more corona, but that's my opinion. It's livable. But it's not good.

Terrie: Thanks for interviewing with me.