



TOP: COUSINS ALLEN and Dave Crow stop a calf from leaving the corral while separating calves from their mothers in preparation to brand.
ABOVE: DAVE CROW, left, and Josh Hodges hold a calf while Rod Gibson operates the branding iron last Friday during a cattle branding on Bob Crow's farm and ranch near Arnold. The Crow family has branded annually for about 50 years.
BOTTOM: BOB CROW'S brand, 'R/C,' is placed onto cattle as a proof of ownership, preventing them from being stolen.

RAW hide

*Ranchers herd up
for spring branding*

Head 'em up, move 'em out. Springtime means branding time for cattlemen and women across the plains. Young calves kicked as smoke rose from their newly branded hides last Friday on the ranch of Bob Crow near Arnold.

He and his son, Gary Crow, brand their cattle each year to prevent them from being stolen.

Before the branding starts, they first herd up help from family members: a father, mother, two sons, five grandchildren, one nephew and an assortment of hired hands.

It takes a lot of folks. After all, a lot of work must be done.

About 350 head of calves were branded that Friday. But first, they had to be separated from their mothers, who were branded in previous years. Afterwards, the 1- to 2-month-old calves were corralled.

Three hired hands, Rod and Judy Gracey and Earl Dailey, then roped critters from horseback, snagging them for three groups of holders.

The holders then held each calf down while it was branded and vaccinated. All bulls were castrated and sick calves had their illnesses treated.

After the ordeal, the calves are allowed back into the corn fields. There they roam with their mothers and eat off last year's stalks, as well as their daily allowances of hay and corn.

Weather permitting, branding day tends to be one of the most active days in a cow's life and one of the most satisfying for the rancher.

Bob Crow was relieved that the weatherman's predicted rain did not fall and all the work got done. It was a beautiful, overcast day, perfect for bringing friends and family together to continue a Crow tradition that spans about 50 years.



**Photos and story by
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