

UNDERSTANDING WORKING RANGELANDS

Bay Area Ranching Heritage: A Continuing Legacy

THE BAY AREA RANCHING HERITAGE

The Bay Area is best known for San Francisco and the technology-rich Silicon Valley; however, the area's most prevalent land use largely goes unnoticed by much of the public. Working ranches from Santa Clara to Sonoma

County, including rangelands, irrigated, and dryland pastures (but not related acreage for silage, hay, green chop and grains), are the number-one land use in this world-renowned urban center, occupy roughly 1.4 million of the Bay Area's 4.48 million acres (Bay Area County Crop Reports 2012). Whether working ranches are on public or private land, many Bay Area ranchers represent the fourth, fifth, or sixth generations stewarding the land and their livestock. These working ranches also contribute over \$132 million per year to the Bay Area economy and represent the third-highest-value agricultural commodity in the region (Bay Area County Crop Reports 2012).

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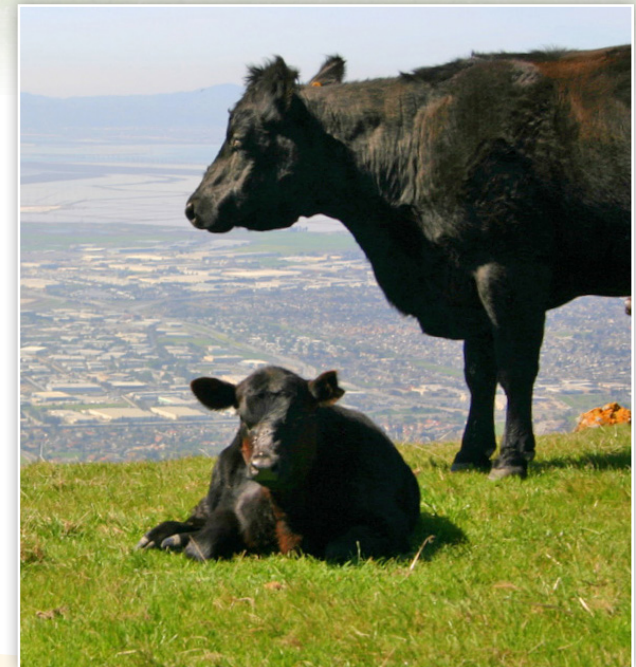


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Working rangelands are public or privately owned open space lands that are managed with livestock grazing and rancher stewardship. Their management contributes to the production of a variety of ecosystem services, including food, clean water, weed control, wildlife habitat, fire fuel reduction, carbon sequestration, pollination, aesthetic views, cultural heritage, recreational and educational opportunities, and open space conservation.