

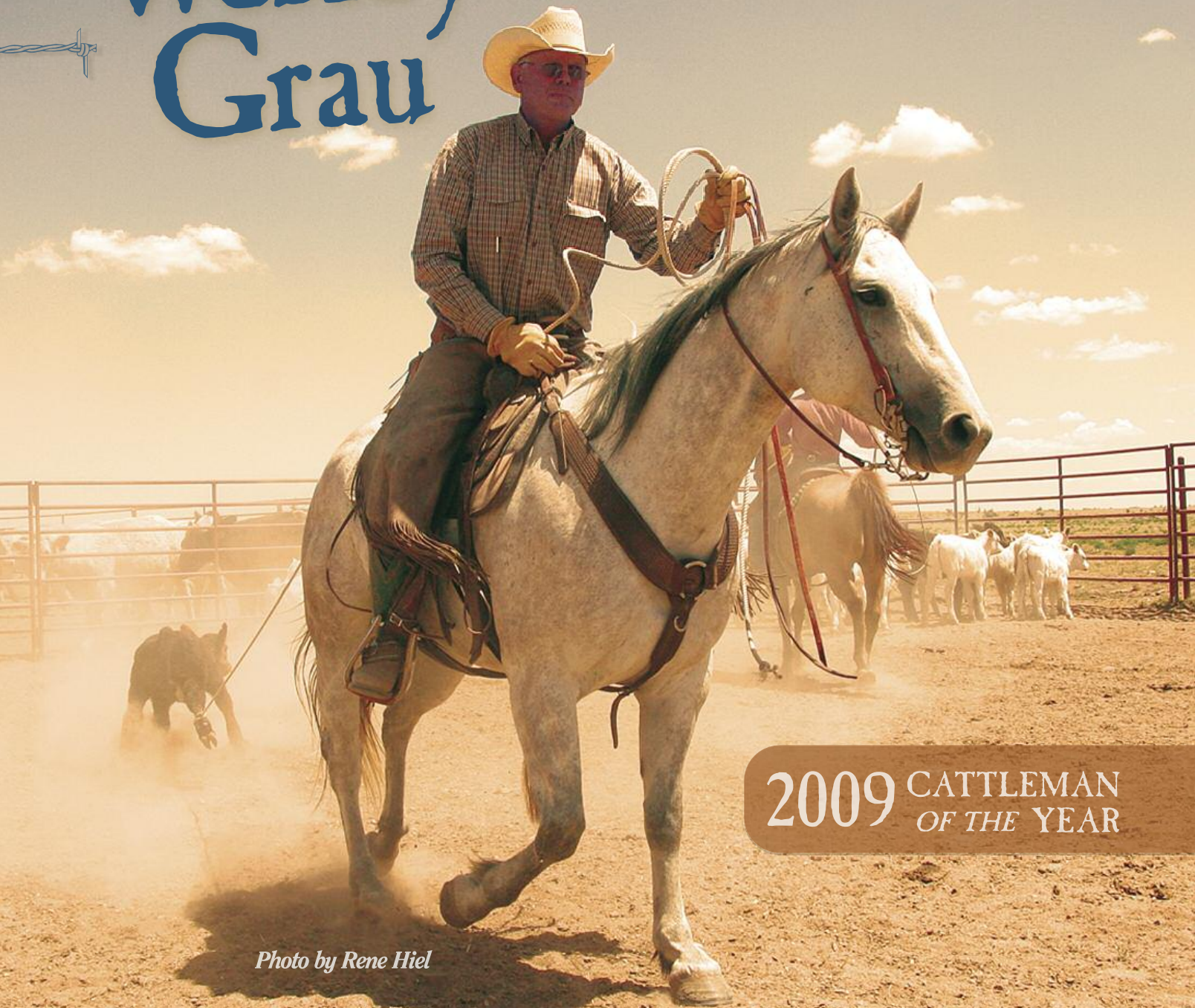
NEW MEXICO Stockman

**WESLEY
GRAU**
*Cattleman
of the Year*

The Magazine for
Southwestern Agriculture

NOVEMBER 2010

Wesley Grau



2009 CATTLEMAN
OF THE YEAR

Photo by Rene Hiel

by CAROL WILSON

Dawn's light has not yet begun to chase the dark from the early morning sky. Wesley Grau tends a fire, coaxing until a crackling flame licks the dry wood. As stars pierce the darkness of the night, Wesley adds bacon to a cast-iron skillet and moves the skillet closer to the flames.

In a few short hours, family and friends will be eating bacon and eggs, gravy and biscuits around the Grau chuckwagon near Grady, New Mexico. After a hearty breakfast prepared by the ranch boss himself, the crew will reassemble in the nearby corral, where ropes

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Wesley Grau

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will sing as the dust rises in the air to join the bawling of cows and calves.

Branding at the Grau Ranch encompasses all that Wesley Grau holds dear. Family and friends join together to work the ranch that has witnessed five generations of Grau stewardship. As Wesley uses a hot iron to burn the ranch brand into the smokey hide of another calf, he is aware that he is keeper of a legacy. And he is very intentional about passing a legacy of family, friends, faith and functional cattle to the future generations of the Grau family.

That kind of focus was in part responsible for Wesley being named by fellow cattlemen as the 2009 New Mexico Cattleman of the Year. As Bert Ancell of Bell Ranch, president of the New Mexico Cattle Growers' Association (NMCGA), noted, "Wesley is a dedicated leader, an industry supporter, and a family man. We are glad to have this chance to recognize him for his hard work and many accomplishments and to say 'thank you'."

The man who loves the cowboy way of life and would have liked to have ridden with John Wayne is described by his friend Blake Curtis as "salt of the earth."

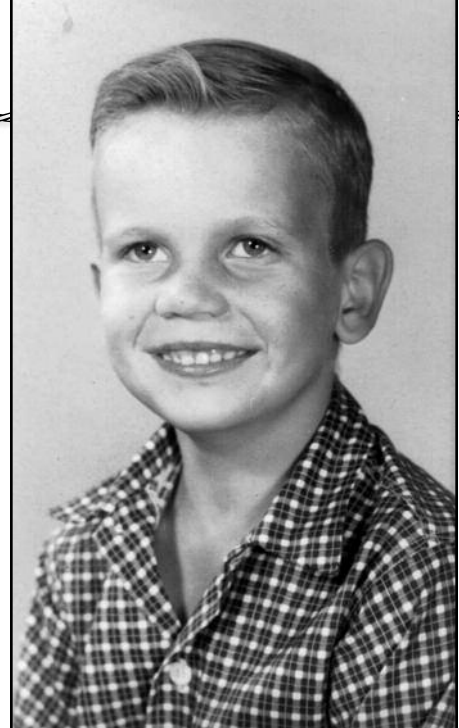
Blake explained, "Wesley is simply a

really good guy. He is unselfish. He would take the shirt off of his back to help anyone. He loves to help people and he doesn't do it for credit, but because it is the right thing to do."

Wesley and his wife, Elnabeth, raised three children, Marcus, Meghan and Micah, on the Grau Ranch. They operate the ranch with Wesley's brother, Lane, Lane's wife, Cheryl, and their four children. Besides raising children, the brothers, along with their late father, Lloyd, raised a reputation as the premier Charolais breeders in New Mexico.

100 year legacy

Wesley's grandfather, Charles Albert, immigrated from Germany when he was two years old. Charles' father was a butcher in New York City for several years before he moved his family to a farm in northern Missouri. When the New Mexico territory was opened for homesteading in 1906, Charles drove his stakes in the New Mexico prairie near what became the small village of Grady. Elnabeth and Wesley live



The young Mr. Grau

there today. Charles loved the flat New Mexico rangeland and did what it took to stay, hauling wagonloads of coal from the railroad in Tucumcari, gathering eggs and

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Brother, Uncle, Partner
& Friend

You make us proud every day...
but having our own Cattleman
Of The Year in the family is
GREAT!

**Congratulations,
Wesley**

Lane Grau Family
Lane, Cheryl, Colt,
Kat, Kait, Kris

WESLEY LLOYD GRAU,



**BEST Cattleman and BEST Son,
Husband, Dad, Grand Dad, Brother, Uncle,
Worker, and GENTLEMAN!**

**Love to you from all the inlaws and outlaws
in NM, TX, CO, CA, MA, and Afghanistan!**





Governor Bruce King and Representative Wesley Grau.

Wesley Grau

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selling cream. As neighbors proved up on the land and then sold out and left the country, he'd use his egg and cream money to buy their land. Slowly, Charles built a cowherd, and in the 1920s he began raising registered Herefords.

Charles raised two sons and two daughters. When Lloyd went into the Army Air Corps during World War II, he served for four years without a furlough home. He was being paid \$30 a month and he managed to save every dollar. When he came home, he'd saved enough money to buy some land for himself and ranch alongside his father.

For the first half a century, the Grau name was associated with whitefaced Hereford cattle. That changed, however, in 1960 when Lloyd purchased the two best bulls from the champion Hereford carload

in Denver. When the calves out of those bulls were weighed at weaning time, Lloyd realized he'd reduced his weaning weights by 50 to 75 pounds. He switched to Charolais cattle and there were no more changes. In the last 50 years, the family has built an international reputation around the Grau genetics.

Keeper of the legacy

As Lloyd and Maxine's eldest son, Wesley accepts the responsibility of passing along that legacy. And he is not just passing it along, he is building the legacy. He is a perfectionist who strives for excellence in all things. He has learned Spanish so he could communicate with the Mexican customers who buy Grau bulls. He and Elnabeth take their five grandsons to the mountains each year just so they can have quality time together. And even with a schedule packed with meetings, appointments and obligations, he makes the time to play his guitar and lead the singing at the local church.

Wesley met his future wife, Elnabeth Teel, at 4-H State Conference. When he was in college, he started making regular trips to Artesia to see her. Wesley and Elnabeth were married the August after she graduated from high school and attended New Mexico State University together.

"He graduated first," Elnabeth remembers. "He was talking about going to law school and was looking at the options when Lloyd had some health concerns. He told Wesley he thought he ought to come home for a while, and we did. We never left. That was a blessing."

Wesley was one of seven brothers and sisters. He and Lane have bought out their sister's interest in the ranch over the years.

Their middle brother was killed in a car wreck in 1972 in Las Cruces.

"Lane and I are the last generation that was helped into the business by our fathers and grandfathers," Wesley noted. "The next generation will have to bring money into the ranches to keep them together. It is very disappointing to me that the people who own ranches today have made money outside of agriculture, then they buy a ranch and turn it into a recreational venue but have no desire to raise beef for an ever-increasing population. They don't want to use their ranch for the good of mankind, but only for themselves. The funny thing is that the ranch will be there after they are gone. God owns all of the cattle. We are only caretakers."

"If I had my druthers, there would be a Grau living here when the ranch celebrates 200 years," he continued. "But it is hard for a ranch to stay in a family for more than three generations."

A passionate cowman

Blake Curtis has known Wesley for years, as a friend, business associate, and

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-3Q

**WESLEY... A GREAT
FAMILY MAN, A
GREAT CATTLEMAN,
A GREAT AMERICAN.**

**THANKS FOR THE
EXAMPLE.**

— LACK-MORRISON BRANGUS

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We would like to congratulate

WESLEY GRAU
& THE GRAU FAMILY

for their contribution to the
livestock industry by develop-
ing an outstanding Charolais
breed program that has
excelled in performance on
every level for us.

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Congratulations
Wesley

on another accomplishment in
life. May the Lord continue to
bless you and your family.

— Jim Lyssy



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Thanks &
Congratulations

BIG
BROTHER

We appreciate you and are
SO proud of you!

Chris, Kye,
Caiden & Kylynn



Wesley & Elnabeth Grau at the Cowboy Ball.

Wesley Grau

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rancher. "He is passionate about what he does," noted Blake. "Wesley is incredibly knowledgeable about breeding for specific traits and how to bring out those traits in the cattle. He is also very active in many organizations which support the cattle business and in the promotion of the cattle business."

Wesley acknowledges that the people who buy Grau genetics are really buying their belief in the Grau program and their wisdom as genetic producers. "The sad part of it is that a lot of people are supplying genetics and they don't even know what they have," he stated. "Great genetics comes from line breeding herds or owning herds of seedstock for about 50 years. If you can't look at a bull and remember his great, great, great, great, great-grandsire, you can't really know what kind of off-

continued on page 27

**Way to
go Wesley!**

**We can think of no one
more deserving to be
Cattleman of the Year!**

C Culbertson - Whatley
Ranch C

WESLEY

THANK YOU AND
YOUR FAMILY FOR ALL THE
SACRIFICES YOU HAVE MADE
FOR ALL OF US.
— BRUCE HINRICHS

Wesley,

**Congratulations for this well-
deserved honor, our good Christian
friend. We are blessed by the time
you and your family spend with us.**

Greg & Sydney Martin

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**Congratulations Wesley!
We are so Proud of You!**

Will Orndorff

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Congratulations

Wesley!

We admire and appreciate your
dedication to our beliefs and principles.
— Neal & Tande Delk

**CONGRATULATIONS,
WESLEY!**

**THANKS FOR ALL
YOU'VE DONE!**



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**Congratulations
for your
dedication and
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**Thank You
WESLEY**

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of service to the
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Wesley Grau

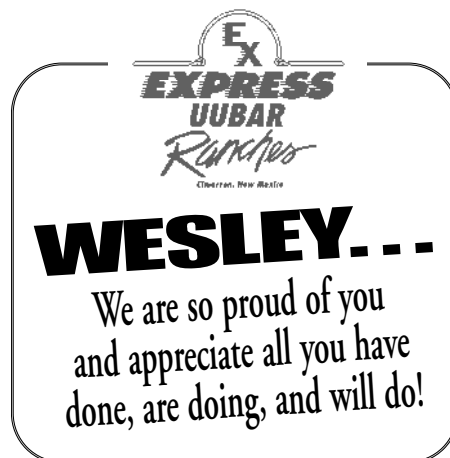
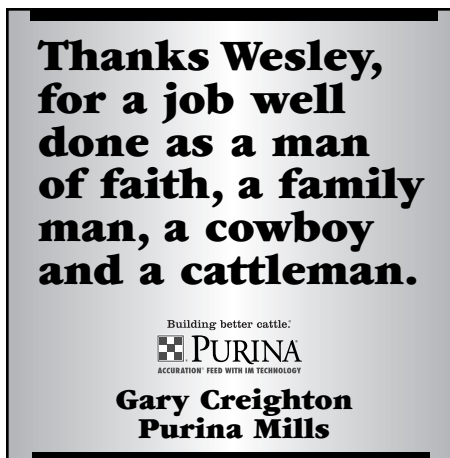
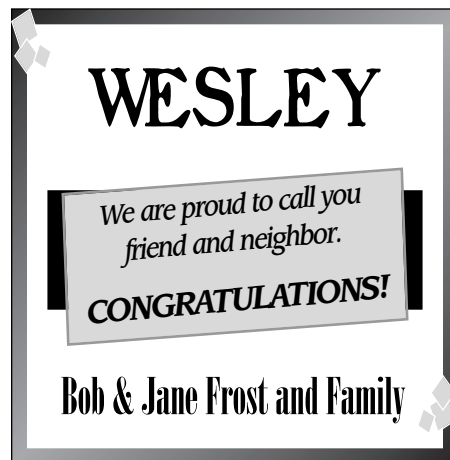
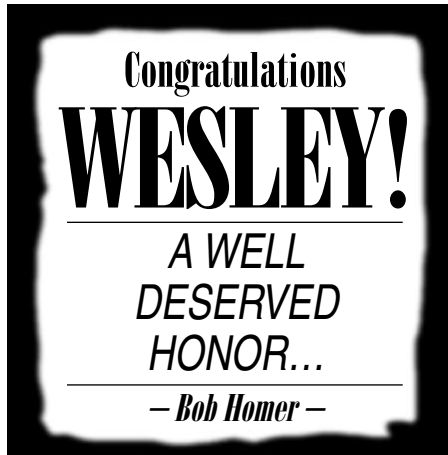
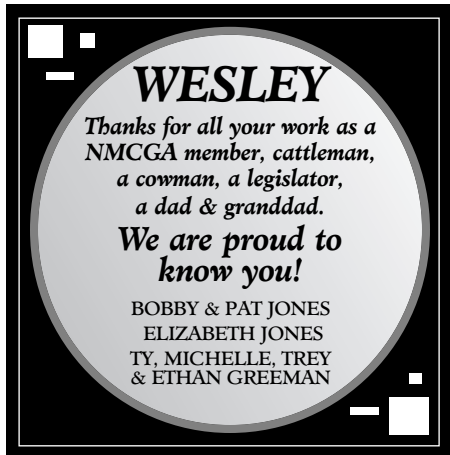
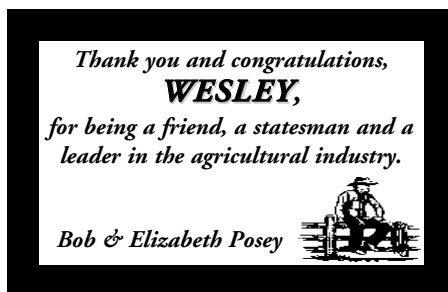
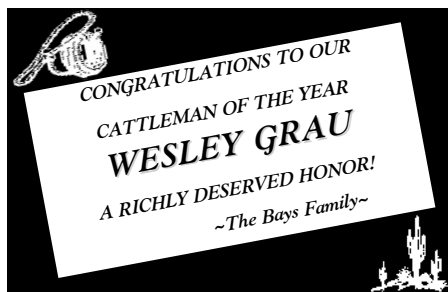
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spring he will sire. The neat thing about our cattle is their linebred coefficient. When they are crossed with anything else, they have extra hybrid vigor and they are predictable. The calves that come out of our bull will resemble our bull. Composite bulls can throw genes in four different directions. If you had a jersey five generations back, the composite bull could throw a calf that looks like a jersey. Composites when used for breeding stock are just very unpredictable."

The decisions the Graus are making now in their seedstock programs will show up in commercial herds in six years. "If we stub our toe today, we'll be out of the seedstock program in six years," Wesley stated. "So we use the latest tools, like Genetic Progress Differences (GPD's) which show that our bulls are testing five stars for quality grade, six stars for tenderness, the maximum, and eight stars for feed efficiency, also the maximum amount. These GPDs need to be included in herd sire selections with Estimated Progeny Differences (EPD's)."

In the past 20 years, Grau Charolais has sold 1,515 breeding animals to producers in Mexico, with the help of Raul Tellez, marketing specialist for the New Mexico Department of Agriculture. "Twenty years ago Wesley couldn't say 'buenos dias' in Spanish," stated Raul. "But he has worked hard to learn the language so he could really help these people and now he can communicate with his Mexican customers."

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Lane, Lloyd and Wesley Grau.

Wesley Grau

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Grau family members often traveled to Mexico before travel got dangerous. They were always well recieved. "Wesley established long-term relationships in a professional way," Raul noted. "One Mexican rancher was at Micah's wedding because of those relationships."

Raul continued, "I wish there were more Wesley Graus out there that have the type of cattle he has. We have customers who have bought from him for five or six times who

will just call up and say they need five low-birthweight bulls for heifers and five bulls for big cows. Wesley always delivers the bulls himself and the rancher just falls in love with them. That is the kind of relationship Wesley has established in Mexico."

"Wesley guarantees that his bulls will work and his heifers will have calves," Raul continued. "He stands behind his cattle. Once a rancher called to tell me that two of the heifers that he bought from Wesley didn't breed. Wesley and I drove to Mexico and he sleeved the heifers, determined they were freemartins, and paid the rancher for the animals. We drove back toward the border and stopped at a little diner. I walked in and a good friend of mine asked, 'Is that Grau with you?' I said, in Spanish, that it was. My friend told the story of Wesley making good on the two heifers. I asked him how he knew the story and he said, 'good news travels fast, my friend.' I tell that story just to show you that Wesley Grau stands behind his cattle. You can't sell 1,515 breeding animals and only have to replace five of them without having extremely good animals."

Wesley and Elnabeth have made it clear

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WESLEY

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AGENTS – CURRY COUNTY:
David Williams • Jennifer Williams

Wesley Grau

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that Raul is to show up at the Grau ranch at 12:00 noon, when lunch is served. "There is always a pecan pie after lunch," Raul noted. "Elnabeth knows it is my favorite."

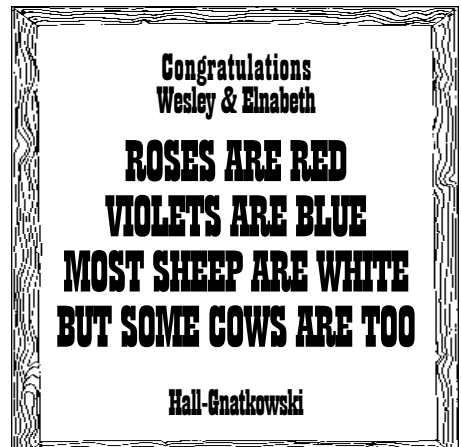
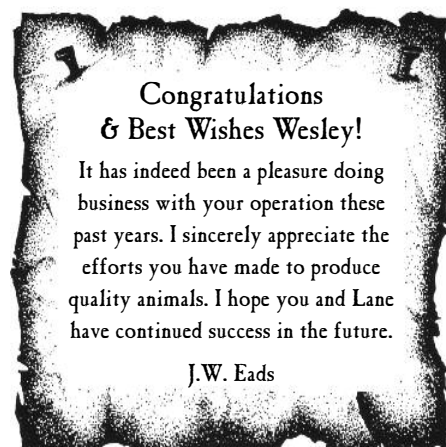
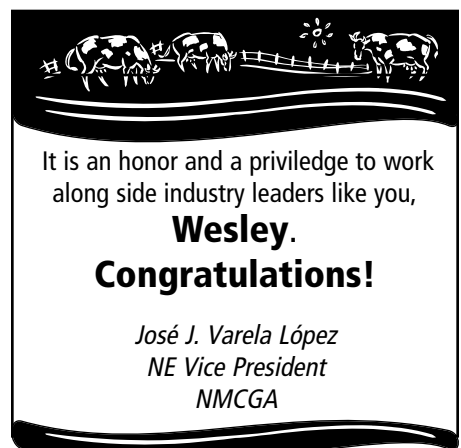
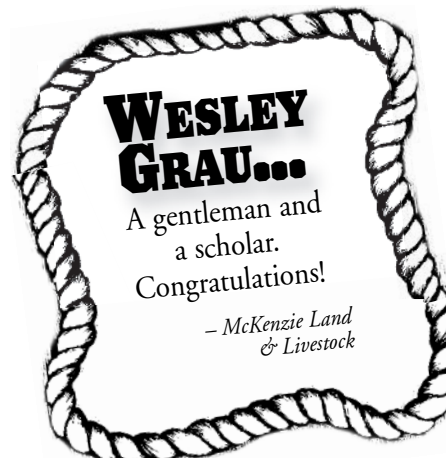
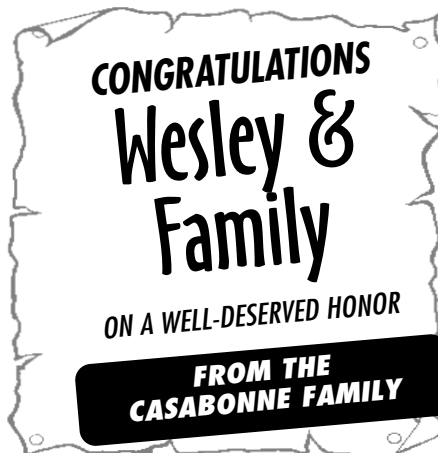
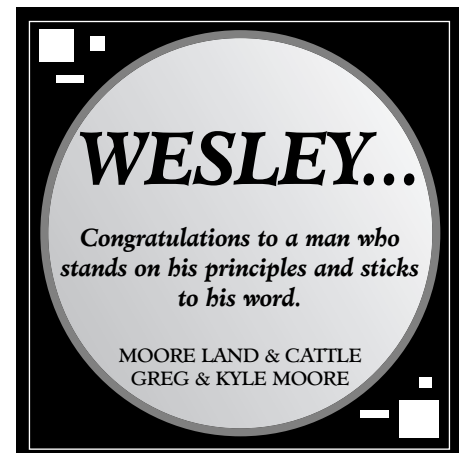
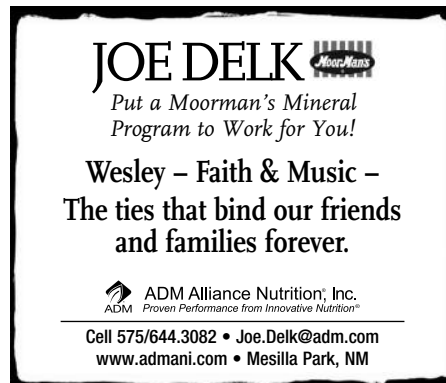
The Mexican trade has generated lots of stories among Wesley's contemporaries. Former Cattleman of the Year Don Hofman remembers the first time he ever delivered bulls with Wesley. "At that time,

they paid half of their money up front and the other half at the time the bulls were delivered," Don remembers. "We got to the border with the bulls and the men counted out more hundred dollar bills than I'd ever seen before in cash. Wesley was as unconcerned as could be and just put the cash in the briefcase, laid it in the seat, and we took off. He never appeared worried about carrying so much money, but I looked over my shoulder for at least 100 miles."

Angus breeder Blake Curtis has also traveled extensively across the border with

Wesley. "Once a customer of Wesley's complained about his bulls not doing well, so Wesley went down to check on them," Blake commented. "That area of Mexico was struggling with a long drought and Wesley found the bulls in a pasture with cactus and some trees, but no feed. It looked like the cattle had really been neglected. The man said, 'Mr. Grau, your bulls aren't breeding.' Wesley replied, 'Well, I'm sorry but I never taught those bulls to break those rocks open and get the

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Congratulations to **WESLEY**

Well deserved. Wish
Wesley & Elnabeth
the very best &
may God bless.

SCOTT, ROSEMARY, KERI, ROB, & JEN



WESLEY

Thank you, friend
and neighbor, for the
lifetime of
dedication to the
livestock
industry, family
and faith.

PAT & CINDY
BOONE



Wesley Grau

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kernels out of them.”

Extensive travels have taught Wesley that cattlemen all over the world are essentially the same. “If you raise livestock, you are set apart from the rest of civilization,” he maintained, “Because of your husbandry strengths and your patience to get along with stock, you are just different than others. The people who raise cattle in Florida are just like us, they just worry about crocodiles eating their calves instead of coyotes.”

No fence sitting

Grau means gray in the German language, but Wesley sees most situations as black or white. “After I weigh facts, I usually take a stand,” he stated. “I don’t believe in sitting on the fence. I don’t believe in gray areas. There is a right and a wrong, and it sometimes takes a lot of diplomacy to get others to do what you want them to do.”

Grau has been in a lot of situations calling for diplomacy. He was president of the New Mexico Cattle Growers from 1993 to 1995 and remembers the challenges of try-

ing to keep all the guns pointed in the same direction. He is also past president of the Grady School Board and Mesa Redondo Cowboy Camp Meeting Association, as well as being a board member of the National Cattleman’s Association and the Executive Board for the Cattleman’s Beef Board.

“Knowing that there is a job to be done that needs to be done right is what drives me to serve,” he noted. “If you don’t pull your chair up to the table, you have no right to complain. The world is run by those who show up.”

And show up he does. “Being active on a state and national level means long hours, many miles on the road, and time away from home and family,” according to Bert Ancell, current NMCGA president. “We truly appreciate Wesley’s willingness to make to sacrifices which have strengthened our industry, and hope he has no plans to slow down.”

After serving as Cattle Growers’ president, Wesley served the 42nd and 43 sessions in the New Mexico House of Representatives, where he sponsored 35 bills instead of the more common number of 10

continued on page 31

WESLEY

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from the entire
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& the CS Ranch

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Congratulations Wesley

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Dan Puckett



Congratulations
**WESLEY, you
Deserve this Honor!**

From your
Compadres on
the New Mexico
Beef Council

WES,
IT IS A
PRIVILEGE TO
KNOW & WORK
WITH YOU!

WHITE HEREFORDS
- RANDY, KATE & JUSTIN WHITE

Chase RANCH

COMMERCIAL HEREFORDS

Thanks Wesley,
for a job well done as a
cattleman, a family man
and a friend.

Congratulations
to our
SPECIAL FRIEND
Wesley Grau

Don & Abby
Hofman



Wesley Grau

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for freshmen legislators. Wesley realized that the agricultural organizations were fighting each other in Santa Fe, so he helped organize the "ag group" to give agriculture a stronger, more cohesive voice in the Legislature. Wesley saw the Legislature as hands-on training on getting things done and using diplomacy to get others to do what you wanted them to do, but he also had to make hard choices, like whether to stay home when his cattle were out of water or attend a rally he'd been invited to in a town hundreds of miles away. He watered the cattle, but many of the constituents didn't understand.

"We are dealing with lots of people who don't have a background in agriculture and don't understand things like endangered species, water rights and individual rights and liberties which we take for granted, but town people think they can run over," Wesley noted. "But even though I enjoyed building the cowboy coalitions and would have been speaker of the house when I got beat by one tenth of a percent-

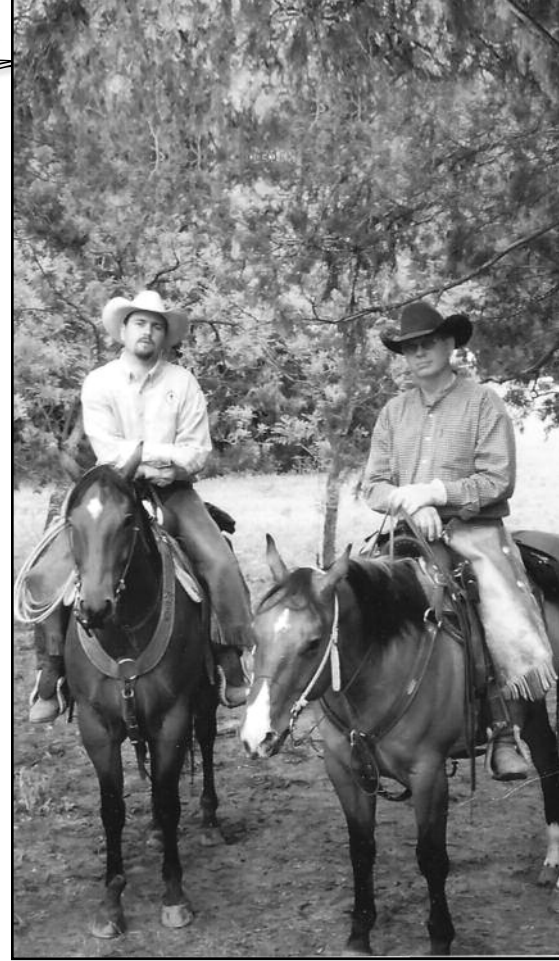
age point, I didn't contest it. I needed to be casting a shadow on this place."

Faith and family

Don and Abbey Hofman got acquainted with Wesley and Elnabeth when both couples were involved in starting the Mesa Redondo Camp Meeting many years ago. "Wesley has been really dear to Abbey and I," Don stated. "He is almost like a son. We've known them real closely, and I've helped them brand for years. He is a wonderful neighbor, and a good Christian man. His word is his bond."

There is almost as much family history with the Angus cattle in Blake Curtis' family as there is with Charolais in the Grau family, but despite the lively debates over the merits of black versus white cattle, the two men have grown close over the years. Blake remembers a Junior Livestock Sale Calcutta and dance that he and his wife attended with Elnabeth and Wesley. The Joe Delk band played and the couples danced until late at night, then drove home so they could be there for their kids' participation in something the next day. They got home about 4:00 a.m. "I remem-

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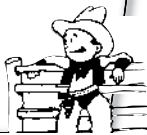


Wes and Marcus.

THANKS **WESLEY!**

We are better off because
of your hard work for the
industry, the state and the
nation.

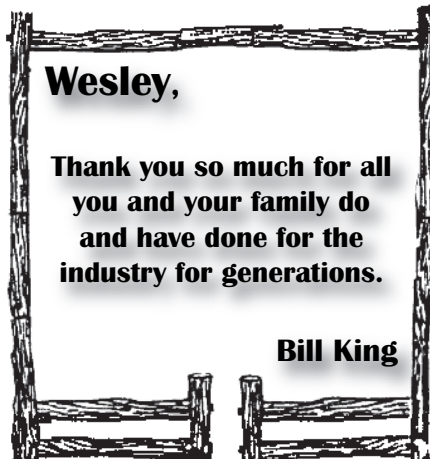
— Bill and Debbie Sautle
CIRCLE DOT RANCH



Wesley,

Thank you so much for all
you and your family do
and have done for the
industry for generations.

Bill King



congratulations
**Wesley &
Elnabeth**

The HUMPHRIES
and KNIGHT
FAMILIES

H
JK HK



WESLEY,

Thank you for your continued
leadership, commitment &
dedication to the livestock industry
& New Mexico as well as the family
values that you and yours have
wrapped us all in for generations.

3M Bar 3M

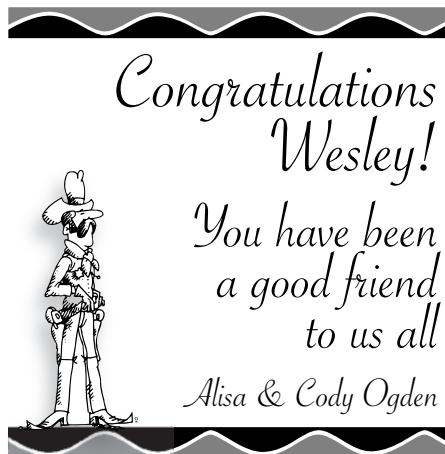
LTC Royce A. "Pancho" Maples



Congratulations
Wesley!

You have been
a good friend
to us all

Alisa & Cody Ogden



CONGRATULATIONS
**WESLEY
WELL
DESERVED**

THAL RANCH





Marcus, Megan, Micah, Wesley and Elnabeth Grau

Wesley Grau

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ber thinking at the time that it was neat that Wesley and Elnabeth were so dedicated to drive all the way to Albuquerque for the function, when they had to drive home again that night," said Blake.

"Wesley is a real civic minded person," added Don. "He has been very active in the Tucumcari bull test and in the local church and the school board. He is just a

wonderful man. I can't say anything but good about him."

Stan Jones coached the Grau children when they were judging for 4-H, is a neighbor of the Graus, and serves alongside Wesley as a deacon in the church. According to Stan, "Wesley cares for everyone. He cares for the community. He is on the beef board. If there is something that he believes in, he is there 100 percent and tries to do the right thing for everyone, not just for Wesley Grau. He is the most giving, caring person that you could ever ask for.

Family ties

Scott Shafer met Wesley in college. "He is a man of strong faith and very proud of his family," Scott affirmed. "When I think of Wesley, I know he puts his family first."

Many times, this is a deliberate choice. The Grau's son, Marcus, often reminded his family that "being busy means being under Satan's yoke." Marcus lost a battle to cancer in 2008, leaving behind a gaping hole in the fabric of Grau family life.

Wesley and Elnabeth grieved. "We know there are big holes in us. But we keep going. We remain faithful to Jesus Christ because we know we can go to those we

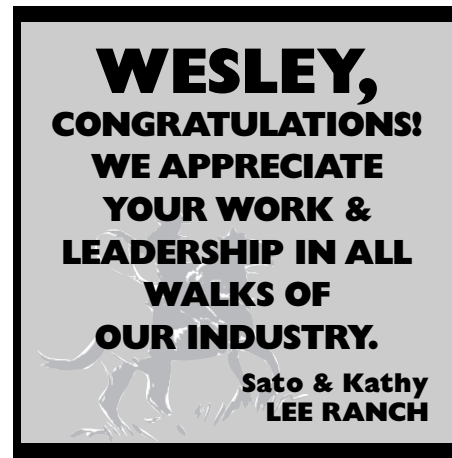
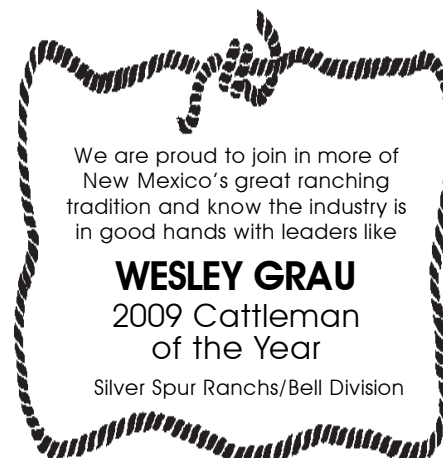
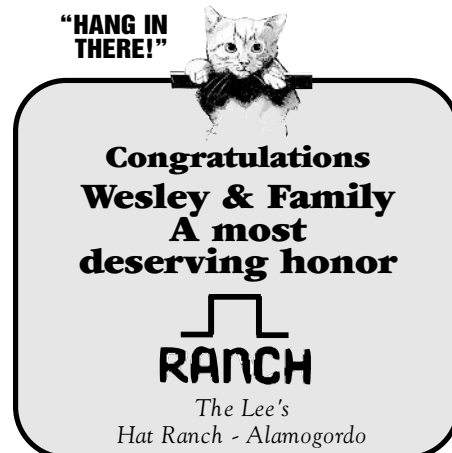
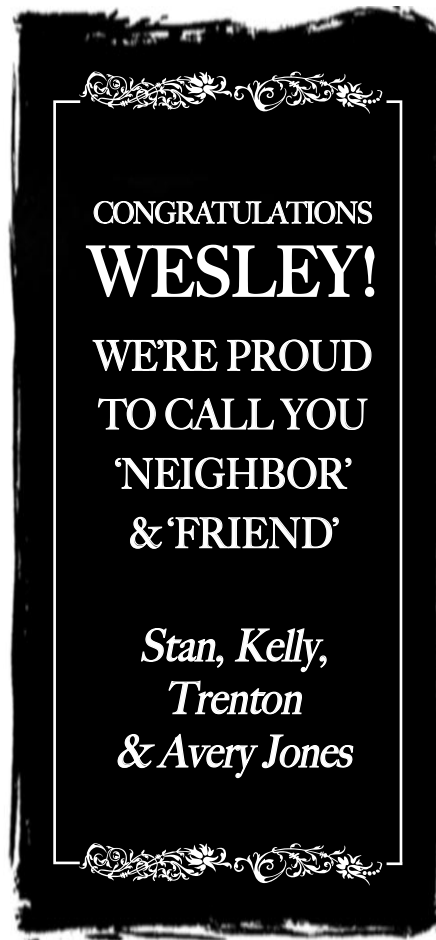
have lost when we leave this earth," Wesley stated simply.

So they set their priorities. The first is faith. The second is family. And the third is to supply good genetics for commercial producers.

Every summer, the Graus escape to the mountains of Colorado with their grandsons, Mason, Miles and Merit Grau and Brody and Cash Black. When they can get away, daughters Meghan Byrem and her husband, Blair, and Micah Black and husband Eric make the trip to the ranch or join in the fun in Colorado. "The boys come out to the ranch as often as they can, and help us brand and work cattle," related Elnabeth. "But it is nice to just get away and be with the boys without other distractions."

Other kids in the community have special relationships with Wesley and Elnabeth as well. Stan Jones recalled the time when his small daughter, Avery, began packing her overnight bags. When Stan asked her where she was going, Avery replied that she was moving to live with Wesley. "She had had all she wanted of the

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Wesley Grau

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Jones family," Stan laughed. "She knew that Wesley and Elnabeth would welcome her."

He continued, "We think a lot of all the Graus. They treat us like family. We are like family."

At home, Elnabeth leaves the house early for her job as counsellor at Texaco High School. "My biggest strength is that my wife is a counselor, so I get plenty of counseling," Wesley teased. As church music leader, Elnabeth also leads cantatas once or twice a year and according to her proud husband has developed a lot of local talent and shown others they they can actually carry a tune.

Wesley and Lane replaced about 60 miles of fence a couple of years ago because, as poet Robert Frost says, "good fences make good neighbors." The day the *Stockman* caught up with him, he had to leave mid-afternoon to get to church and lead music in a revival. After church, he had a meeting with an ag group, then had to be horseback on a neighbor's ranch at 6:00 a.m.

Another project which is claiming time is wind energy. "Renewable energy could be the newest frontier, especially for the east side of the state," Wesley noted. "On two million acres we have the wind capacity to produce 20 to 40 gigawatts of energy. That means that we could be the Saudi Arabia of renewable energy here in south-east New Mexico."

A lasting brand

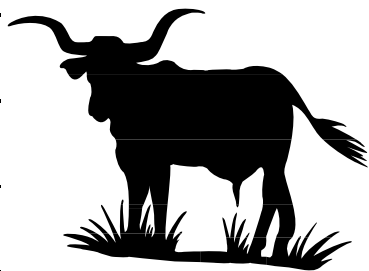
Though Wesley has grieved both a young brother and a beloved son and the passing of his parents, he is not defined by the hardships endured. Instead, grief has helped him remember that life is short. So he serves others. He gives with an open hand. He cares because that is who he is. Whether he is burning the mark of ownership onto a purebred Charolais calf or driving a four-wheeler with a grandson at Bennett Peak or simply helping a neighbor, Wesley makes his time count. And he makes sure to brand all of his life with the one symbol that will outlast it, the cross of Jesus Christ. □

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