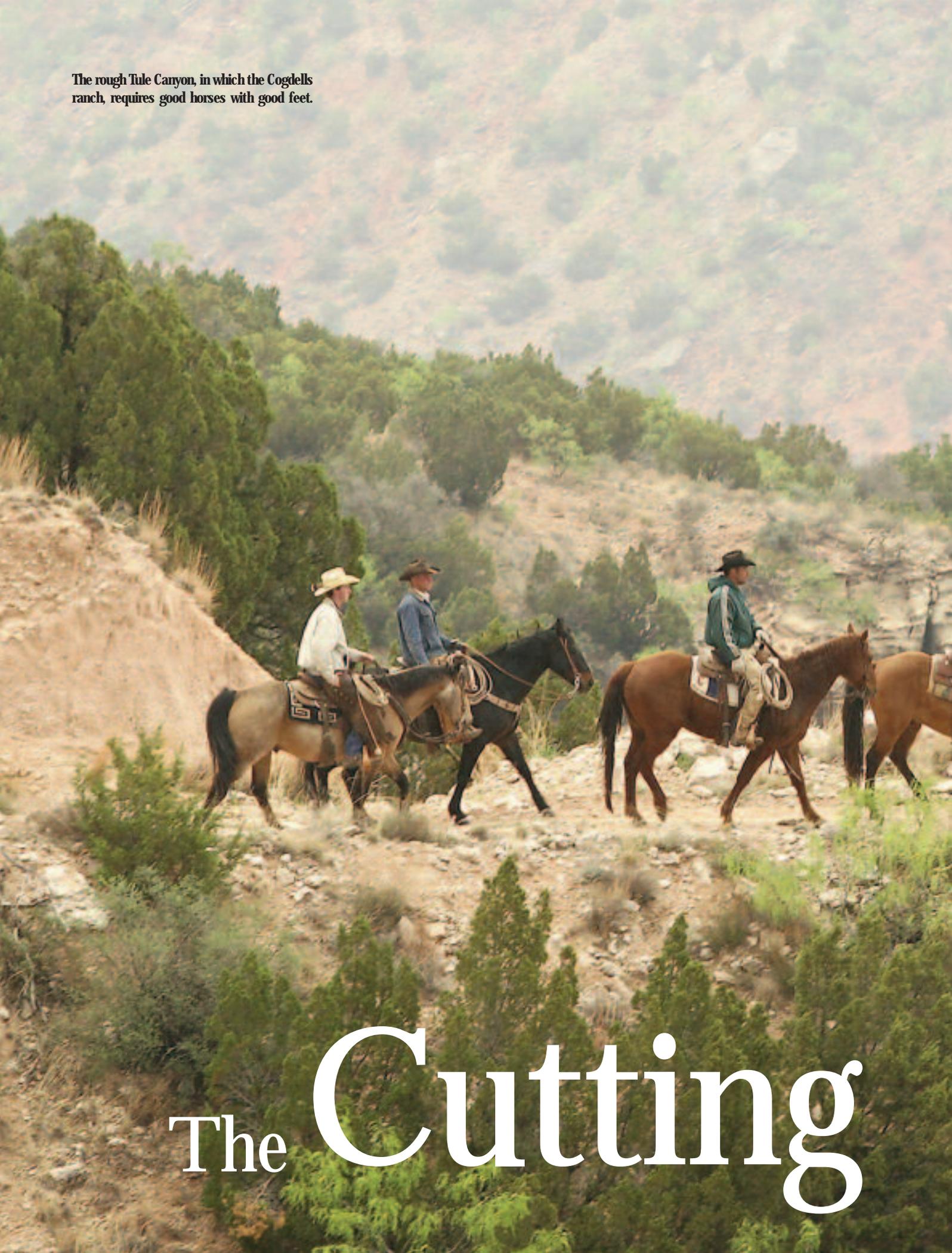


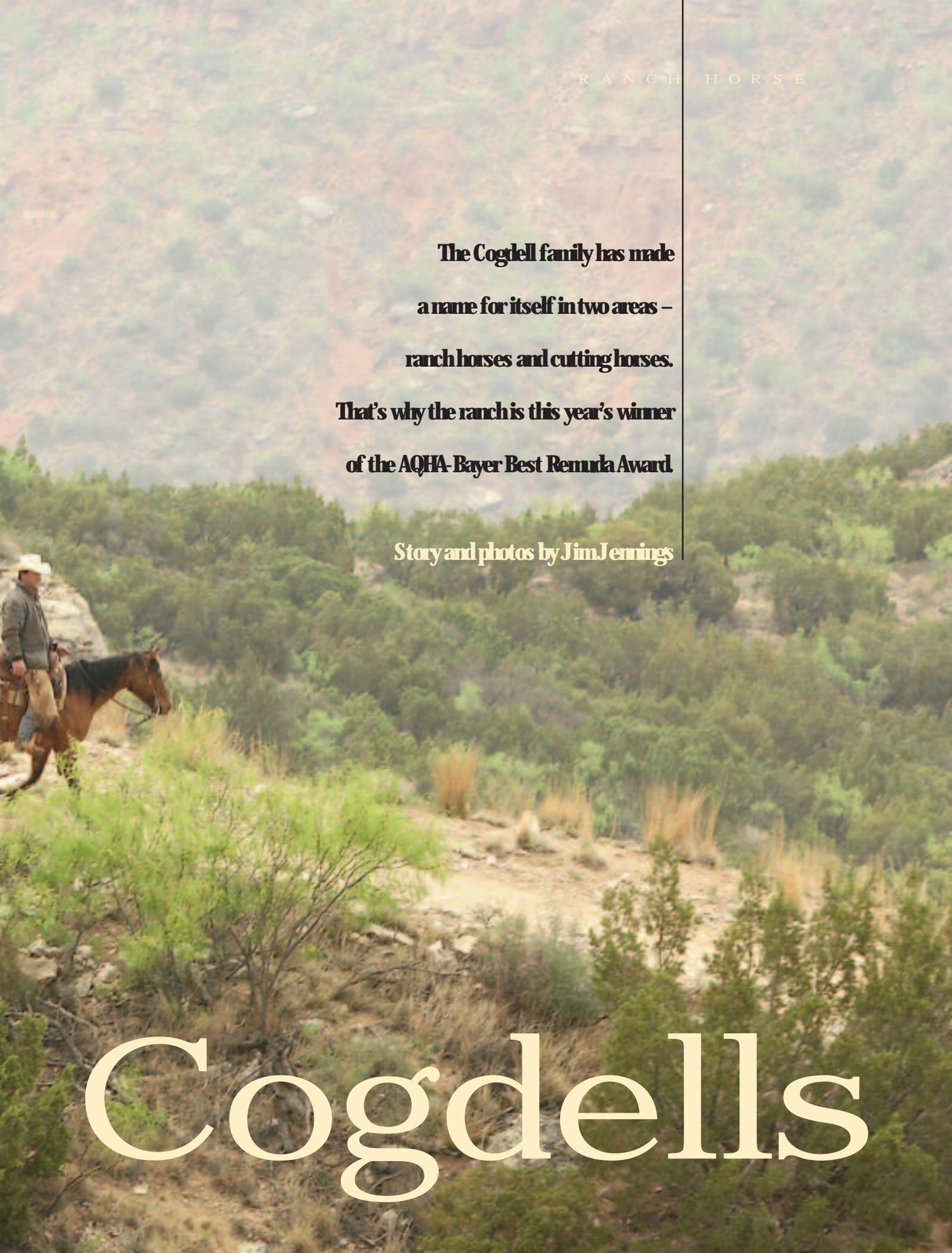
The rough Tule Canyon, in which the Cogdells ranch, requires good horses with good feet.

A photograph of three riders on horseback navigating a rocky, dirt trail in a rugged canyon. The riders are wearing cowboy hats and western attire. The horses are of various colors, including brown and black. The background features steep, rocky hillsides with sparse green vegetation and a large, reddish-brown rock formation in the distance.

The Cutting

**The Cogdell family has made
a name for itself in two areas –
ranch horses and cutting horses.
That's why the ranch is this year's winner
of the AQHA-Bayer Best Remuda Award.**

Story and photos by Jim Jennings



Cogdells

When there's work to be done, all the Cogdells are present. From left are Penny Cogdell Carpenter, Rank, Dick and Jim Cogdell.



BILLY COGDELL WAS BORN AND RAISED ON HIS FAMILY'S RANCH north of Snyder, Texas. He grew up horseback, showed his first cutting horse when he was 12 and won the first class he ever entered. It's debatable whether that was good or bad. He found himself hooked on the sport, and for the next eight years, he started taking his ranch horses to every cutting he could get to. But that all came to an end shortly after Billy turned 20.

Polio was rampant across the country in the early to mid-1950s, and Billy contracted the disease. It left him 98 percent paralyzed. As a result, the image of Billy Cogdell that most people remember is Billy sitting in his wheelchair at a cutting or a ranch rodeo. Billy died in 2003, but he left a legacy in both the ranching and cutting horse industries that continues today. His three sons and a daughter are carrying on the Cogdell name in both of those industries.

The Beginning

IN 1954, TEXAS WAS IN THE FIFTH YEAR OF A TERRIBLE DROUGHT. It was especially bad in West Texas, where day after day the sky turned brown with dirt picked up from the bare fields and pastures. But as D.M. Cogdell Sr. watched his ranch near Snyder suffer under the unrelenting wind and sun, he kept remembering when, as a youth, he had ridden across the Texas Panhandle plains. And, he remembered how lush the grass was up there. Of course, the Panhandle was suffering from the drought, too, but not as badly as some of the other areas of the state, so D.M. bought the 27,000-acre Tule Ranch, east of the small town of Tulia, and moved his cattle there.

Tule Ranch was named for Tule Creek, a small tributary that cut across the ranch through Tule Canyon and down into the Prairie Dog Town Fork of the Red River and Palo Duro Canyon. The canyon provided both water and protection from the weather, as well as some good grazing, while the

flat land up on top offered the hearty buffalo and gramma grasses. It was good cow country, and as soon as Billy recovered enough from his bout with polio, D.M. sent him to the Panhandle to take over that ranch.

D.M. died in 1964, and Billy and his brother, D.M. Jr., took over the ranching interests in the Panhandle. Their sister, Jonisue, operated the ranch at Snyder. Then, in the mid-1970s, Billy and D.M. Jr., both with growing families, split their inheritance, and each went out on his own. Billy and his wife, Bette, kept the original Tule Ranch, and were able to add more and more land. At the time of Billy's death, Tule Ranch encompassed more than 160,000 acres with approximately 3,000 mother cows.

Billy was not able to get horseback, but there was virtually nowhere on the ranch he couldn't get with his pickup. And as his children began to grow, he directed their efforts as each of them became a part of the ranch. Sons Rank, Dick and Jim, as well as daughter Penny, all learned to ride on one of the last horses Billy broke before the polio grounded him, and with direction from Billy on the sidelines, they all became good horsemen. But they also had good horses.

The Horses

D.M. COGDELL SR. HAD KNOWN THE VALUE OF A GOOD HORSE, and he planted the foundation for the Cogdell horses in 1951, when he made a trip to the King Ranch and bought 10 yearling fillies and a yearling stallion. The yearling stallion was by Wimpy, and D.M. Sr. named him Solis Cogdell. Later that year, D.M. Sr. went to the Waggoner Ranch at Vernon, Texas, and bought a son of Pretty Buck named Peppy Buck, and then he went down to see the Hankins brothers at Rock Springs, Texas. There he bought a daughter of King. That group of horses provided the basis for a top remuda, one that Billy and

his children have continued to develop, even until today.

Even though he was unable to ride, Billy never lost his love for a good cutting horse, and it was instilled in all four of his kids at an early age. They all began to show, almost as soon as they learned to ride, and all make their presence known in the cutting arena yet today. But it was probably back in 1978 that the Cogdell name rose to prominence in National Cutting Horse Association competition.

In 1977, while at the NCHA Futurity sale, Billy saw a little 13.2-hand mare by Doc's Lynx come through the ring. "No one wanted her because of her size," Billy was quoted as saying in a February 2000 *Quarter Horse Journal* article. "But I like little horses."

Billy purchased Lynx Melody and sent her to trainer Larry Reeder to ride. Reeder won the Futurity with a performance that is talked about yet today. His stirrups were in the dirt several times as the little mare got down low and worked each cow. "It was a sight," Billy said in the *Journal* article. "Larry is 6'2", and he was on this little bitty mare."

Although unknown at the time, Billy, when he bought Lynx Melody, had purchased a two-in-one package – Lynx Melody was in foal to Doc's Stormy Leo. Billy named the foal Docs Accident and immediately fostered it onto a Shetland mare so that nothing would interfere with Lynx Melody's training. However, Docs Accident also made a name for himself. He placed eighth in the 1981 NCHA Futurity and, during his career, earned almost \$43,000.

Lynx Melody went on to win the 1979 NCHA Derby and was the 1980 NCHA World Champion Mare. Her lifetime earnings were more than \$113,000.

Retired from the arena, Lynx Melody was brought home and placed in the broodmare band, where she produced foal

after foal that earned thousands of dollars in the cutting arena. Then, in 1996, she produced a filly by Peppys Boy 895, a stallion Billy owned by Vibrant Peppy by Peppy San Badger. Billy named the mare Shania Cee. In 1999, Shania Cee won the NCHA Futurity, making Lynx Melody the only mare ever to win the Futurity and produce a Futurity winner, and making Billy Cogdell only the second person to ever own two Futurity winners. Lynx Melody's foals have now earned more than \$1million in cutting competition.

Shania Cee finished her career with more than \$400,000 earned, and then she joined her mother in the Cogdells' broodmare band.

That broodmare band reflects the Cogdells' interest in the cutting arena, as well as in ranch horses, because to the Cogdells, they are one and the same. "We all love to ride cutting horses," says Billy's daughter, Penny Carpenter. "But cutting is a sport that came from the ranch, and we are continually cutting cattle in our ranching operations. We cut out dry cows, sort pairs, separate steer and heifer calves and cut out sick cattle. We are all trying to breed cutting horses, but many of our cutting horses are ranch horses."

An example of that is former ranch sire Maxi Lena. A son of Doc O'Lena out of a daughter of Gay Bar King, Maxi Lena's foals have earned more than \$850,000 in NCHA competition, but he has also sired six ranch horse and ranch rodeo champions. Maxi Lena died in 2002, but a number of his daughters are in the broodmare band. There are also several daughters of Peppys Boy 895, the sire of Shania Cee. Peppys Boy 895 is an all-around sire, with his get earning money in cutting, reining and working cow horse competition, as well as in the ranch horse arena.



Cogdell horses are probably best known for their prowess in the cutting arena, but they also get along well in the branding pen.

It takes a good horse to roust a bunch of crossbred cows out of the necks and draws of Tule Canyon.



Stallions used on the ranch today include Shadowcatchin Cattin by Cattin, Shiver Shake by Doc's Hickory, and Lucky Bottom Tom, a Doc Bar-bred horse that goes back to Gold King Bailey on the bottom.

After Billy died, the ranch was split among the four kids. Each of them continues to operate his share of Tule Ranch today, and, as before, all of them work together. As an example, Dick happens to own all three of the stallions to which his siblings are breeding their mares.

All of the stallions are pasture bred, with each turned out with a band of mares. All the foals are evaluated as to their abilities, and then a determination is made as to which ones to keep and which to sell. Some of the foals are at least tried in the cutting arena, while others are destined to futures as ranch horses. Fillies are also broken and evaluated. Some will go into training, some are returned to the broodmare band, and some are sold.

"The primary goals of the Tule Ranch remuda program are to produce good quality all-around ranch horses with the ability and breeding to also compete as cutting horses," says Penny. "Ranch horses and cutting horses are all chosen from the same group of colts. There is no separate group of horses designated for cutting horse prospects."

The Cogdells today operate their ranches just as their father did. In the rough Tule Canyon, there is no substitute for a good horse. Cattle are gathered and calves branded, all with horses, and in the fall, during shipping time, some cattle are driven close to 15 miles up and out of the canyon, where trucks can pick them up.

"Daddy always wanted to win the Best Remuda Award," Penny says, "because it encompassed everything that he spent his life doing – breeding and raising good horses. It's through his leadership that Tule Ranch has won it, and he certainly gets all the credit." ■



Until the rains started in late summer, it had been a long dry year for ranchers in the Texas Panhandle. But with lots of planning and pasture rotation, the Cogdells' broodmares managed to stay in pretty good shape.