

HILLINGDON RANCH

The Hillingdon Ranch located near Comfort, Texas is operated by Robin and Carol Giles and their son Grant. This is a 20,000 acre ranch with 800 acres owned by Robin and his family and the remaining acreage leased from more than 200 relatives and heirs of the original ranch.



The Hillingdon Ranch was established in 1887 by Alfred Giles, Robin's grandfather. Robin and his family have operated the ranch since 1959. They stock the ranch with Angus cattle, Angora goats and Rambouillet sheep. The stocking rate is evenly proportioned in thirds of cattle, sheep, and goats. Robin feels that this type of animal mix allows for use of forage that would otherwise be lost because of differing animal diet preferences.

Range condition and trend have shown vast improvements over the years due to planning, good decisions and grazing management techniques employed. When Robin began operating the ranch, there were many areas within each pasture that were in poor condition due to spot grazing. Presently good condition rangeland is more uniform across the ranch.

Big bluestem, Indiangrass, and little bluestem are prevalent over much of the ranch. Robin has learned how to graze and manage these species to get the most out of them and keep them increasing in the ecosystem.

The ranch realizes the value of their wildlife resources. A deer census is conducted annually on the ranch and the data is used to determine harvest numbers and to balance the buck:doe ratio to insure higher quality and appropriate numbers of deer to maintain on the ranch.

Improvements in range hydrology have mirrored the increase in overall range condition. Infiltration is high resulting in an increasing number of springs and increased spring flow of existing springs. Some springs that once dried up during the summer now flow year long.



The ranch is stocked at about 25 acres/animal unit/year. Eleven herds, with various mixes of cattle, sheep, and goats are rotated based on a decision deferment. Each herd has two to four pastures available for it at any one time. Brush and weed control is achieved biologically with goats and sheep. For example, when small ashe juniper begins to come into a pasture, goats are concentrated in that pasture during the dormant season to consume the juniper.

Robin and the family s interest extends to things other than ranching. Robin has coached 4-H Range Evaluation teams for nearly 30 years and has numerous state champion teams and 3 national champion teams.

Robin, Carol and Grant take pride in their range management on the Hillingdon Ranch. Robin has been a featured speaker promoting range management at numerous state and national meetings and the ranch has been the site of several state tours for various groups as well as a classroom for various university groups.

Finally, the Giles family loves the land and the resources that God has given them to take care of. The Texas Section, Society for Range management is pleased and proud to bestow the Outstanding Rangeland Management Award to the Hillingdon Ranch.

