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The Sky's the Limit

Johnny Arnold

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JOHNNY ARNOLD, LANDOWNER

The Sky's the Limit

If you first meet Johnny Arnold over the phone and talk for more than five minutes, you'll find yourself speaking with a Central Texas accent for the next week. And it's "Johnny" ---not Mr. Arnold. A Texas cattleman from Coryell County, near Gatesville, who when asked why he bought the Leet Pasture replied, "I just fell for it, I guess. I just love it. Not a doubt about it." Johnny continues, "There isn't a better place in the world to turn out steers. You fall and winter'm in Texas---get'm ready to go to gaining in the spring.



"You can look for a 200 to 250 pound gain on a 600 pound steer on ninety-day grass. That's two and a half pounds a day. Sometimes it's a little better. Last year it was awful dry---as dry as I'd ever seen it. Still, cattle do better in a dry year. It concentrates the nutrition. In wet years, the grass can get too washy. I started bringing steers into the Flint Hills fifteen years ago. Old man Tommy Winters, that's T.W. Winters, was a family friend and had joining property in Coryell

County. The Winters used to rail steers up to the grass in the Flint Hills. It's because of the Winters that my Dad,

I'll never forget how he would raise that left hand, point to the sky and say, 'Remember, Johnny, the sky's the limit, the sky's the limit.'

Mother (Shorty and Inez Arnold), and a partner (Frank Johnson) began to run cattle in Kansas, after seeing what the Winters family had done. I do business with little Tommy Winters to this day. David Winters, who is a son of T.W. Winters is Tommy's dad. They're sure good people.

"I was fourteen when I bought my first 20 cow-calf pairs. My dad went on the note for me. By 1990 or so I changed to stockers. The first year I

came to Kansas, I brought 600 head to the Flint Hills. That was 1997. This year I'll have around 4,500 head on grass up here. I run all native cattle, all steers. It's all I ever wanted to do.

"My mother and daddy wanted me to get an education and I went to college for two semesters. But it wasn't for me and my parents knew it too. We're real close. They're my best friends. When I decided not to go back to school, my daddy said, 'You'll never make it in the cattle business.' I guess he knew me well enough to know if he said that, I'd try as hard as I could to prove him wrong. My daddy had a stroke when he was 28 years old. It paralyzed his whole right side for life, but he never quit. He and my mother. I'll never forget how he would raise that left hand, point to the sky and say, 'Remember, Johnny, the sky's the limit, the sky's the limit.'

"After I came home, I started working in a sale barn--three sale barns. Met a lot of good people. I was

fortunate enough that people backed me, gave me a chance to get started. Young people this day and time will never make it without someone backing them and helping give them a chance.

"Years ago I set my goal to send 5,000 head to Kansas. Now I am setting that goal even higher. I don't know if I will ever be able to make it. It's hard. It is hard to find bluestem pastures. Pastures don't change hands very often here in the Flint Hills.

I'm looking forward to hosting the

Symphony on the Leet Pasture for a lot of reasons.

"I feel very fortunate to have my property selected for such a great annual family affair that celebrates the Flint Hills. My dream is to keep bringing steers to the Flint Hills and to continue to strive to be successful. That means taking care of the grass, that way we can all succeed. I like to see people succeed. I got that from my parents."

Johnny Arnold to Emily Hunter Connell



JOHNNY'S CATTLE, LEET PASTURE
Patty Reece