

## NewsWatch

## Texas rancher's wildlife conservation honored

## TEXOMA TALK

By J.T. SMITH and DAN CRUMMETT

**JOHN B. Brent** of the Anacahuita Ranch in Jim Hogg County, Texas, has received the Land Stewardship award from the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for excellence in wildlife conservation.

Brent purchased the ranch in 1999 from an absentee landowner during a severe drought that had begun in 1994.

Brent's first approach was to defer the land from livestock grazing since the drought and excessive stocking rates had taken a toll on the land. The native-mix tall-grass community that the rangeland was capable of producing had shifted to weak annual grasses, undesirable weeds and brush.

Brent worked with **Erasmio Montemayor**, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service district conservationist, and the Monte Mucho Soil and Water Conservation District to develop a long-range conservation plan aimed at restoring the ranch with a mix of tall

grass prairie and a healthy balance of open grasslands and brush composition. This would sustain a healthy population of wildlife, including white-tailed deer and bobwhite quail.

The South Texas rancher purchased necessary equipment to make range improvements. He also drilled a deep-water well at a central location on the ranch, and installed PVC pipe to build or restore nine wildlife-watering facilities. Five existing windmills were restored to working condition to better distribute water throughout the ranch for wildlife and other future cattle stocking.



**WILDLIFE HONORS:** Ann and John Brent have prolific wildlife on their ranch in Jim Hogg County, Texas. John has been honored with the Land Stewardship award from the Texas Chapter of the Wildlife Society for excellence in wildlife conservation.

Brent joined the efforts with the Randado Wildlife Management Co-op, which encompasses more than 35,000 acres of neighboring ranches that are managed to enhance wildlife habitats and produce trophy-quality white-tailed deer. Brent and Montemayor conducted annual aerial surveys of the deer population and developed deer harvest recommendations based on their survey.

Rainfall between 2002 and 2004 helped Brent begin to see results of his hard work in improving the ranch's overall range health. He plans on using prescribed burning to maintain open areas and the land's ecological health.

## Other newsmakers

**Stan Comer** has gone to work for Trans Ova Genetics of Sioux Center, Iowa, as area sales manager, covering Oklahoma and Texas, and providing client support across the Southeast.

Comer is a graduate of Oklahoma State University, where he was a member of the National Champion Livestock Judging Team. He and his family reside in Ardmore, Okla.

As area sales manager, he will work closely with Trans Ova Genetics Professional Service teams at regional centers in Crescent, Okla., and Centerville, Texas.

**Chris Breedlove**, manager of Olton Co-op Gin in Olton, Texas, will serve as 2008 president of the National Cotton Ginners Association.

**Curtis Griffith** of Morton, Texas, has been recognized as the Horace Hayden "National Cotton Ginner of the Year" for the past year. His family has been in the ginning business since 1945.

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