



# Fort Bridger third grade adopts the Hamilton Ranch

Photos courtesy of  
**BUTCH MORETTI**

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**DANNETTE EDELMAYER**

During the 2009-2010 school year, the Fort Bridger third grade class took part in an Adopt-A-Rancher program, through the Uinta County Conservation District. This is the first year for the program and, with the support of a great group of volunteers, teachers and students, we were able to make this program a huge success for everyone.

Richard and Carol Hamilton spent the school year exchanging letters and photographs with the Fort Bridger third grade class. The Hamiltons took the students on a journey to learn about life on their ranch from fall to spring roundup. They exchanged letters about the history of the ranch, vaccinations, branding, calving and much much more. Through this process, the students became familiar with the Hamiltons, their ranch animals and family pets, and learned about real-life experiences of life on a ranch.

After a school year of corresponding, the students were invited to meet their adopted family by spending the day at the ranch. With the help of neighbors and friends, the students were treated to a day full of



activities. Each class was assigned a group leader and off they went to experience life at the Hamilton ranch. Thank you, Barbara Moretti, Donna Cantlin, Bonnie Byrne and Dannette Edelmayer, for spending the day with the students maneuvering through the ranch.

The students took a wagon ride through the ranch, pulled by Wes Lupher's team of mules. They got to ride past the infamous Taco (the cow) and they saw a historical home on the ranch. Wes shared information about ranching with a team of mules and some of his family history. During the ride, they saw deer, geese and sandhill cranes. Thank you, Wes, Becky and Logan Lupher, for a fun and exciting experience!

The students, with the help of Chad Spackman, Casey Lamoreaux, Pat Potter and Kerri Sabey, each took turns running the hydraulics on the ranch backhoe and tractor. Nancy Hamil-

ton showed the students Casey's barbed wire art, the pigeons and the equipment inside the ranch Quonset. Thank you, Chad, Casey, Pat, Nancy and Kerri!

The Hamiltons wanted the students to see additional ranch animals on their visit, and with the help of neighboring ranchers and friends, they were able to make this possible. Marty Watkins brought his two mares and foals to share with the students; Ben Horton brought his miniature horse, jackasses and goats. Chad Spackman brought a few of his orphaned calves; and Darius Eardley brought his ewe, lamb and yearling. Ginger Walker and Deanna Behunin helped the students learn about these animals and let the students walk the yearling. Ginger and Deanna also showed

the students ranch gear, saddles, western clothing and calf warming lamps. Thank you, Marty, Ben, Chad, Ginger and Deanna, for helping make this a memorable event for the students!

By this time, we had all worked up a big appetite. Thanks to Mindy Lamoreaux, we were served up a hot lunch and treated to Carol's homemade cinnamon rolls. After filling our bellies, we were off to explore more activities at the ranch.

Jean Henry and Carol talked to the students about cattle identification, health, by-products and instincts. The students also got to meet the family dogs (Yip and JR) that they had read about during the school year. To top the day off, the students each got to take a ride on a saddle horse, lead by Cindy Hickey and Emilene France. Thank you, Jean, Carol, Cindy and Emilene!!

At the end of the day, the event

was a huge success, with much thanks to Carol and Richard Hamilton for opening their ranch and life to all of us. This is a wonderful program for students to obtain hands-on agricultural experience.

Debra Fisher of Fort Bridger Elementary said, "We had an amazing experience with the Hamiltons. We all learned a lot about ranch life and the information they shared with us directly correlated with our state standards in Social Studies."

If you are interested in learning more about the Uinta County Conservation District Adopt-A-Rancher program, please give Dannette Edelmayer a call at 307-747-8224.

