By Ida D. Jeffries

Leaning against the red pickup he'd driven into the open field, rancher Dan Anthony tugged his straw hat to shade more sun from his eyes. Still, he squinted more from habit than from watching three cowboys give chase to three heifers, strays from the herd.

"They like that all right," murmured Anthony, "chasing 'em, roping 'em and tying 'em. That's the sport of it all."

Each horseman sped after a separate stray, only one made his catch on the first try. Eventually though, all three animals were roped and brought to the red truck, were coaxed or pulled into the chute they had already for the cattle; they learn from experienced dogs.

That one there's not but a year old."

Suddenly, Quaglino's ranch manager, Robert Rainey Sr., signaled it was time to begin. The cowboys dismounted and positioned themselves near the corral chute, where the cattle were driven in bunches and released one at a time. Anthony's son Leonard flipped the chute gate over the first cow's head. Moments later, his bright red shirt, so easy to spot while he was rounding up the herd, was flecked with hoof-churned mud and the sticky, white, worm medicine.

The sky was cloudy. Noon's sunrays streamed onto the men, who ignored the heat as they worked swiftly and methodically. Roundup and chute work was not new to them. It was always hot, dirty work. Even the cattle seemed to sense the urgency of getting the ordeal over with, but the herd still had its stubborn members.

"Kept the flies down," he quipped.

The whole operation appeared a bit rough on the cattle, who were even bickered in the corral by their own kind. But once an animal was vaccinated or wormed and let through the chute, it headed swiftly for open pasture, looking none the worse for the trial. Only a few cows lingered nearby, mooing mournfully. "There're calling out to those young bulls peppers up there," said Rainey. "Tomorrow, when I visit the ranch, they'll still be calling for their little calves. Cows are pretty near human in that respect."

Lloyd Kriling of Amite explained how his employer, Amite Livestock Company, would send a truck at day's end to transport the old cows and young bulls. "They'll be hauled in, tagged for tomorrow's sale, then put in a pen with feed and water."

Kriling, who'd been active in morning roundup and was now helping with chute work, said he and another company employee wouldn't charge for their day's work.

"We'll make our commission off the sale of this beef. Sometimes we help with roundups like this once a week and have even gone as far as Baton Rouge and Liberty, Miss., but mostly for ranch owners whose cattle are sent to our company's regular sales. Tomorrow's sale, for instance, will be our weekly one—about 750 head will be sold at the rate of about one a minute.

"Those bull calves'll wind up going out West—probably California or Wyoming. Order buyers will get 'em and ship them to places with feedlots 'til they reach about 1,000 pounds. Order buyers are individuals who buy and ship cattle to the real owner or buyer, who can't travel to numerous local sales. "A lot of ranchers around here don't fool with steers," commented Keating, pausing from his vaccination chores. "They just sell their bull calves for veal."

Nodding his head, ranch owner Quaglin told how, eight years ago, when he started developing his Folsom spread, he'd hoped for heifer calves to increase the herd. Before long, he was counting on an equal number of bull calves which could be sold to help meet ranch expenses.

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Watching summer roundup progress, the businessman-cattlemens mind wandered to another season, winter. Soon, he'd engaged both Rainey and Calmes in discussing new pastures that had been cleared and were to be planted in rye and oats. Quaglino and Calmes had spent many weekends bulldozing those 100 acres. The five-day-a-week city dwellers had no trouble explaining bulldozer tactics to make a good pond. The Circle Q has eight clear ponds, three man-made.

"Engine noise doesn't panic the cattle," stressed Quaglino. "Jeeps, trucks, bulldozers; they're used to them more than horses, which are seen mostly at roundups."

"When I started my dairy farm on 10 acres 34 years ago, I bought land at $100 an acre," broke in Rainey, who'd begun reminiscing on pre-machinery days. "That same land's going for more than $440 an acre now. Yeah, back then, men turned their cattle in the woods; weren't any pastures or fences. People've bought it all up, and now it's prime ranchland."

For the cowboys and state livestock men, the roundup lasted till after 6 p.m. Fifty-seven head, 44 bull calves and 13 old cows, had been cut from the herd, over 250 strong. Keating and Bickham's tabulation sheet ready to be mailed into Baton Rouge showed 52 heifers, age 3-6 months, vaccinated for brucellosis.

For Quaglino, ranchman and businessman, roundup wasn't over until the next day, when he received receipts from the Amite Livestock Company and learned the pleasant news that some of his best bull calves, about 250 pounds and under, had been sold at 37¢ cents a pound.