

Women of the Range: Women's Roles in the Texas Beef Cattle Industry

Elizabeth Maret



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Women of the Range: Women's Roles in the Texas Beef Cattle Industry Elizabeth Maret Women may not fit the common image of a rancher, but on the range and in the ranch office women are at home. With their parents, children, or spouses—or alone—women own, manage, and do the daily work of ranching, as they have since pioneer days. Increasingly, they also fill the productive roles of the highly technological industry growing up around beef cattle.

Women of the Range describes the roles of women in the Texas cattle industry of the past, the present, and the likely future. Based on a decade of interviews, observation, and data analysis, Elizabeth Maret, a sociologist and rancher, tells the story of the women who serve as an often unpaid labor force in this classic American enterprise. Through profiles of typical (and some atypical) women, with photographs she took of them at work, Maret shows how women serve not only as "keepers of the land," but also as a force for modernization in the cattle industry.

The women she shows include a cattle fitter, sale barn manager, and herd health veterinarian. They are owners and managers of historic family ranches. They write computer software for planning optimal crossbreeding operations, they run equipment in artificial insemination companies, and they encourage industry emphasis on nutrition and consumer interests.

Women have always been there, Maret shows, participating in ranching and the cattle industry as silent but active partners. Maret's portrait of their involvement and analysis of its significance will fascinate readers with an interest in ranching, social history, women's studies, and the sociology of work.

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