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The Rosalia Ranch of the Gottsch Cattle Company

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PORTRAIT 99S
Don Wolfe

The Rosalia Ranch of the Gottsch Cattle Company

From Cassoday to Latham with Rosalia in between, eastern Butler County is prime Flint Hills ranching country. Over the years the Rosalia vicinity has been home to a number of major ranching operations, including, among others, the Nuttles, the Dunns, the Liggetts, and the Jahrens. Added to that list in recent years is the Gottsch Cattle Company, comprising among its enterprises ranches, feedlots, and commodity trading.

Bob Gottsch, founder of the company, was born at Kennard, Nebraska, in 1926. A veteran of World War II, Gottsch started what would in time become one of the nation's premiere livestock organizations in 1956 when he leased a 2,000-head cattle feedyard near Omaha, feeding the cattle himself with a team of horses and a wagon. Over the next few decades, he expanded dramatically, adding other feedlots in Nebraska and Kansas that had a capacity of over 100,000 head. In the mid-1980s the company, which now included his sons, began to add ranchland to its operations. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the Gottsch Cattle Company had ranches and feedyards in Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Louisiana, and Texas.



Bob Gottsch, astute businessman, died in Omaha on June 28, 2002, at the age of seventy-five. He was also a colorful character, as described in this excerpt from his biography, *Never Back Down: Bob Gottsch, The Business of Life*.

Bob Gottsch was a hell-raiser. If you called him a liar, he'd knock you on your butt. He wasn't a big man, but he was square cut and bull strong, with live-wire eyes. Hard work was his religion. He'd work you into the ground any day of the week—every day

of the week. He'd bang drinks with you until you were passed out on the floor, and he'd get up the next morning and do it all over again. Thrift drove him; he'd haggle over the price of a gallon of gas or a McDonald's hamburger. He liked nothing better than beating you out of the cost of lunch. But after he'd scrambled for pennies, he'd go all in on the cattle market. If you got crossways with him in commodities, you'd better hang on tight, because he'd take you for a ride. People who called his bluff found out they shouldn't have; he never bluff.

The Rosalia Ranch, managed by Bill Oates, is described thus by the Gottsch Cattle Company: "If there's a place on earth that was made for raising cattle, it's here—in the wide-open country of the Flint Hills." Much of the ranch's 10,000 acres was once part of the historic Jahren Ranch northeast of Rosalia. Over the space of a year some 12,000 stocker cattle will come to the ranch for backgrounding before being sent on for finishing at one of the many Gottsch feed yards.



Symphony in the Flint Hills, Inc. is grateful to the Gottsch Cattle Company for providing a beautiful setting for the 2014 concert among the spectacular vistas of the Rosalia Ranch. For more information on the Gottsch Cattle Company, see Never Back Down: Bob Gottsch, The Business of Life, Omaha: Legacy Preservation, LLC.

Images courtesy of Family and Employees of Gottsch Cattle Company