

KACHE

THE REAL-LIFE COWBOY

By Laura Fuchs

Fixing fences, doing ultrasounds, herding cattle—it's all in a day's work on the ranch.

When you think of a cowboy, you might think of a ruggedly well-dressed man riding his horse into the sunset. The reality is a bit sweatier! There still is a lot of horseback riding—but into the sunrise more often than the sunset. Besides riding horses, being a real cowboy also means fixing fences, branding cattle, and feeding, herding, and even helping cows give birth.

Kache B., 15, from Texas, USA, is a real cowboy. "I see a cowboy as a person who is working hard out in the country," he says. "The world sees cowboys as boots and spurs."

Kache knows that being a cowboy isn't glamorous. He spends 30–40 hours a week during his summers working on a ranch owned by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that his dad manages. At the end of the day, he is often dusty, dirty, and drained.





LONG HOURS AND SORE MUSCLES

Hard work is the theme of cattle ranching. Almost everything on the ranch requires long hours and sore muscles, and for Kache, it's all worth it. "Ranching has helped me see the world from a different perspective," Kache says. Putting in the effort to raise cattle helps him appreciate the land, food, and the value of a job well done.

Hard work isn't easy—that's why it's called hard! But for Kache, ranching comes with a great sense of accomplishment. Kache loves helping the cattle every day and says that there isn't much that's more rewarding than knowing the cows are happy, healthy, and safe.

And what Kache does on the ranch actually matters. Last summer he developed a grazing plan for the cattle, and two summers ago he helped build and repair over two miles of fence. Fencing is Kache's least favorite ranch chore, especially when it's hot outside. "It feels like it will never end." As Kache's dad explains, "There are parts of the job you love and there are parts of the job you love when they are over."

Even though it sometimes feels never-ending, Kache doesn't mind fencing too much, because it keeps the cows safe. Plus, "fencing helps me stay in shape for football and track," he says. Some of the work on the ranch (like riding horses and wrestling cattle so they can be branded) is more fun than other work, but Kache says he likes to learn about and do it all.

FAITH ON THE RANCH

Life on a cattle ranch is both stressful and faith-building. One time they needed to plant oats to feed the cattle. Kache and the other ranch hands were ready to plant—there was just one problem. "It was really dry and hot and there was no rain for the oats." Kache says. "My dad asked us to pray for rain. After a few days, we got that rain. The oats were able to grow, and we were able to have food for our cattle."

Things don't always work out the way they hope, but that doesn't mean the Lord's arm of mercy isn't still extended (see 2 Nephi 9:14). Kache says, "There was a cow this last summer that needed a C-section. We pulled the first calf out and it ended up being twins." They both died not long after



the C-section. "Seeing them die was hard," said Kache, but he is learning to trust God even when things don't work out. "If we are strong and stay true to the gospel, we will be rewarded in the end."

GROWING AND LEARNING

The ranch is beautiful with rolling hills and spectacular views. The land is both awesome and intimidating. "You have to show respect for the land," says Kache. Sometimes it is difficult being so reliant on the land. On tough days a desk job might seem like a safer career option, but Kache is determined to become a rancher. "Ranching has helped me appreciate all that the Lord has made for us. He gave us this world to use so that we can grow and learn."

Cowboys don't just have to be good with animals; they also need to be veterinarians, nutritionists, farmers, builders, and planners. Kache's dad went to graduate school to become a ranch manager. The challenge of learning so many skills is part of what makes being a cowboy so cool. "You have to work to get what you want," says Kache.

This work ethic has pushed Kache to be strong on the ranch and in his faith. "Ranching has shown me how important it is to be strong, especially during hard times," he says. "Things can be difficult, but we are able to push through it with the Lord's help."



THE FACTS ABOUT COWBOY BOOTS

Have you ever wondered why cowboy boots look the way they do? It's not for fashion; it's for function. Cowboy boots are built so that they stay on when you're working in the mud. When you're riding a horse, though, they come off fairly easily. That's why they have a heel—so that if the horse bucks the rider, the heel and the boot get caught in the stirrup and the rider falls off the horse shoeless. If they were wearing regular shoes, they might get their foot caught in the stirrup and be dragged by the horse!





"EVERY LITTLE KID WANTS TO GROW UP AND BE A COWBOY. BUT IT TAKES A LOT OF WORK. WITH KACHE, WE ARE SEEING THE DESIRE TURN INTO SOMETHING REAL."—KACHE'S DAD



OFF THE RANCH

When he is not on the ranch, Kache keeps busy. He's on the football team, does online seminary, runs track, and plays the clarinet in his school's band. Even though his busy school schedule is almost relaxing compared to ranching, Kache says, "I miss the ranch a lot during school."

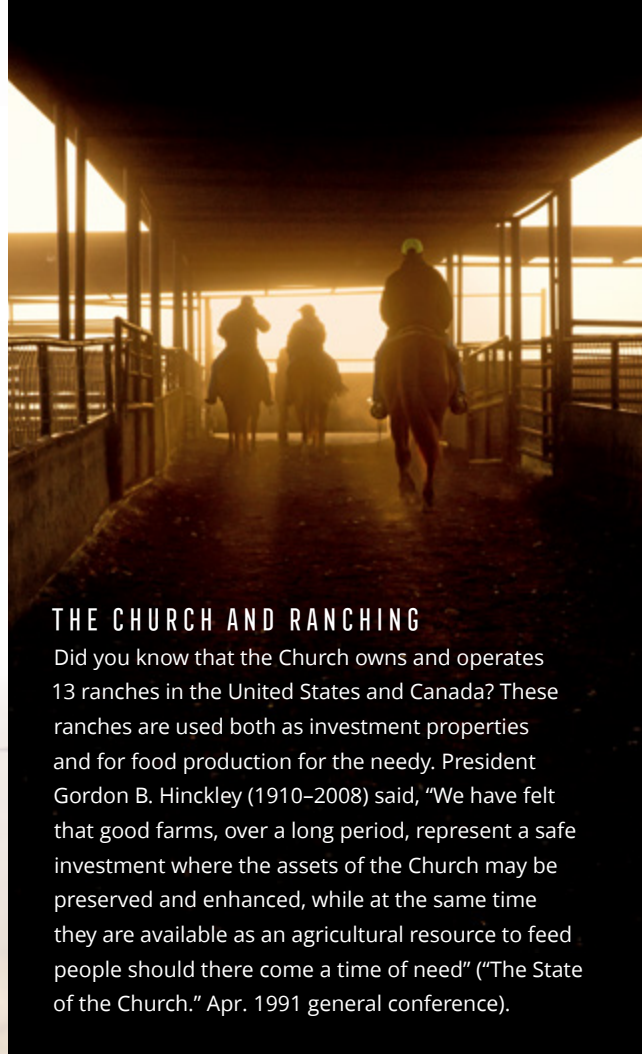
Kache's branch covers two massive counties, so there aren't many members where he lives. "Being the only member of the Church in my school is a little hard sometimes, but it shows me how important it is to have and keep high standards." Working on the ranch has taught him to do what's right on and off the ranch, no matter who is watching.

Thankfully, Kache has found a lot of great friends. "After my friends learned about my standards and beliefs, they respected them. Some of my friends even raised their standards and tried to become better people." Kache's friends have not only been lifted by his example, but he has learned from them too. "I have good friends who are from other Christian faiths—in fact those are my best friends. They have shown me that you don't have to be a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to be a good person."

WORDS TO LIVE BY

Whether on or off the ranch, Kache lives by the same motto: "Work hard to get what you want and always be willing to learn and try new things." So, when his alarm goes off at 5 a.m. in the middle of summer, Kache gets excited to put his boots on and get to work. **NE**

The author lives in Utah, USA.



THE CHURCH AND RANCHING

Did you know that the Church owns and operates 13 ranches in the United States and Canada? These ranches are used both as investment properties and for food production for the needy. President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) said, "We have felt that good farms, over a long period, represent a safe investment where the assets of the Church may be preserved and enhanced, while at the same time they are available as an agricultural resource to feed people should there come a time of need" ("The State of the Church." Apr. 1991 general conference).

