

Modern cattle theft cases harder to crack than past

United Press International
FORT WORTH — The Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, dedicated to the investigation of livestock theft, has accounted for 600 stolen head of cattle with one arrest, but an official says the cases are getting harder to crack.

"Technology has made a real difference in cattle rustling. These goose-neck trailers are so big anymore, you can take 20 or 30 head at one time," said Don C. King, general manager of the Fort Worth-based TSCRA.

"And the distances are so great these days. You can pick up a load of cattle, hit the interstate and be hundreds of miles away in no time," he said.

King said the recent arrest of Roger Allen Marlow, 49, of Hagarville, Ark., on charges of cattle theft was a good example of how a modern rustler could combine better equipment, bet-

ter roads and erratic laws to clear a quarter million profit.

When Marlow was arrested at the end of April he admitted stealing almost 450 head of cattle in Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas over the past two years. TSCRA inspectors have since linked him to another 150 head of stolen cattle and say the total could go higher.

Marlow admitted stealing cattle as far away as Ellsworth, Kansas, and Woodward, Okla., and transporting them to a holding area in his hometown about 60 miles east of the Oklahoma border on I-40.

"Rustlers today have better trucks than you and I do. They keep all the the licenses in order, the lights working. They stay under the speed limit so they don't draw anybody's attention," King said.

"(Marlow) was careful about it," he said. "He didn't steal any-

thing in his home state, so he didn't raise any suspicion among local agents. Arkansas doesn't have a branding law or an inspection law, so it was almost impossible to trace the stolen cattle."

King said many of the cattle were sold openly in sales barns in Arkansas and some already had been slaughtered by the time agents broke the case. The average price per head was about \$350, King said.

King said only Texas and New Mexico have tough requirements at the point of sale that could ease tracing of stolen animals. At Texas cattle auctions

brand inspection is required and vital information — such as color and special markings — is recorded.

Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana, however, have no such laws, which King said made finding stolen animals nearly impossible.

King said in his 20 years with the TSCRA cattle rustling had not diminished. He said last year the privately funded group developed 195 cases of livestock theft — of which 92 came to trial. He estimated that last year more than \$1 million worth of cattle were stolen.



Creamy days

staff photo by Mike Davis

Leslie McKinzey, freshman petroleum engineering major from Donna, and Elizabeth Sutton, a freshman finance

major from East Bernard, enjoy ice cream outside the Creamery on a hot, summer-like Wednesday.

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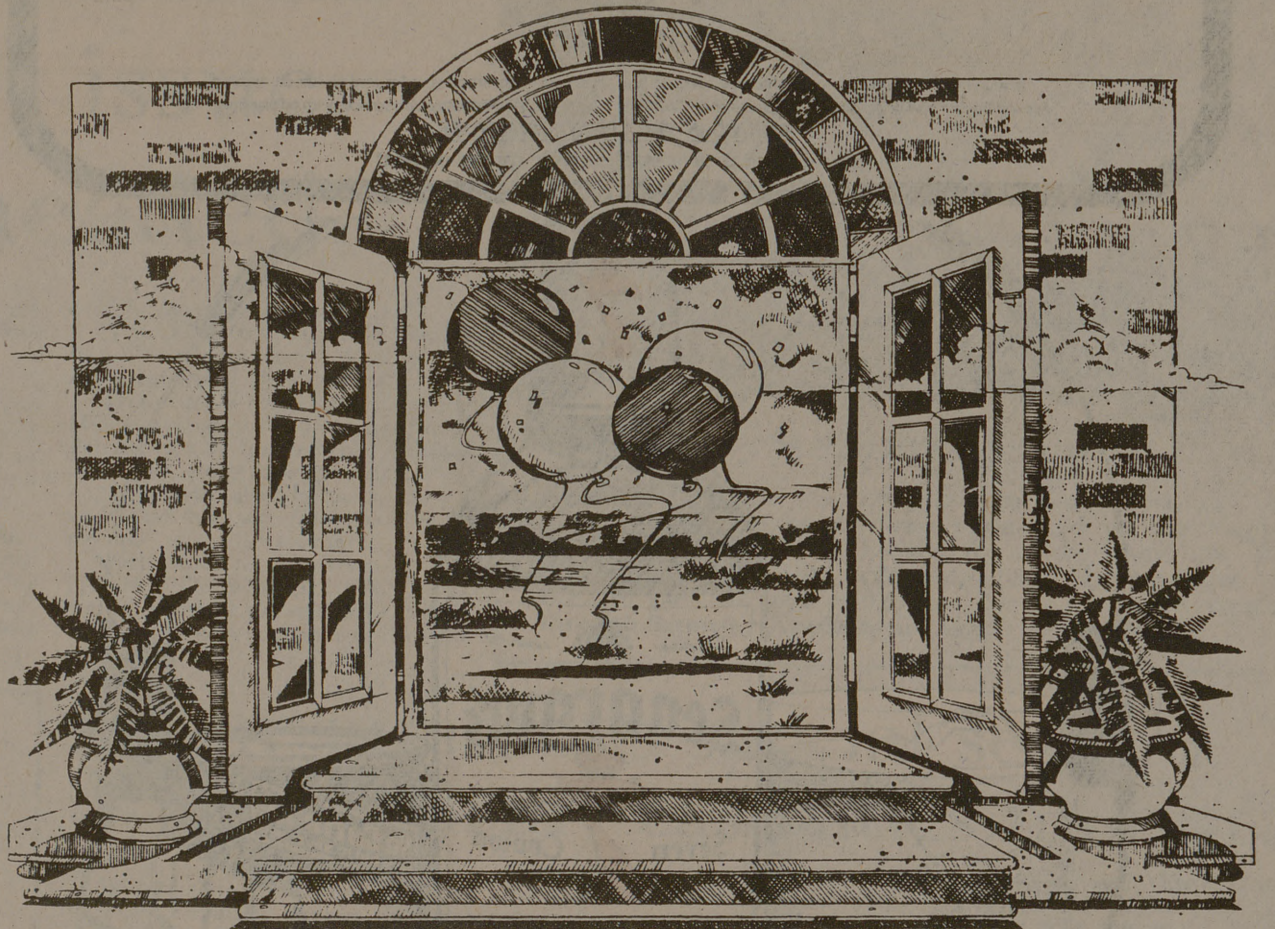


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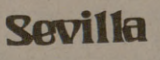
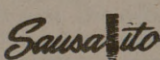

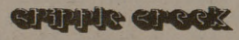
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