

CASE STUDY:

Andy Popp, Popp Farms

Ranch Overview:

Popp Farms is a family-run operation located near Gainesville, Texas, managed by second-generation farmer and rancher Andrew Popp. Originally a conventional grain farm focused on milo, corn and soybeans, the operation has gradually transitioned into a livestock-based system. Andrew took over management in the early 2000s, choosing to pivot away from annual grain production toward a year-round livestock and grazing enterprise that better fits his family's lifestyle and long-term goals. Today, the operation primarily runs cattle and goats across a mix of owned and leased land, with an emphasis on no-till practices and soil health.

“A plowed field looks pretty, but a field full of mixed species—different heights and textures — tells a story of what’s happening below ground. You have to be wired a little differently to get your satisfaction from knowing what you’re improving in the soil instead of just what people see above it.” — Andy Popp

Regenerative Journey:

Popp's shift toward regenerative agriculture began around 2012, when he first adopted no-till practices learned through an NRCS program. Intrigued by the soil and economic benefits, he began experimenting with cover crops and rotational grazing, becoming one of the early adopters of regenerative methods in his area.

In the early 2020s, he added goats to his system to help reduce chemical use and diversify grazing impact. “Where I have goats, I’ve been able to cut out most of my herbicide use,” Popp explains. Electric fencing has been key to making multi-species grazing successful, and he’s even found that the infrastructure helps keep feral hogs out.

His participation in Noble Research Institute's Monitoring, Measuring, and Managing (3M) project has further deepened his understanding of soil and water function. The on-ranch research site includes soil moisture probes, weather monitoring, and water quality sampling. The collaboration already yielded useful insights — like identifying and correcting a pond with poor water quality.

He joined the project to gain data-driven insight into his land's performance, saying “It's information to help us run our operation more efficiently and make better decisions for the future.”



Stewardship & Ranch Management Philosophy:

- **Believes profitability and stewardship must go hand in hand:** “If I just needed fast money, I’d choose a different occupation.”
- **Prioritizes soil biology and the long-term productivity of his land over short-term yields.**
- **Advocates for staying open-minded and adaptable:** “Regenerative ag isn’t for everyone — but if you’re willing to learn and give it time, it pays off.”
- **Focuses on family and quality of life — structuring work around family time rather than the other way around.**



Scan the QR code
to read more about
Andy Popp's.



Scan the QR code
to learn more about
the 3M project.