

CASE STUDY:

Annette & Mark Thomas, Thomas Land & Cattle

Ranch Overview:

Annette and Mark Thomas manage Thomas Land & Cattle, a family livestock operation in north-central Oklahoma that integrates cattle and sheep across diverse pastures. The first-generation ranchers started their careers in agribusiness before realizing their dream of managing a ranch of their own. Once a conventional grazing enterprise, their ownership has evolved the ranch into a regenerative management system built on soil health, water conservation and plant diversity.

Thomas Land & Cattle reflects a balance of practicality and purpose. What began as curiosity about soil and grazing efficiency has grown into a model of resilient land stewardship — one that reduces input costs, improves water infiltration and builds resilience through healthy soil biology.

“Taking care of the land is really taking care of ourselves. When the soil thrives, everything else — our animals, our finances, even our mindset — thrives too.” — Annette Thomas

Regenerative Journey:

The couple's introduction to regenerative agriculture came gradually. Small, low-risk experiments — adjusting grazing rotations, trying cover crops and cutting back on tillage — revealed noticeable changes in forage quality and soil condition. Those early successes encouraged deeper exploration and eventually led to their involvement in Noble Research Institute's Monitoring, Measuring, and Managing (3M) Project.

Through the project, researchers installed sensors and soil probes to measure water infiltration, moisture, and biological activity across their pastures. For the Thomases, seeing scientific data confirm what they'd already observed on the land was deeply rewarding.

“It's encouraging to see the numbers back up what our eyes have been telling us for years,” says Annette.

The project's holistic approach also includes economic tracking and well-being interviews, which the couple views as a refreshing acknowledgment that ranch success isn't measured by yields alone.



Stewardship & Ranch Management Philosophy:

- **Soil-first mindset:** Every management choice begins with how it will affect soil structure, moisture and biological life.
- **Diversity builds resilience:** Running both cattle and sheep creates a balanced grazing impact and more stable income.
- **Continuous learning:** They actively engage in workshops, research collaborations, and peer networks to refine regenerative techniques.
- **Holistic well-being:** They see clear connections between healthy soil, animal vitality, financial steadiness, and human health.



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Andy Popps.



Scan the QR code
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the 3M project.