

Biography of Ben Work:

It was just another day... May 17, 1971. I was the second child born (feet first) to George and Elaine Work. George a third generation rancher/farmer, and Elaine a school teacher. I have a six year older sister Jody and a three year younger sister Colleen.

I went to a one room school named Pleasant Valley k-5 grade. There were 18 kids the height of attendance. From there I went to town (Paso Robles) for junior high and high school.

I was active in 4-H and a little bit of FFA during those years. I graduated high school in 1989.

I then briefly went to Cal Poly SLO but was learning about Holistic Resource Mgt. at the same time and found more value in it so decided to join the HRM degree program.

I was able to help on the ranch while taking the classes so there was a lot of hands on learning.

In 1992 I reconnected with a class mate (my now wife) in a Spanish class at our local jr. college. We got married in March of 1993.

At that time and still today my wife and I run a 200 head commercial cow calf operation, no till farm 1000 acres of dry-land grain, operate a recreational guided horse back riding program, and a guided hunting program. Together with our children and Grandchildren we continue to operate with the goal of passing down the farm. This will take proper and careful family planning, and land management to achieve this goal.

In April of 1995 our first daughter was born. Jan. of 1997 our second daughter was born then in Feb. of 1999 our son was born. We had them all at home with a midwife.

Around 2000 I was elected to the Pleasant Valley school board where I served 2 1/2 terms. The school is no longer a 1 room and there were apx.146 k-8 students. I also served on our local Resource Conservation District board and the San Luis Obispo Cattlemen's board.

In 2011 2 weeks after my 40th birthday I was in a life changing accident here on the ranch. I suffered an incomplete spinal cord injury due to a conflict between myself and a ranch motorcycle that bucked me off. Neck surgery and years of rehab followed. Thank the powers to be it was not worse. Wheelchair for six months, had to relearn to walk, feed myself etc etc. My young family and aging parents rose to the occasion and kept most everything going as best they could.

Looking back today: My Dad has always been progressive in his field. My Mom also. I was one of the first kids born in SLO co. with Dad in the delivery room and Lamaze training. My Dad also was one of the early ranchers to learn and utilize artificial insemination in cattle. He was one of the first no till farmers in the area and was a pilot ranch with the Department of Fish and Games 580 program. He also introduced our family to Holistic Management in the early 80's which has probably had the biggest influence on me. This is only a partial list of the many progressive things that I have been lucky enough to be a part of and what makes a large part of who I am today.

In closing, in farming and ranching there is a lot of planning, monitoring and replanning. My parents taught me that relationships are vital to a community whether a couple, family, or community and communication is key. I came in feet first to the world but feel ready to dive in to this next venture.