



Al Green (left) and farm manager Gale Harris, Broomfield, Colo., ranch in close proximity to Denver and Boulder. "You can't stop progress, so you have to learn to get in tune with it, make more out of what you have left," Green says. CAB fits into that equation.

Story & photos by  
**STEVE SUTHER**

Green is more than a surname for Al Green and farm manager Gale Harris, Broomfield, Colo.

They uphold a tradition of recycling, integrated farm and cattle management, and close interaction with the public from nearby Denver and Boulder.

City folks know them from a

web site that does not focus on cattle ([pumpkinsandmorefarms.com](http://pumpkinsandmorefarms.com)), but Green, Harris and stock dog Rowdy give a lot of attention to their 160 Angus cows. Green also operates a realty, estate planning and trust management business. Their producing land base includes 600 local acres and Rocky Mountain range pastures south of Granby, Colo., in summer.

Harris grew up around cattle, while Green learned by traditional family roots in Denver's "Globeville" stockyards area. His family practiced organic gardening and operated refuse companies for decades. Later, Green learned as manager of a Granby area ranch in the 1960s and 1970s. Herefords there were first crossed with Charolais bulls, but calving problems soon gave way to Angus solutions.

#### **Adapting**

Today's Green Ranch operates on some of the same land, but the cities loom over the Broomfield headquarters land.

"The highway (connecting U.S. 287 to 36 turnpike) cut us up," Green says, driving around a

construction barricade. "But what are you going to do? You can't stop progress, so you have to learn to get in tune with it. Make more out of what you have left."

He uses the built-up highway bank for a calving-pasture windbreak, and leases some land from the county.

"This is happening all over the country, and ranchers are going to have more direct experience with the public," he adds. "It takes patience, but you can do some good and even make a little money."

Phone calls and e-mails can bring in hundreds of school-age children on a fall day. They disperse to the farm's horse-drawn hayrack rides through the pumpkin patch, petting zoo, chicken pen, straw maze, and other natural castles and playgrounds. For a small fee, folks hike 6 miles through an elaborate corn maze, too.

All come out hungry and ready for an all-natural hamburger. Green has sold beef locally for 25 years but just joined the supply chain for *Certified Angus Beef*® (CAB®) brand Natural last year.

"Kids today can forget where

# Ranching on the Green

*Colorado ranchers make the most of operating under the public's watchful eye.*

food comes from,” he says. “They go to the supermarket or the water faucet; if they want heat, they go to the thermostat. We remind them of reality. I like to see the little kids’ faces as they learn about all this.”

### Doing it right

High-quality, natural beef starts with a well-cared-for cow, Harris says. “We never cheat on them.”

“My Volga-German grandparents taught me that we’re entrusted with these lives, these heartbeats,” Green adds. “If you’re not going to do it right, get out and let somebody else do it.”

Calves are born in winter, so they will grow to get the most out of mountain pastures in June. But January calving takes planning.

“We don’t just let them plop out of their 104-degree oven into the snow,” Green says. “We watch them closely; we have calving barns, warm-up areas and a lot of straw.”

Research may prove cows can live on snow alone, but Green says “good enough” won’t do for his cows. The herd drinks from propane-heated tanks, pumped by solar power with generator backup for cloudy days. Along with forage, they eat ear corn and all-natural supplements out of recycled-tire bunks.

Rowdy regularly helps move cattle to fresh ground, so calf sickness is rare. If a calf needs treatment or falls behind, he’s isolated for special care until recovery; then it’s on to the petting zoo or sale barn.

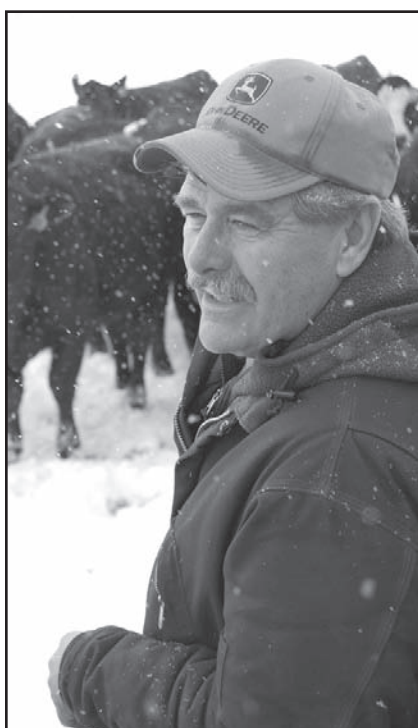
At spring roundup, and before trucking to the Western Slope, calves must be branded to ensure they come home to the right place. Green and Harris watch for older cows bringing up the rear.

“We want to do right by them, so we

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don't ask the older cows to go out," Green says. "They can raise their calves where they don't have to walk as far."

The corral is designed for calm and safe handling with scores of gates, alleyways and raised observation points and walkways. Heifers and better-quality cows are heat-synchronized and bred by artificial insemination (AI). Registered Angus herd bulls come from the

Leachman and Vermilion Ranch herds, Green says.

He and Harris monitor the summer grazing on horseback, moving salt and mineral supplements, and rotating the herd to fresh pasture. Sometimes Green's grandchildren come along or join in other camping adventures in the Rockies to learn about cattle, nature and responsibility.



Cows come home a few weeks after the calves to graze on crop residues and the many leftover pumpkins, which they contentedly munch even in the snow.

After crop harvest, the calves come home to a health program of vaccinations and adjustments to independent life before steers move on. Some are retained for hand-feeding to the local demand, but most sell to buyers who appreciate the all-natural background.

### Producing natural beef

Last year, Beef Marketing Group (BMG) bought 70 head to feed at its CAB-licensed Thomas County Feedyard near Colby, Kan. BMG operates a CAB Natural supply chain for Tyson Fresh Meats. "They were as good as their word and treated us fair," Green says. "[They're] good people I think we can work with in the future."

Feedlot performance and carcass data will help Green and Harris with selection for higher-quality beef. They have much experience with records and selection for milk and weaning weight. "When we see our data, we can look into the BMG partner or retained ownership programs, too," Harris says.

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It's all good, natural food for the cows. "We want to produce the best," Harris says. "When we sell, we want to know the

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— Al Green

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next guy is happy and satisfied, like when you go to the grocery store and buy food that's safe and good for you. That's got to be the way of the world."

Green says the market will always be their guide. "Sure, we could just focus on making cattle gain weight, but that doesn't do much good if we don't end up with the high-quality beef people want to buy. This is what we do. It's who we are."

