



Guardians of the Range

California Rangeland Conservation Coalition

"If you want my ideal definition of the word sustainable - my family has kept this ranch healthy and productive for nearly 100 years - that is sustainable."

- Tim Koopmann

Photos courtesy of CRCC and USDA-NRCS.

Partners

- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- California Cattlemen's Association
- California Rangeland Conservation Coalition
- Sand County Foundation

Every Day is Earth Day

Koopmann Ranch, Alameda County

Tim Koopmann proudly wears a number of hats in his life. He is a husband, father, rancher, educator, conservationist and leader in his ranching community. His family has been ranching for nearly 100 years and Koopmann fully expects his son and daughter, and eventually their own children, will keep the ranch healthy and productive for at least 100 more.

Koopmann owns and operates a cow-calf operation on 850 acres of rangeland in Sunol, California. Koopmann's grandfather established the ranch in 1918, making his son and daughter the fourth generation ranching on their property. The ranch is a prime example of the urban-rural interface and is bordered on three sides by development – Highway 680, a golf course, and a number of ranchettes. The Town of Sunol lies just beyond his fence and is a constant reminder that his conservation efforts and actions set a strong example for his urban neighbors.

While Koopmann considers his ranch "more than a hobby but less than a profession," he is extremely proud of the work his family has done to sustain local ranching and goes out of his way to share his passion with those around him. He opens his ranch up to local students and community members to discover how important ranching is within the local community and the importance ranching has in protecting and preserving the environment, wildlife, and a historic way of life.

**EVERY DAY
IS EARTH DAY
ON MY RANCH**

This sign proudly greets every visitor to the Koopmann Ranch barn.



From left to right: Clayton, Melinda, Tim and Cari take a moment, from tending to their ranch, to pose for a photo as part of Tim's Aldo Leopold Award package. Tim and his family won the prestigious award in 2011 for their outstanding conservation efforts in California.

An Educator

Koopmann believes with his heart and soul that educating those around him on the importance of ranching is critical to sustaining agriculture for future generations. Be it opening his ranch up to UC Berkeley environmental science students for hands on experience

or speaking to his ranching peers about estate planning, Koopmann proudly shares his knowledge with others.

He has held various leadership positions in the California Cattlemen's Association, including now serving as the organization's president, and other industry non-profit organizations and has been a strong advocate for open dialogue within the ranching community. Koopmann believes that every rancher brings important skills to the table and that through mentorship, a healthy exchange of ideas and peer relationships, ranching will remain innovative and successful.



UC Berkeley students search for California Tiger Salamanders and other species that call Koopmann's ranch home.

A Conservationist

The hardest decision Koopmann has had to make was weighing options to paying estate tax bills when his father unexpectedly passed away. A bright spot, in the wake of this tragedy, came when an opportunity was brought to Koopmann to conserve part of the ranch to protect the federal and state-threatened California Tiger Salamander. As part of this conservation easement, Koopmann protected a naturally-occurring pond and the surrounding 31 acres of grassland in perpetuity for the tiger salamander. He was also awarded a conservation easement on an additional 107 acres of the ranch, in mitigation funds from Alameda County for the building of an adjacent municipal golf course. The combination of the two easements allowed Tim to pay his estate tax bill.

These easements achieved multiple benefits for – allowing the Koopmann Family to stay on the ranch, protecting part of the ranch its natural resources for perpetuity, and keeping working lands working.

Koopmann is also an active supporter and participant of NRCS's conservation programs. He has implemented numerous conservation practices on his ranch through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program and also has a ten-year rental agreement through the Grassland Reserve Program.

In recognition of Koopmann's conservation efforts over the years, he and his family were awarded the prestigious Aldo Leopold Award in 2011.

An Innovator

Koopmann is credited with spearheading a number of innovations within California's agricultural community. One particular achievement was leading the development of San Francisco's Public Utilities Commission HAACP-based program to control waterborne pathogens. In the late 1990s, the waterborne pathogen *Cryptosporidium* was detected in the local watershed. *Cryptosporidium* causes an intestinal problem that poses a significant health risk and can be fatal to people with a weakened immune system. This was a highly controversial issue, and the levels were blamed on cattle grazing. The commission was prepared to eliminate cattle grazing completely within the watershed, setting precedence around the state. With Koopmann's leadership, a multidisciplinary team was formed with 15 public agencies and agricultural organizations to better understand the issues, and the science, and to develop a comprehensive management and monitoring plan. Since its adoption in 1997, this management plan has set a benchmark for livestock grazing around the world.

"Every Day is Earth Day on my Ranch"

Koopmann is extremely proud of his barn sign that reads "Every Day is Earth Day on my Ranch." Those words encapsulate a man who is committed to action and not just words.

This story is courtesy of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition. To learn more about what other ranchers are doing throughout the state or about this cooperative

partnership visit www.carangeland.org

Written by Jonathan Groveman
Public Affairs Specialist
Natural Resources Conservation Service