

A photograph of a cowboy on a light-colored horse herding a large group of brown cattle in a field at sunset. The cowboy is wearing a dark hat, a light-colored shirt, and blue chaps. The cattle are densely packed in the foreground and middle ground, with some dark-colored cattle visible. The background shows a vast, open landscape under a warm, golden sky.

Ranching

Cattle have been raised and herded in Texas by men on horseback since the Spanish conquistadors introduced cows and horses to the area around 1541. Today they are still used on ranches to gather and work cattle, check fences, and various other labor intensive jobs. A good ranch horse must be versatile and perform activities such as herding, cutting, roping, and reining. They should have keen cow sense, high endurance, and a gentle disposition. Most of the competitive sports performed on horseback today are based on activities that are performed on a working ranch.