

Passion for the Land



A Collaborative Project to help rural residents share stories about preserving community heritage while protecting agricultural lands & natural resources for future generations

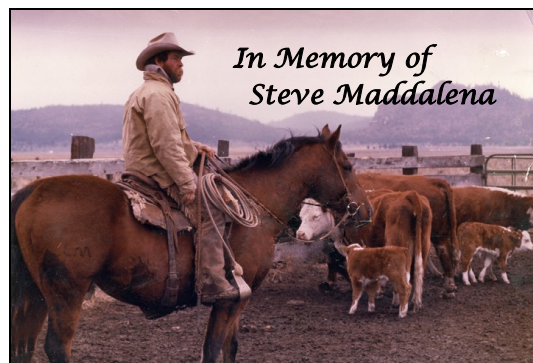
The Next Hundred Years by Lacey Maddalena



I always knew that I wanted to have a job in agriculture. I didn't know that I would be thrown into the position as a single, twenty-four year old girl, but I am very thankful for what my dad left to me after his unexpected passing. My dad was the most important person in my life. He was my hero and the one person who influenced me into believing that agriculture is a way of life. It's not just what you do, but who you are. It defines you as a person.

When I hear of people saying that agriculture isn't viable in Sierra Valley, I can't help but be disappointed. If agriculture isn't viable in Sierra Valley, then what is? When you drive up to the Vista Point on Highway 49 and look out over the valley, all you see is ranch land. My family has been ranching in this valley for one hundred years, and I fully intend on being the next generation to come in and ranch it for another hundred years.

Ranching is hard work. People ask "why do you work so hard for something that is so up and down? Sometimes you make money, sometimes you don't." Well, it's not about the money; it's about the love for the land. It's about looking out seeing your progress every day, seeing the calves get big, watching the grass grow tall, knowing those calluses on your hands are the product of hard work and determination. It's about knowing that someday future generations like myself will be able to have something beautiful of their own. Something sustainable and absolutely viable. As long as you have a piece of land, you can be entirely self sufficient, and in these hard times, that is truly a beautiful thing.



Sometimes, I sit up on the hill on our ranch where we spread my dad's ashes and I cry and ask the Lord why he put such an enormous responsibility upon my shoulders. As I wipe my tears and look up I can see the entire valley through the setting of the sun. It is then that I realize that this is my life. I am the future of agriculture and it is my responsibility to make sure that people understand that agriculture is, and always will be, viable in Sierra Valley.

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