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**THE MATADOR CATTLE COMPANY RECEIVES
INTERNATIONAL HABITAT CONSERVATION AWARD**

BALTIMORE, MD—Employees at The Matador Cattle Company's Beaverhead Ranch received international recognition for their contributions to wildlife habitat conservation at the Wildlife Habitat Council's (WHC) 20th Annual Symposium, *20/20 Vision: Celebrating the Past, Looking to the Future*. Matador Cattle Company, a division of Koch Agriculture Company, demonstrates its commitment to environmental stewardship and increasing native biodiversity by achieving habitat recertification at the Beaverhead Ranch, located near Dillon, Mont.

The Matador Cattle Company's Beaverhead Ranch covers 300,000 acres of owned and leased land and was originally established in 1865. The working cattle ranch supports about 8,000 head of cattle. Beaverhead Ranch employs Market-Based Management® in its ranching operations and stewardship. Market-Based Management has provided the catalyst for its success in managing its natural resources over the long term.

"This year, our 20th Anniversary, WHC celebrates two decades of solid leadership and on-the-ground achievements by our members in wildlife habitat preservation and conservation education," said Robert Johnson, WHC President. "WHC members are continuing to lead the way to further define and demonstrate how corporations can use their lands to preserve our biodiversity, while preparing new generations through conservation education to understand how to be better leaders and managers for tomorrow's sustainable businesses and communities. Congratulations to Beaverhead Ranch for their volunteer-based efforts to preserve the biodiversity of their community and the world, and to connect people to nature."

Beaverhead Ranch's long-term goal is to improve the health and productivity of the land, water, air and plant communities, thereby enhancing the sustainability of renewable natural resources harvested both for wildlife and domestic use. In the past decade, the ranch has participated with various local, state and federal agencies to restore and manage the existing natural resources while increasing operational efficiency and long-term productive capability. The ranch derives its value from managing natural resources in a way that is sustainable over the long term. A key point in the resource management program at the ranch is that periodic harvest, as well as periodic rest, is necessary to maintain resources in the optimal condition for wildlife and native plant life.

The ranch is home to a diverse wildlife population which includes the pure westslope cutthroat trout. With the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the ranch has helped re-establish habitat for the trout species on two miles of Bear Creek by removing invasive trees, establishing electric fences to direct livestock from crossing the creek in the protected area and removing beavers and beaver-built dams. Recent U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services surveys indicate an improvement in stream quality and function. The ranch, following active timber and grassland

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management, now provides calving grounds for hundreds of elk and supports about 5,000 head on a seasonal basis. Other wildlife species benefited are several hundred head of white-tailed deer, mule deer and antelope, as well as moose and many other non-game species, including wolves.

New site projects have been initiated since initial certification in 2002. A salvage and forest health enhancement project in the Centennial Valley began on an area burned in August 2003 by wildfire. The project includes harvesting both burned trees and beetle-killed trees, with the objectives of minimizing the spread of pine beetle, moving away from a monoculture of tree encroachment, increasing forage availability for wildlife and cattle, and increasing water quantity and quality in stream flows. Additionally, a travel and big-game management project on private land at headquarters initiated more intense monitoring of vehicular travel and wildlife numbers.

In recent years, the wildlife team has initiated an integrated weed management program in conjunction with the BLM. The wildlife team is also attempting to improve a riparian corridor along the Sage Creek by utilizing grazing management techniques. An increase in the elk population from 56 to greater than 400 has been observed.

In addition to its Habitat Certification from the Wildlife Habitat Council, the ranch has received numerous awards in recognition of its enhancement efforts. The National Association for Environmental Management awarded the ranch with the Corporate Environmental Excellence Award, and the U.S. EPA has awarded the ranch its Regional Administrator's Award. The ranch has also received the National Private Lands Fish and Wildlife Stewardship Award, National Environmental Stewardship Award and Partners in the Public Spirit Award.

Beaverhead Ranch was one of 214 sites recognized at the 2008 Symposium for creating a *Wildlife at Work*SM program. In addition, 97 *Corporate Lands for Learning*SM programs reach thousands of learners from schools and scout groups to master gardeners and university researchers. Since 1990, WHC has certified 489 programs worldwide. The certification program recognizes outstanding wildlife habitat management and environmental education efforts at corporate sites, and offers third-party validation of the benefits of such programs. Certification requirements are strict and require that sites apply for periodic renewal.

Celebrating 20 years in conservation, the Wildlife Habitat Council (WHC) is a nonprofit, non-lobbying organization dedicated to increasing the quality and amount of wildlife habitat on corporate, private and public lands. WHC devotes its resources to building partnerships with corporations and conservation groups to create solutions that balance the demands of economic growth with the requirements of a healthy, biodiverse and sustainable environment. More than 2.4 million acres in 46 states, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and 16 other countries are managed for wildlife through WHC-assisted projects. To learn more, visit www.wildlifehc.org.

Celebrating 20 Years in Conservation!

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