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DA Investigating Mysterious Cow Deaths In New

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Stig

Wednesday, June 9, 1999

DA Investigating Recent Cow Deaths

By Brendan Smith
 Journal Staff Writer

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No one is sure what killed a calf and two cows last month on the Tres Ritos Ranch north of Questa, but ranch manager Tom Reed definitely finds the deaths unusual.

"I come up with more questions than answers," Reed said Monday. "I wouldn't be surprised if we never do find out who or what is doing this. It may be something totally unexpected."

The last cow was found dead May 23 in a pasture near where a dead calf and a dead cow were found earlier in the month, Reed said. The last cow had its udder cleanly cut off and a deep hole with smoothly cut edges gouged into its neck, Reed said.

Each of the three animals had unexplained wounds and missing body parts, Reed said.

The 8th Judicial District Attorney's Office takes cattle mutilations seriously, although no one has ever been charged with the crime, Assistant District Attorney John Day said. The judicial district covers Taos, Colfax and Union counties.

"If someone is up there killing livestock, that's a crime," Day said Tuesday. "Whether (cattle mutilations) are a secret government project or aliens, that's out of my realm."

Dozens of reported cattle mutilations in northern New Mexico dating back to the 1970s have spawned theories about aliens sent to Earth to slice up cows.

Reed said he couldn't explain the three recent deaths from his herd of 40 cattle, but he isn't convinced aliens cut up his cattle.

"I would lean more to the government or cults or something like

that. I really don't know anything. I guess that's just speculation," he said. "If the government isn't involved, I think they're covering it up."

Gabe Valdez, a retired State Police officer who has investigated cattle mutilations near Dulce, said he is working with the District Attorney's Office in investigating the recent cattle deaths on Tres Ritos Ranch.

Valdez, who lives in Albuquerque, is now a field investigator for the National Institute for Discovery Science, a private organization that has volunteered to pay for necropsies and lab tests on the dead cattle.

The institute, based in Las Vegas, Nev., researches cattle mutilations, UFOs and reported encounters with aliens. The organization is funded entirely by a Las Vegas entrepreneur who is interested in the paranormal field, said Colm Kelleher, the institute's deputy administrator.

Reed found the first dead cow on May 4 in a pasture on the 3,200-acre Tres Ritos Ranch. The cow's right eye and right ear were missing with a circular cut around the right ear extending down the neck, Reed said.

"There were no tracks where she was injured or hurting and dragged herself around," Reed said. "She was just there."

The calf was found dead four days later in the same area. The calf's right eye and tongue were missing and the genital area had been cut open, Reed said. The calf's rump also was missing but Reed thinks birds may have eaten it.

Valdez said he saw flipped cow patties around the third dead cow that may have been caused by "turbulence," but Valdez didn't know if the turbulence was from an alien spaceship.

"It was an unexplained animal death," Valdez said. "Don't ask me what I think. I don't know who's doing it."

The New Mexico Livestock Board investigated about 30 cattle mutilations in northern New Mexico in 1993 and 1994, including one mutilated cow reported by Reed at the Tres Ritos Ranch in May 1994.

The Livestock Board concluded most of the 1993-94 cattle mutilations were not caused by predators or scavengers. An earlier investigation by the board found there was "possible involvement of clandestine Satanic groups."

Predators or scavengers were blamed for similar cattle mutilations from the 1970s investigated in 1980 by an ex-FBI agent for the 1st Judicial District Attorney in Santa Fe.

The Las Vegas institute hasn't determined what caused the recent deaths of the cows on Tres Ritos Ranch.

The institute has researched about a dozen unexplained cattle deaths, most in New Mexico or Utah, over the past three years, Kelleher said.

After conducting necropsies and lab tests, some of those cattle deaths were determined to be caused by infectious disease, accidental poisoning from insecticides, or the work of predators or scavengers, Kelleher said.

Other cases of cattle mutilations have proved more mysterious.

"There are a small handful for which there are no logical explanations," Kelleher said.

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