

Charles T. Kimura

Parker Ranch, Hawai`i



Charlie's 47- year career as a Parker Ranch cowboy began when he was only 12 years old and signed-on as a summer hire. By the time he retired in 1996, he had been Livestock Manager for 18 years. Some would say his destiny was pre-ordained, as he followed his Father, Yutaka, who spent his entire 49-year career as a Parker Ranch cowboy, herdsman and livestock breeder. Charlie says his father "put him on the right track" by telling him both the positives and negatives of his own accomplishments. They would have discussions about ranching long after others had left the dinner table. On one such occasion, the father told his horse- loving son, "This is not a horse ranch. The horse is just a working tool", and Charlie respected that advice.

When he was in high-school, Charlie wrote that his career would be in Animal Husbandry. True to his word, Charlie later began working with the Ranch's registered Hereford herd and then became foreman of the herd and the Makahalau and Paaukau sections. It wasn't long before he was given the additional responsibility of marketing the cattle. Then he became Mana Division superintendent and then Ka`u Division Manager.

But the highlight of his career came in 1978 when Charlie was promoted as the Parker Ranch Livestock Manager. That was where he had his "big opportunity", he says. He found that cross-breeding was the answer to genetic improvement of the stock. That was only the beginning. In his words, "you cannot express genetic potential without the proper environment". Charlie's enlightened approach led to holistic resource management as the ranch's operational goal. They say that the cowboys who worked for Charlie "loved him", that he brought a lot of change in a "graceful" manner, and he was successful as a manager because he started as a cowboy.

Tape # 1
Hawaii Cattlemen's Association

Paniolo Hall of Fame
with Charlie Kimura (CK)

by La'i Mitchell (LM)
August 16, 2004

in Waimea

LM: So tell me where were you born?

CK: Ah it's ah Pu'u Kikoni (*Pronounced Pu-kikoni*). That's a section of Parker Ranch where we had a Holstein dairy and my dad was in charge of the dairy that's how I grew up on a dairy.

LM: My grandmother [Florence "Coco" Vredenburg Hind] has a great picture of the dairy...and ah...your dad holding her with the milk bucket while he's trying to milk.

CK: Yeah well ah they were up there and then...and you're talking about the house see that was their house first. Your family was there before I was born. And ah...we were born there in that house because my dad worked there.

LM: O.K. How long did you guys stay up there?

CK: Well when I got to be six years old we moved to Waimea. But my dad still lived up ah you know had two homes up there because in the old days traveling was hard. The roads were junk- muddy and car cannot make it sometimes.

LM: Did you move down to go to school?

CK: Yeah ah my two older brothers and older sister stayed at my grandparents'. But ah...I guess my dad thought it was about time to move down I had a younger sister too so...

LM: So there's....five of you kids?

CK: Well one the first one died [as a baby].

LM: Mm. O.K. What was the house you grew up in like?

CK: [chuckles] It's still here in Waimea... it was actually a two bedroom. And a wood stove. And no electricity. No icebox. Ah they had a cooler what you call cooler outside on the wall and they made a door and they had a big ah I think it had screens so flies wouldn't come in but the cool air came and that's how we kept our food fresh.

LM: Did you have pets when you were growing up?

CK: Well no the dairy had horses. And we rode horses there- the tame ones. Yeah my...my dad when he was ah younger he caught a wild horse...he had what they call 'em Mauna Kea they were inbred and small.

LM: Oh.

CK: And they trained that horse but he was so tame for them so they could ride.

LM: [chuckles] That was your kind of horse- your speed. Where did you go to school besides Waimea?

CK: I went to Honokaa High School. Other than that ah I didn't go to college I was drafted into the service you know. And then I went to shop courses. And then we had ah - Mr. Dick Penhallow, manager of the trustees thought I had the potential to make it as a consultant for one year. And that's how lot of my programs got through doing that kind of thing.

LM: Oh.

CK: He and I was on the same channel. He was a well known person throughout the world. The animal science field ...he was a professor at Washington State. And he did a lot of work I think he wrote a lot of books. And he went to China and wrote books about China. Well then he has a class every year at San Antonio. At that time I don't know about now but ah in those days he had the experts from every division of cross breeding ah the top cross breeding station in the United States was represented by Professor Penhallow.

LM: So that's where you learned all about cross breeding stuff.

CK: Yeah which breed to go to and stuff like that. You know we had a little experience in cross breeding before we had Shorthorns. Ah Hartwell Carter brought in quarter horses and Shorthorns but on a limited scale. And it didn't go too well. I don't know why but that was before my time in there and then Mr. ah Dick Penhallow brought in Angus.

LM: Oh.

CK: So when he became manager we ah crossed some Angus in Kohala.

LM: What was it- Angus Hereford cross?

CK: Angus Hereford because we were basically all Hereford cattle.

LM: Right. So were they bringing in other breeds?

CK: Yeah ah for a little while and then when they changed manager they went back to straight Herefords again. Herefords was basically the best.

LM: That was their prize.

CK: And also it was our downfall. Our grading was- you know we're bringing a lot of bulls from the mainland with the different managers we had- and the grading just kept on dropping.

LM: Really?

CK: And by the time I came after I got married there were ah-only 6% percent grade so it's the fastest thing I could do was put a cross breed. I went to ah school to learn cross breeding.... rotational cross breeding.

CK: They thought straight breds were the main thing Angus straight or Hereford straight you know-cross but...

LM: Right. Pilau?

CK: [laughs] Pilau.

LM: But didn't they um weren't there a lot of problems with the Hereford breed like cancer eye and stuff like that?

CK: Herefords are weak ah?

LM: Yeah.

CK: The pigment the ones that had weak pigment was real susceptible to cancer eye.

They had some other weaknesses but not not too bad the cancer eye was really was their weakness.

LM: So when when you started cross breeding which area did you start working on first? Were all the cattle cross bred or did you just do like a certain area?

CK: Well we didn't have you know enough like ah of course you know you gotta start ah if you get Herefords say no problem because a lot of Herefords. But the Hereford improvement herd we had and then we needed to build up a Angus. We cannot continue to buy cattle. Bulls and and... we bought bulls from ah George Schattauer.

LM: O.K.

CK: And eventually we raised our own. And then we went to cross breeding with Brangus but he's kind of closely related to an Angus. But cause they cross with Brahma we needed that Brahma breed in the dry country. From experience oh we also had Santa Gertrudis at one time small limited scale. And they were bred the pure Santa Gertrudis were bred down at Puako.

LM: Yeah for the hot weather right?

CK: Yeah and then we had cattle out Keamoku where Boise Cascade is now in Waikoloa. Ah we had well part Santa Gertrudis cows up there and we had some few Hereford cows. And you look at their off springs so much difference...

LM Really?

CK: The Santa Gertrudis cattle are real nice the cattle were light color and woolly too and the cows but they cannot handle that country. You get that Brahma breed to kind of back up so that's how we brought in a little you know the influence of an Brahma. Then they've changed now you got to keep on changing you cannot stay in one place. The Kahua well that Simmen[tal] I mean a Charolais and ah you know you cannot just go over there and buy. He offered us to sell but you needed results like ah what can they do?

LM: Right.

CK: How can they improve our carcass quality that's one of our main downfalls is carcass bearing.

LM: The carcass bearing.

CK: Yeah. Hard to tell beef quality. Ah you get top choice top price for choice cattle. And then you come down to the mixed breed.

LM: Right.

CK: Ah you know you gotta kind of sell- go and sell 'em. But choice cattle people come and buy choice beef.

LM: How how come the grade was low?

CK: Well they're straight Hereford cattle. Ah and the former managers that bought in the cattle... they weren't looking at the ah how they grade. I went to the Mitchell Ranch twice ah in New Mexico and we bought a lot bulls from Mitchell Ranch.

And ah Mitchell Albert Mitchell I admire him as a cattleman and horseman ah he he you know cattle trend changes and and got into this compact cattle.

LM: Oh right.

CK: And he went all the way and his whole herd look alike they're really compact.

LM: Like the smaller breeds?

CK: Smaller breed Hereford cattle get horns their horns are big compared to the size of their body I mean you know like ah you seen our Hereford cattle... they're big and the horns is not that big.

LM: Yeah.

CK: But this ones they have big horns and stocky and short body. And the management at that time well didn't think it was good.

LM: Really?

CK: That thing went total overboard- over 800 bull calves. And maybe couple hundred Herefords. We going start off our own Mitchell cattle. [laughs]

LM: [laughs]

CK: Then the next management came in and I went with them and Don Hansen and I went into ah Arizona and visited five ranches and just picked out bulls like figuring out how many pounds to buy cattle. And so the next easiest thing when I took over of course cross breeding we got to do our own basic ah herd cause we were....doing AI.

LM: O.K.

CK: And then in AI you buy semen and you know what that bull can do. You looking for a bull for breeding.

LM: Right. That's smart. It saves you money in the long run too cause you're not shipping over bulls.

CK: Oh yeah it's not that you know we used to buy bulls I used to buy bulls for when Rally Greenwell was manager. He sent me off to buy bulls. But we bought you know only two, three, four, five bulls at the most.

LM: Really.

CK: He pulled ah ah herd of special cattle. What we call special herd. We had that registered herd at Makahalau. Well you know the ranch started off ah A. W. Carter. Carter brought in the Hereford bulls horned when we say Hereford it's horned cattle. Cause ah the other one is Polled Herefords.

LM: O.K.

CK: They don't get along those two kinds...

LM: They don't?

CK:I know because I....I seen it up there. [chuckles] You know the the horned guys say the polle is a mutant.

LM: Right. [laughs]

CK: Anyway ah but we had to go to mutant because of ah the dehorning problem you know dehorning the horns of cattle. So we went to the ah Polled Herefords then ah we we had to bring in bulls. And we didn't know how to do AI. I went to the AI school but I didn't do one cow AI. At that time the management didn't want to go AI.

LM: Oh.

CK: Yeah. I was disappointed at that time cause I went to AI school.

LM: Huh. So they started with the Herefords...And then they went to the Polled Herefords.

CK: Polled Herefords yeah.

LM: And then and then where'd they go to then?

CK: Back to horned Herefords.

LM: Then they started cross breeding?

CK: No ah see when A. W. was I mean Hartwell Carter was here Hartwell ah was managing up till 1960. Prior to that he wanted to do cross breeding with the Shorthorns. He brought in a herd of Shorthorns. But that was only on a small scale. And then they gave up on the I don't know why you know at that time that type of Shorthorn was too waisty. A fatty animal.

LM: Oh not on meat.

CK: He didn't want to you didn't want outside too much outside fat you wanted the fat inside you know inside the meat.

LM: Right. The marble.

CK: Right yeah the marble yeah. That's the one. I cannot think of the word. When you get older. [laughs]

LM: I know weather's a big part of ranching here in Waimea, how was the weather like... I would say in the past twenty years that the weather's changed here in Waimea.

CK: It's changed.

LM: How's it changed since you were younger?

CK: Well I thought it was colder you know in those days before but when you think about it we had the ah houses we had to live we didn't have rugs like this you know. The carpet makes a lot of difference you know?

LM: That's a good point! [laughs]

CK: But ah but you know the weather has changed before used to be foggy all the time. You know in the afternoons when I was working up Makahalau in the afternoon that fog used to just move in. And you gotta watch cause you get lost in the fog like that but that now you don't see that much fog anymore.

LM: Yeah. It seems like it's drier now.

CK: Yeah and then you know it's what we call kamaaina rain the wind comes from the trade winds and bringing that drizzle and you know people get oh boy rain again! But when we get into drought.....then these people wish we had the drizzle.

LM: Yeah.

CK: Man and we had more droughts ah in the past ah thirty years than we did before. But they they said in the old days there the big drought you know everything went just brown in Waimea.

LM: Oh. So there was always droughts then?

CK: Yeah and every place you go there's droughts.

LM: How about the floods that came through like the beginning of 2003. Did you guys have floods like that before?

CK: Yeah we had some but not very often ah one day we couldn't come home from Makahalau. I had to come home with a horse. But you know not damaging as far as the ...of course you know your your streams up in the pastures you've got your swings under the fence yeah. Some of them were washed out. That's not a really big problem. We'd rather have the flood than drought.

LM: That's true! [laughs] So when you were growing up did you always know you wanted to be a cowboy?

CK: I think so you know I, like my mom used to say that when I was a kid where we lived they they brought in the cow that just calved- the Holstein cow. And they gotta take the calves for a while they take the calves away so the cow can be taken to the milk barn.

LM: O.K.

CK: And then you know when they take the calf away the cow cries all night you know you hear that music to my ears.

LM: [laughs]

CK: [laughs] Nobody thinks that way but I used to feel that way.

LM: [laughs] That's when you knew!

CK: Yeah. [laughs]

LM: Did your dad want you to be a cowboy?

CK: I don't think so.

LM: Yeah.

CK: Because he had a rough life.

LM: Right.

CK: And he didn't want somebody- his kid to be that way but couldn't help it.

LM: You couldn't help it. [chuckles] Couldn't stop you.

CK: Yeah and you know when I looked at him and he was in charge of the dairy...

LM: Yeah.

CK:and you know the records come in from the dairy every cow you know the production work and how much milk how many pounds of milk to work it. And they know how to breed a cow, which bull to breed. And that's what got my interest you know in breeding cattle...with the beef cattle.

LM: Right cause your dad had to deal that kind of stuff too at the dairy?

CK: Yeah on the on the dairy herd yeah.

LM: Was he the foreman up there?

CK: Yeah.

LM: He was the main guy right?

CK: Uh huh. He was kind of kolohe sometimes but you know everybody I guess when they young.
[chuckles]

LM: Right. It's a small town! What are you gonna do?

CK: Yeah.

LM: Right. Your grandparents lived here too on the...

CK: Yeah they from Japan.

LM: So that was your first generation that came over?

CK: Yeah yeah first generation.

LM: O.K.

CK: They they worked for the Greenwells before.

LM: Oh they did? O.K....

CK: Yeah and Puakea in Kohala.

LM: Oh.

CK: Then they moved to ah Puuanahulu.

LM: O.K.

CK:with the Greenwells you know just not the Greenwells! Hinds.

LM:the Hinds... O.K. so they were at Puuanahulu.

CK: Yeah. [my father] was born in Puuanahulu.

LM: Oh your dad was born over there?

CK: Yeah and you know the kids needed to go school so [clears throat] he started to work in Waimea that's how they got... Well his dad worked for Parker doing fence jobs and things like that so that's how he got there.

LM: All right so what was your first job on the ranch? When you're twelve right?

CK: Yeah well that that was... a summer job. We used to go up Waikii you know they had cornfields at Waikii and we had to you know the corn stalk this ah I don't know what they call in ah English but we call it "keiki" come out on the side. So we we had to cut the keiki [corn] with a knife and the grass was up till here we were soaking wet by the time we...then we went to Kawaihae to pick kiawe beans Parker Ranch had some hogs. And we picked kiawe beans to feed the hogs.

LM: [laughs]

CK: And up here you know the the [clears throat] one we call up Kulea is forest and we had a pipeline water gauge up there and the main pipeline's coming through and we get we get tress for to hold up the pipeline and ah we had to clean under the tresses so the grass it don't over grow...That's what we did summer times.

LM: Was it like that with all the kids...

CK: Young guys twelve-year old Boy Scout I wasn't in the Boy Scout but ah....going up there and work it's a decent job. Then the ah, one summer we picked corn they had some corn there and you got to follow the truck.

LM: [laughs]

CK: Yeah then when I graduated highschool at Honokaa...I asked for a job and there there weren't any ah opening in the livestock you know all cowboy you know so I went to fence camp. You kinda you kinda have to prove yourself...So they know you're a worker...

LM: Right.

CK: So they put me to fence camp it's hard work but ah I learned and I figure it's good for me basically when I took over the sections I knew how to make fence...

LM: You gotta start somewhere too.

CK: Yeah. I seen some people come in from college they they don't know anything about fences and you know we had to show them and stuff so...

LM: Oh. [chuckles]

CK: You gotta you gotta know something about fences. [chuckles]

LM: Right cause the cattle does no good if they're running away. [chuckles] So O.K. so you're fence gang for a while and then what did you move up to after...

CK: O.K. yeah and see the guys that was working at Makahalau with the purebred herd ah they wanted to move to Waimea they get family so they wanted to move so they moved and we moved up took their place...

LM: O.K.

CK:three of us three young guys.

LM: Three of you. Who who was working...

CK: Ah Walter Stevens and LeRoy Lindsey. Yeah [clears throat] but they gradually ah well then I stayed up there about five six months and then Uncle Sam called me so I had to go to service was in the Marine Corps. And when I got out Walter wasn't there already he was he joined the army...

LM: Oh he did?

CK: But he's a good horse breaker he was horse shoer. So he when he got back came back he went to Keamoku and went back to his his love was breaking pen.

LM: When you came back you went back to Makahalau?

CK: Yeah I came back and I asked Hartwell Carter [clears throat] see if I can get a job back...

LM: Oh that's cool. So O.K. so you guys worked Makahalau. How many head of cattle did you guys have up there at the time that you had to take care of...

CK: We had about 150 registered cows.

LM: Registered cows.

CK: And then imported bull you know Hartwell Carter bought bull from way over in Mississippi and all that. Big bucks. A. W. did the same thing he went to the American Nationals and bought the champion bull. You know that was the top that was the top show of the country back East...and he used to bring 'em back. Yeah. That's how he improved the herd. You know this place was all wild cattle.

LM: Right.

CK: And A. W. is the greatest man they ever had here.

LM: Yeah. Smart man.

CK: He wasn't a cattleman.

LM: No he was a smart businessman yeah?

CK: Yeah ,Yeah.

LM: When did they put you in charge of the registered Hereford herd?

CK: Well ah see there was a guy named Ed Johnston...He was he was the foreman when I was over there when I came back he was still there. And in 1955 he quit so I was assistant to Rally[Greenwell]- Rally came back from Kahua. So he was the foreman of Makahalau. So I stayed at that Makahalau as his assistant.

LM: O.K.

CK: Then gradually ah when Penhallow took over he made me the foreman up there purebred herd.

LM: O.K. that's right.

LM: And were you living up at Makahalau at that time?

CK: No.

LM: Here in town?

CK: Yeah in Waimea.

LM: Oh right.

CK: When I was single yeah I lived up there but other than that I moved to Waimea.

LM: Why do you think everybody liked the Hereford breed so much? What was it?

CK: Well they they easy to handle the Hereford cattle you know. The Angus cattle are are nervous cattle you know...

LM: Yeah.

CK: ... ah the the Brahma cross is a little bit harder to handle.

LM: Mm.

CK: You don't cowboy them like you do ah Hereford cattle. They'll come back at you if you do it to them.

LM: [laughs] Right.

CK: [chuckles]

LM: Is there a breed of cattle that you like better than everything else like crossed or?

CK: Yeah the crossbreeding you know the Angus cross was the best Angus Hereford...

LM: Angus Hereford cross?

CK: Yeah. Because of what the marks see you got to look at marketing. Everything you do here is because of the marking.

LM: Yeah. Why did you move down into to go work in Kau?

CK: [chuckles] Why! [laughs] That's I, ah my my bosses at that time made a deal with C. Brewer...and they asked me to go down and manage that ah subdivision ah I didn't know Kau but I knew that was a dry country you know but I had to take that challenge.

LM: When was that the Seventies?

CK: Seventy-five.

LM: Seventy-five right. And how many how many families went down with you to go work?

CK: Well I took ten cowboys with me... With myself ten. And we took over their job you know and they see everything down there is C. Brewer.

LM: [laughs] So you were married already?

CK: Yeah. In fact my oldest daughter didn't want to go down she went to college in Hilo. I had two boys the younger boys they went with me to Kau.

LM: Oh O.K. And then you stayed down for three years did you say?

CK: Yeah ah actually two and a half. The boys stayed down- I came back.

LM: Did you run the same breed of cattle down there?

CK: They had. You know they had a basic herd of ah Hereford cattle ah but they they they also did crossbreeding. But they bought bulls to crossbreed and I don't think they had a program but a lot of wild cattle.

LM: Right.

CK: Yeah ah the fences and the pasture management were very poor. All overgrown with brush. And weeds and you know we'd never seen cat's claw up here. We went down there and uuuuhhhh.

LM: [laughs]

CK: Popoki. They call it popoki.

LM: Yeah. [chuckles] Popoki. [laughs]

CK: Oh we had and you know you gotta rope cattle and that's not ranching really that's rawhiding. Rawhiding in the country. And when I became manager I ah we had a meeting down at ah Honolulu with Richard Smart and the meat company and the trustees and I told 'em you know we should get out of there because we're just rawhiding that country. And [inaudible] we weren't making money there.

LM: Yeah.

CK: Yeah we shipped all the cattle to a feed lot and oh ugly the cattle [inaudible] ugly that. I have no wish to go back down there anymore.

LM: [laughs]

CK: [laughs] We had 27,000 acres and they come down to Kapapala then they'll ah around between Pahala and Naalehu and then down to South Point. It's just a stretch out ranch 108,000 acres of stretch out.

LM: And only ten guys.

CK: Yeah and then we had to haul everything we had to haul if you gotta move cattle you gotta haul because of different sections. Like out here we can drive 'em and...

LM: Yeah.

CK: We get up you know anyway you get up in the morning you go work you come home you think you're pau hana and people calling you up, "The cattle in the cane, the cattle in the macadamia!"

LM: Oh...

CK: The fences were so bad...and ah so finally we met with the plantation manager and they they know the problem there so we brought our labor down from here and they they paid for the materials.

LM: Oh.

CK: It stopped the cattle from going in in the cane fields. [chuckles]

LM: Oh gee...

CK: When we went down there the in that country oh we were was making money. 74, 75 [inaudible] everybody going 76 shh! It went down hill and then went on strike and we got we got affected by the strikes...

LM: Really?

CK: Because you know we supplemented our cattle with molasses from the plantation... We went out and we needed molasses badly so we you know we went to molasses blocks and it did everything changes ah if you can't do it one way you gotta do it the other way. Molasses blocks is much much easier to handle. And that...we supplemented cattle we made our own hay down there.

LM: How did the water system operate there and how did it differ from the water system back in Waimea?

CK: Terrible water system there real terrible and lotta earthquakes. One time the main waterhead just collapsed! They got 'em up on the pali.

LM: From an earthquake?

CK: And you know... Yeah! And you know they they got tunnels they built tunnels...

LM: Yeah yeah.

CK:old Japanese people...built the tunnels and they get dripping drip the water so the pipes [inaudible]. Oh boy we are and the guys that sending my boys up there the cowboys had to go put up the water system. Earthquake again they were climbing up the ropes to get out!

LM: Oh no! [laughs]

CK: [inaudible] like I say when they got back here [Waimea], A.W. made his water system out of the forest.

LM: Mm.

CK: And you had to have permit from the State to get that water from Hawaiian Homes. And he did all of that you know the agreement that to be allowed so many you know thousands of gallons a day he'd be allowed to pick up. But the old system the galvanized pipe gradually they had we had two or three pipes going up smaller pipes three inch, 2 ½ inch. It gets corroded.

LM: Mm.

CK: Cause of that surface water. And all that grit you know ah dirt and roots and stuff come through the line and the rust. Galvanized pipe rust. So instead of three inch you getting maybe ½ and inch of water coming through and lot of puka pipes shooting water all over the place the the pipe ran came right through the ball park right in front of Parker School.

LM: Serious?

CK: Came right through town but that's the old days you know nobody's out here so...

LM: Yeah. [chuckles]

CK: A. W. made all that lines and we had hard time getting water up to Waikii...

LM: Oh right.

CK:and Makahalau and ah we were hauling water!

LM: Right.

CK: We were you know hauling County water and stuff and oh we were in bad shape hauling water, hauling water. So I kept on begging the trustees to improve water so we had to go to the DLNR and work them up. We have a meeting that we're gonna improve our water. [chuckles] Finally we got the water and boy we got water system we changed all the system over to down by that Hongwanji church going out that way...

LM: Wow.

CK: And then one of our smaller lines tributary lines you know galvanized pipe was all corroded too...we changed that ah to black Driscoll pipe.

LM: So Parker basically set up all the water?

CK: Parker did all that water.

LM: For this town pretty much probably?

CK: Yeah originally I think all the water came from from that system but then the County came in...Made it, started the reservoir during the war...

LM: Right. So what did you guys do in a drought? Like when you had bad drought what would you guys do for water?

CK: Well the water you know after we improved that water system...And then we made those those reservoirs out at Waikii. We lined the reservoirs you know? And that was the big big deal with DLNR that we had a reservoir reserved in case we got into drought...

LM: Just in case...

CK:we could go to that.

LM:O K.

CK: And then they approved.

LM: That's great.

CK: Water is valuable in any ranches they need water ah you can have the best meat in the world you cannot go without water.

LM: It doesn't matter.

CK: You can get the best bull in the world but you cannot express potential without proper environment.

LM: Right.

CK: I have to explain we needed the water and pasture management. Before genetics.

LM: Right. So your first priority was to fix the water.

CK: Yeah that's my priority you know?

LM: Yeah. And then once you fixed the water then then what did you focus on?

CK: Pasture management pasture rotation.

LM: O.K.

CK: Of course in the meantime you looking at your your genetic improvement yeah that's that's ongoing. You cannot overlook that but you needed water and pasture management are more important than genetics.

LM: What did you do to improve the pasture management?

CK: Well rotation of pastures and we get pastures but then that we went and look at just pasture management. We had the holistic manager from South Africa and pasture management then. He called it holistic pasture- holistic resource management. I told eh the cowboys don't understand that kine word. [laughs]

LM: [laughs]

CK: Yeah but ah that was a big help for us. I went to Dr. Anthony and we he looked at mainland guys at different universities what kind of pasture management program they had. They had rotation grazing but they didn't have anything like pasture management. So you know I was looking forward to getting some place and finally we found this one.

LM: So what did you do? Did you break down paddocks into smaller ones or did you just start rotating the big ones?

CK: No we look at the you know we got smaller paddocks on this side on the wet weather side. And we we we made that into our special management program.

LM: Oh that.

CK: Like the pie shape you know they talk about the pie shape and all that the hub and all the spokes.

LM: O.K.

CK: The guy from South Africa did that in Africa where it is dry country and he knows everything about dry country and we asked him about wet country he don't know too much about wet country.

LM: Right.

CK: And and we were successful. We had [inaudible] at the time ah you know Mud Lane...went started down there. And we had ah the Extension Service guy and our agronomist Joe Spencer they were helping us how many cattle to put in there it take more time to put in more cattle but you know you overlook animal health. In the rainy country and they can pile up and they [inaudible] they break out in pneumonia.

LM: Mm.

CK: And we lost some cattle and with pneumonia. And so you know you need to learn things like that. The whole basic idea like Dr. Savory from South Africa said in the in the Wild West where the buffaloes graze the buffaloes graze in a tight herd...

LM: Oh they stick together?

CK: They move they move...

LM: Right.

CK:they they were doing that by themselves. And then you know ah the the domestic cattle the ranches in America you got a big pasture and the cattle go and surface graze what they want to eat.

LM: O.K.

CK: And but this way they gotta eat everything in this paddock. They cut they cut this thing down...

LM: Right you're right.

CK:they also they also fertilize with their urine and the manure and then she move 'em and as you continue to do this rotation the pasture gets better.

LM: Oh...

CK: The conditions get better you because they not only eat what they want to eat they gotta eat everything and then new growth comes up. Out here at Keamoku we had a fire you know just [inaudible] the foreman out there said you got barbed wire grass out there. Cattle don't eat barbed wire grass like fountain grass they no like fountain grass.

LM: Yeah yeah.

CK: But but the barbed wire grass is the hard grass and the cattle don't like eat but when it burned one day we had a burn out there between the Saddle Road junction? And when we started the rotation again here the barbed wire grass just started coming and the cattle ate the young grass.

LM: Cause it's green when it's little right?

CK: Yeah yeah. It's softer so they can eat it. Like like the fountain grass they'll eat it if it's young.

LM: O.K.

CK: But if if adult they don't they have hard time...

CK: There's no nutrients in that fountain grass.

LM: Right.

CK: Yeah. Same with the barbed wire grass they don't like it.

LM: O.K. So did so you used the the spoke thing out and the dry side too then?

CK: Yeah Keamoku.

CK: But you know what we were carrying in this paddock like this we call ah ah ah we had we called one paddock Waikoloa.

LM: O.K.

CK: We were carrying in this area, we were carrying 200. We doubled that you know in in one year.

LM: Really.

CK: We carried 400.

LM: Wow.

CK: Through this rotation program. And the pastures improved.

LM: Right! So you did your water and then the pasture management and then where did you folks go?

CK: Genetics and cross-breeding and AI artificial insemination.

LM: Did AI help to improve your calf crop a lot?

CK: Ah no the calf drop you not going to have as good of a calf drop like natural fertilize...

LM: Mm.

CK: Because you know ah the system it's just like you know you use artificial but natural fertilize you can have better way better percentage but you gotta expect that ah there's different methods we weren't you know we had in artificial insemination you gotta know when the cow get heat and so...

LM: You gotta watch and...

CK: No you have you have these teaser bulls. You know? They they vasectomized so they cannot ah produce calves so they climb and we put straps on them and there's a well here with a red marker so when he when he climbs on the cow...

LM: You mark...

CK: It marks the cow.

LM: Smart!

CK: When we bring on in the herd you see all the red markers.

LM: Then you know...

CK: Yeah the red markers. From the [inaudible] ah the cows conceive better at certain time of heat period maybe she stays in heat maybe one or two days that's all...

LM: Right.

CK: And then we changed to a different system.

LM: [chuckles]

CK: We have this ah what do you call it? Estrol synchronization where you synchronize the heat you give that cows all injection same time...

LM: Oh...

CK:so if you say if you got this 100 cows and inject every every one of them that's just [inaudible]they'll they'll come in heat. All of them will come into heat...

LM: Same time?

CK: Just like ah birth control kind of stuff. It controls the cycle.

LM: Right.

CK: I went to this ranch in Texas that ah where there was crossbreeding the rotational crossbreeding that's that's one of the ways I learned how to do that rotation of crossbreeding.

LM: Oh.

CK: You gotta identify your animal your cow already you know? They they ear tag all their cows. Say if they got say if they get Hereford Angus Simmental and Brown Swiss...

LM: O.K.

CK: And all the cow Hereford cows...

LM: O.K.

CK: If they crossbreed they'll identify their calves with certain kind of ear marks or or only the ear tag [inaudible] all different ear marks. Says it's Angus times Hereford their calves Angus Hereford calves will have a certain ear mark. Will cut the ear and leave it like this.

LM: O.K.

CK: So can identify. So if the heifer when she goes to the next herd maybe she's gonna breed to a Simmental Angus ah Hereford female breed to a Simmental their off springs will have a different ear mark so we know the heifer calves [inaudible] market.

LM: Right.

CK: But this ones here they maybe they going to Brown Swiss you gotta have an earmark the heifer get so you don't get them mixed up. You know all this earmarks was here and this other earmark say is this earmark is straight like that all of these goes to a different [inaudible]. And all of these ones go to the next ah say what was maybe a Shorthorn...

LM: O.K.

CK: And the Shorthorn heifers might they have two Vs on their ears. Then all these heifers go here. So you don't get mixed up so you don't mix up...

LM: Okay.

CK: The females rotate. The bulls stay in the same area. You can go three way crossbreeding or you can go crisscross with just two breeds...

LM: Back and forth.

CK: But then you know you can get too close. You lose your hybrid vigor.

LM: Right.

CK: You know what's hybrid vigor? Well you know everything in breeding on hybrid vigor is you increase increase the good thing that each animal has. If they get stronger they have higher calf [inaudible] percentage you know they got better milking than the cows. All of that comes into it. Anything any desirable traits come in of course there's some undesirable traits we try to get rid of those...

LM: And the more you breed out the bad things the better the...

CK: Yeah.

LM:vigor is of the animals. All right. O.K.

LM: And they didn't have this system before before you came to Parker? What were they...

CK: No no no they did crossbreeding like I said Angus and Hereford in Kohala. Where the biggest crossbreeding program had in Kohala.

LM: O.K.

CK: About 3,000 cows were bred to Angus. But there wasn't any rotation everything.

LM: During the time you were managing Parker and you were using a holistic method, were all the ranches using the holistic method or was that kind of a new thing?

CK: Well it's a new thing and ah Kahua with Monty...

LM: Right right.

CK: Very progressive Monty...

LM: Yeah.

CK: Yeah.

LM: Yeah. He liked that.

CK: Yeah. And I don't know how many much of the other ranchers whether how much they went to use that pasture management.

CK: Nobody heard about rotation grazing before. Grazing the holistic resource management ah after I got back here then we got a method.

LM: Then you started. O.K. O.K.

LM: What was the biggest challenge you had to deal with when you became manager of the livestock division?

CK: To ah you know the trustees none of them were cattle people and well Richard's not here anymore. He wasn't a cattleman see...

LM: No yeah.

CK:and [my job] was kind of hard...When I wanted my authority ah he asked me, and I had to prove that I had a hard time. So they hired Dr. Anthony there to come down here. He came down four times.

LM: Really?

CK: What I was getting at he agreed with me that's how I got my authority...

LM: Oh...

CK: On water, pasture, genetic improvement...I was lucky in that.

LM: It makes sense though.

CK: Yeah. And you know he's [Dr. Anthony] got lotta other work that he get he know he know he's not looking for that much money. But he in his mind he wants to help anybody and any rancher improve the operation of cattle operation. He backed me up...

LM:on your stuff.

CK: Yeah. And that's how the trustees agreed on my first three priorities. I was lucky in that way that they hired that guy [Dr. Anthony]. Because he's been all over he knows what what's important he knows cattle ranching. And you gotta justify you gotta have your action plan what you're gonna do.

LM: Um hum.

CK: What's your desire what is your desire. And that's what I learned in Dale Carnegie. We went to Dale Carnegie management school. The ranch put us to Dale Carnegie management school. When I first came back from the military. You know you grow up you don't know this kind of

management practice cause we never worked like that and that helped manage the people that not only the people but set our priorities you know how to write up your reports and what you did right and how the action plan. You've got to speak with the trustee. This my plan and how it is, what it takes to do it. And what you gotta do to get that to that point.

CK: In order to improve your division or your branch or whatever [clears throat] some other guys felt that if they showed their men all what they knew then they don't need him anymore.

LM: Right.

CK: They said if I show everything then the rest don't need me.

LM: Yeah. [laughs]

CK: But they forgot that I can do that and you know I show my men all what I do I go up one more step.

LM: Right so you learned more.

CK: I can train the next people see?

LM: Right. [chuckles] That's old style though...

CK: Yeah. [chuckles]

LM: What was the working environment like when you were at Parker- I know it's different then and how it is now...

CK: Yeah. Well you know ah the old days there was the General Manager who was Hartwell Carter.

LM: O.K.

CK: Then he get he had ah one top ah foreman in the cattle management side and then one other physical property side.

LM: Oh yeah?

CK: And then when I before I started working on the ranch he was the taking care of the physical property and my dad was in charge of the well he's not in charge he's under Carter every day every evening he comes to our house to check...

LM: [laughs]

CK:sit down and talk about the cattle work.

LM: The day...

CK: Yeah. And that's, that's a old system he had then. Actually then when Penhallow came in he cut into three ah divisions. That was that method then the one that really stuck on was ah cut into divided the ranch into three divisions and each division had its foreman and he wasn't the

ah marketing foreman or breed foreman. That's Penahallow's method. He changed to well Rally took over after Penahallow...

LM: O.K.

CK: And Rally went back to the Hartwell Carter system. I was his top manager...

LM: O.K.

CK: Yeah. And he had somebody else in the physical property- the old system.

LM: Oh.

CK: Then when Gordon Lent and Jack came in from Arizona New Mexico and Jack he set up a more systematic management program. We had a chain of command. Before we didn't have chain of command. Big boss up. [laughs]

LM: O.K. Oh so he made chain of command?

CK: Yeah. Gordon Lent was a, was a smart man. He wasn't a cattleman.

LM: Oh O.K.

CK: Yeah you know but ah I seen life goes on you know you you learn not only the good things you gotta learn the like mistakes of somebody else.

LM: Right.

CK: You learn from mistakes somebody else.

LM: Right right.

CK: If you think only you doing good and you don't know you don't watch mistakes the other person makes you get a wrong track you know...

LM: Right.

CK: I learned from my dad when he go and do when he's wrong I remember. I don't tell him because...

LM: Right. [laughs]

CK: I don't tell him he's wrong. And even like now you know ah ah I used to stay with him you know when I retired or maybe before I retired he's he lived to 98 so we had a long time to talk story he and I when, I was single he and I used to sit on the kitchen table talk about cattle. And ah when he retired he no like what's going on on the ranch and I used to breed and when I became manager and then he tells me after I got through with being manager he tell me, "Who who bring that black cow in there?"

LM: [laughs] He didn't like it huh?

CK: [laughs] "Who put the, who put the brand on the horses' shoulder?"

LM: Oh no. [chuckles]

CK: [chuckles] But you know I learned that from the people that change is gonna come.

LM: Well what did you enjoy most about working at Parker Ranch?

CK: [chuckles] Well I like the life you know I been in the service thought maybe that I can find another career.

LM: Right right.

CK: When I went in there and they sent me to what they thought that was the most modern thing in service.

LM: What was that?

CK: Communications teletype.

LM: Oh!

CK: And ah when I got out these guys from Honolulu used to live here in Waimea. They tell me if you want a job you can get good job at Hawaiian Airlines or something. I tell 'em no I'll go back...Be cowboy! [laughs]

LM: Are you happy you did?

CK: I didn't like doing that kind of stuff.

LM: I know! [laughs]

CK: [chuckles]

LM: You're smart. You would have been in an office.

CK: Yeah when I left Makahalau you know I just been five months up there...I didn't know too much about the cattle side ah but we were started to train horses and stuff like that- you know but I enjoyed that part.

LM: Um hum.

CK: But then as you get older you know ah so I got a interest in purebred cattle and learning about them and I really liked that stuff and and then [clears throat] certain breeds looking at breeds but production...

LM: Yeah.

CK:that's the the main thing. But you gotta keep production up. What cow she produces then we we weighed and graded the calves and the bull calves or the calves we kept for replacement we grade them- a yearling and then you select what cattle you want to improve your herd a little.

LM: What do you think was the best thing you contributed to Parker Ranch in your 47 years of working?

CK: Well you know [clears throat] to me when I was up there I never dreamed I'd be up there but I started from scratch.

LM: Um hum.

CK: Ah what I accomplished when I was the manager of the water and development and then pasture management...and crossbreeding and AI that's what I in my mind that I did for the ranch... Water was here but we had to improve...

LM: Yeah.

CK:puka pipes they all were fixed...

LM: That was important for sure.

CK: And you know one of the things that I didn't like was Ka'u was throw away Ka'u.

LM: [laughs] You could forget about that part of your experience.

CK: [chuckles] That's the worst part of my life.

LM: [laughs] So are you still involved like do you guys still have cattle today like do you go like ride horse once in a while or some...

CK: No ah I don't ride horses anymore you know when I ah the last part of year my neck is giving me problems...

LM: Oh yeah.

CK: I got whip lash one time from horse bucking. When I was young I didn't care I didn't feel it.

LM: Yeah you'd get up.

CK: One day went down to the racetrack 4th of July we had different kind of- they wanted to make the ah the ground you know 4th of July is only for the cowboys.

LM: Right.

CK: But what about the rest of the guys?

LM: Yeah.

CK: So they wanted tug-of-war.

LM: Oh. [chuckles]

CK: So I had to help pull tug-of-war. When I got back on my horse boy my neck got sore from the old whip lash.

LM: Oh.

CK: And I had to go to chiropractor's to crack my neck. And when you get old it comes back.

LM: Um hum.

CK: And the latter the last years of my time I had hard time my neck bothered riding horses.

LM: Well now you're golfing and using your pasture management there!

CK: And in some places are good like in the golf course I work part time at the Waikoloa Village...

LM: Um hum.

CK: When I started playing golf when that place opened it was all Bermuda grass nice Bermuda grass Kikuyu grass come down to the shoes [inaudible]...

LM: Right...

CK: ...and the guys would poison all the Kikuyu. Then they changed that guy the greens keeper we had greens keeper and now the whole country's Kikuyu!

LM: Oh! Really?

CK: Yeah.

LM: Wow! It took over that fast.

CK: And then when I retired from the ranch '96 I played golf I play golf more often and then grass that grass they call it ah Goose grass. Hard grass. Ah taking over the golf course and there was they didn't have a good program to eradicate that thing or control I would say that it's hard to eradicate you know but control ah keep on watching them hire young kids and nobody doing a good job.

LM: Yeah.

CK: Getting worse and worse until I offered to do the work down there and I got it under control.

LM: Just to control it? Really?

CK: And the Kikuyu is a big help.

LM: Oh.

CK: I tell the guy the old manager you gotta make the Kikuyu strong so it chokes out that thing...

LM: The other stuff.

CK: He don't believe me you know.

LM: [chuckles]

CK: Now we got a good greens keeper oh he takes care he water the Kikuyu fertilize the Kikuyu. We want that Kikuyu strong. So on the Fairways there's no more hardly any Goose grass I cannot find it it's only in the rough.

LM: Your knowledge came in handy.

CK: Yeah you know my uncle is a agronomist on the ranch and his big push is we're all grass farmers. [laughs] Cattle rancher is a grass farmer.

LM: That's true yes. Cause without grass we have nothing. [laughs] We're grass farmers. But I think that's a good thing to remember because to have good cattle we have to take good care of our land. And it's not just for your cows it's for the land too.

CK: Yeah. Of course you know water once you get it going good you know you you're safe but you gotta always keep in mind you gotta keep improving- it's ongoing.