

## **Report on the 2004 TSCRA Annual School for Successful Ranching Program: Bud Williams on Stress Management.**

By Herman Detering

In line with current interest in stress and cattle management, (see *The Brahman Journal*, Oct. '03, *Gulf Coast Cattleman*, Feb. 04), the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association invited Bud Williams, internationally respected expert on cattle handling, to address their 2004 School of Successful Ranching.

On Sunday, March 7, Bud drew a packed house at the Austin Convention Center and for four hours, through film, formal presentation and questions and answers, illustrated his approach to handling cattle in a variety of difficult situations.



Stress was the concern that stood at the center of Bud's focus on handling techniques. Temperament and facilities both took back seats to his emphasis on lowering stress through proper bodily positioning and movement of the handler. It is not cattle genetics, he argued, but ours that causes handling problems. As predators it is natural for us to chase and force cattle whereas measured pressure and timely releases are really much more effective.

Bud has spent the last fifty years handling all types of herd animals, from deer in the Arctic Circle to cattle on the Aleutian Islands. He has found through experience that if you will take a few minutes to teach cattle to accept restrained pressure they will willingly go where you direct them.

Also, Bud lamented the fact that while the cattle industry looks to experts in matters of health and nutrition, few avail themselves of consultants when it comes to handling cattle. It seems, he commented, that we have forgotten the techniques our grandfathers knew, and are paying a high price in stress-related illness, weight loss and diminished reproduction rates. The best genetics, medication and the finest facilities can lose much of their value if poor handling is used in daily contact. Low-stress techniques further allow the rancher to derive maximum value from his feed and economize on the labor required to get the job done.

As a small Brahman breeder I have tried to apply Bud's techniques for four years with the results that I can now handle my herd safely and efficiently alone, on foot, even in tight quarters when they have young calves at their sides.

Bud offers stockmanship workshops on a regular basis in Bowie, Texas. I would urge anyone with an interest in cattle, or in learning more about how the mind of prey animals operate, to avail themselves of what he has to offer.

For workshop scheduling and more information, see his web site: [www. Stockmanship.com](http://www.Stockmanship.com).