# Keystone Ranch

## Ismay, MT

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# Ranch

About 6 miles north of Ismay, MT [was renamed JOE, MONTANA in 1993 for a one year, more on that later] which is about 6 miles north of highway 12 and 60 miles east of Miles City, MT sits the Keystone Ranch 21,887 acres of which 10,742 +/- deeded and 11,145 are BLM and State of Montana lease. There are 2,577 acres of crop ground [according to FSA 156 EZ's] on the deeded plus 484 acres of crop ground [according to FSA 156 EZ's] on the state lease. None of this is currently being farmed and is seeded down into hay crops with some alfalfa consisting of newer seeding.

Usually in this area ranches will put up ¾ of a ton/acre depending on moisture and fertility. The ranch has water rights for irrigation off Pennel creek for 258 acres. This is a spreader dike irrigation system that floods during periods of high water. As of February 2024, roughly half of the ranch's grass was still intact. Owner and realtor state that this ranch should support 550 cow calf pairs and 300-400 yearlings depending on management and weather.

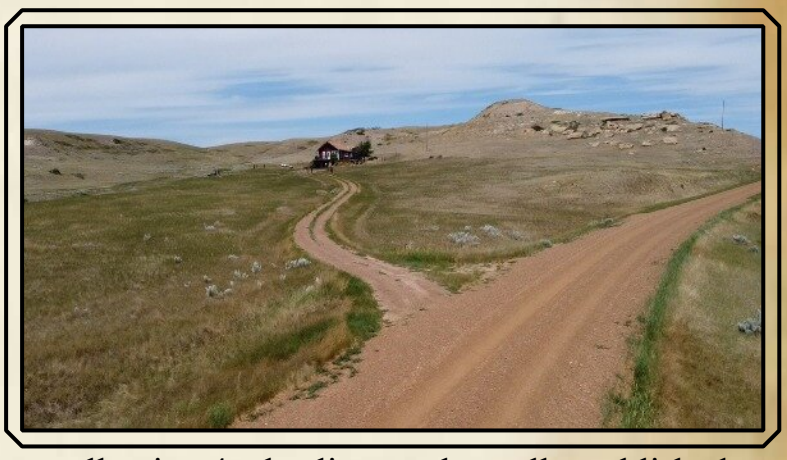
Calving starts in early April and finishes in May. The ranch is in two separate piece's the main ranch which is 6 miles north of Ismay and 240 acres just on the NE corner of Ismay which has the headquarters for the ranch. On the 240 acres is three feed lots, one called the bull feed lot, the church lot, and the other is a winter calving set up in combination with a feed lot. Water is like the grass, lots of it. There are six flowing artesian wells and water rights filed on 9 more wells.

The ranch is watered by wells, a set of pipelines, reservoirs, springs, Pennel creek and O'Fallon creek. There are three main pipelines: One runs from an artesian well that is also powered by a diesel generator from the old homestead to the west in section 35 almost to the west boundary and supplies a 30,000-gallon tank which gravity flows to 10 stock tanks is powered . There is also a 10,000-gallon tank on a separate well that gravity flows to 5 stock tanks. The west side also has 9 reservoirs, one spring, numerous other wells, and O'Fallon creek. The east side is watered by two artesian wells that flow to a 10,000-gallon storage tank and a 22,000 gallon storage tank that gravity flow to 14 stock tanks via a pipeline.

The east side also has Pennel creek, 8 reservoirs, springs, and individual wells. There are no windmills on the ranch, all have been converted to solar, diesel generators or propane generators.

Some of the storage tanks have electronic cell phone activated monitors to let you know when the storage tanks need to be refilled. The pipeline, storage tanks and stock tanks were designed by the NRCS. We have all the water right filings available. There are 46 rights which include the wells, irrigation and stock rights.

Terrain is varied, level ground, rolling hills, timbered hills, draws, creek bottom, hay meadows and even some bad lands. Gravel is readily available on the ridge on the east side of Fallon Creek, this is gravel not scoria.



Recreational opportunities are available on the ranch also. There is a pleasant "hunter's" house with water, sewer, and electricity this rents out for $150.00 to $200.00 per day during hunting season and is booked up a year in advance. The ranch offers Mule deer, antelope, turkeys, pheasants, and sharp-tail grouse hunting, With very limited access to the public land. There is a great opportunity to run a vacation rental using the house in the off season allowing 4 wheeling on the well-established road system that the ranch has. One of the reservoir's was stocked with trout a while ago so one could also offer fishing. besides a small prairie dog town [on BLM] there are box turtles and a plethora of songbirds. Ranch also has teepee rings, and the foundation of the old one room school.  There are grouse leks on the property.

Ranch also has teepee rings, the foundation of the old one room school. On the west boundary is an old homesteaders set of buildings complete with the dump ready to be excavated.  One can still see the old dug outs used by the wolf hunters as living quarters. Besides, remnants from a time when petrified forests existed can still be found across the ranch.

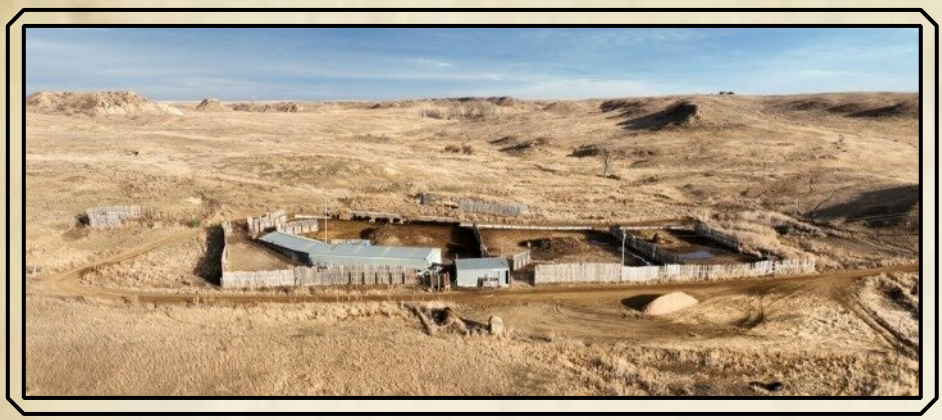
The actual headquarters is about 4 miles to the south of the main ranch and sits on 240 acres, featuring various structures designed for practicality. The first residence, built in 2008, is a modern five-bedroom, three-bathroom home with a spacious 2400 sq ft on the main floor and a well-lit 2100 sq ft basement. Equipped with air conditioning and warm water radiant heating, it seamlessly combines comfort and functionality.

The second residence, dating back to 1960, offers four bedrooms and two bathrooms.
With a total of 1468 sq ft on the upper floor and a 760 sq ft gas-heated basement, it exudes a timeless appeal.

Adding a touch of history, the third home, built in 1916, provides a quaint 1012 sq ft space.

The headquarters also includes a Quonset hut shop from 1955,  a 45 x 55 metal insulated shop with wood heat, three 10,000-bushel grain storage bins, three 4,000-bushel grain storage bins, a grain hopper and a stationary grain grinder.

200 head combination feed lot and calving barn, 14 calving jugs, 10-15 head indoor pen, hydraulic squeeze chute, alley with a head catch, 20,000-pound scale, multiple wind sheltered corrals all tied together to the calving barn.



There is an additional feedlot, known as the "bull" feedlot, and two sets of piped corrals—one on the eastern side of the main ranch and the other near the "hunter" house.

Getting back to the name change on the town. In 1993 Joe Montana was traded from the San Francisco 49'rs to the Kansas City Chiefs football team. A radio station in Kansas City came up with the idea that if they could find a small town in MT that would be willing to change their town name to Joe Montana for a year they would furnish a expense paid trip to a Kansas City Chiefs game for everyone in town. So, the Ismay residents had a meeting and decided to do it. The population of Ismay was 21 people at the time. Some were little kids so some of the Ismay Rural Fire Dept. members from the outlying area went in their place. They even had a 2-page spread towards the front of the Sports Illustrated Magazine with a picture of the community at the football game. The best part of the story is what follows: From the royalties the town got paid from t shirt, sweatshirt, and cap sales they made enough money to build a new community center. It is rumored to have cost over $98,000. It is named Joe Montana Community Center, sadly Joe Montana never visited the town.

The historic Ismay Community Church is home to a thriving congregation of around 40 members. The building boasts beautiful stained-glass windows, a rich past, and the original organ is still being used.

# Improvements

The keystone ranch was awarded the 2011 Montana Environmental Stewardship Award by the Montana Stockgrowers Association, quite a prestigious award.

Documents available for review include:

- A summary of the water rights,
- All applications associated with the water rights,
- BLM leases,
- State leases,
- A water line map,
- A history of the Keystone ranch made by the Montana stock growers association with official letters recommending the ranch for the award,
- well logs,
- county property documents,
- and FSA records.

If you're in the market for an excellent, well-rounded cattle ranch that also provides some additional revenue through hunting, your search ends here.
Priced to sell at $9,950,000.

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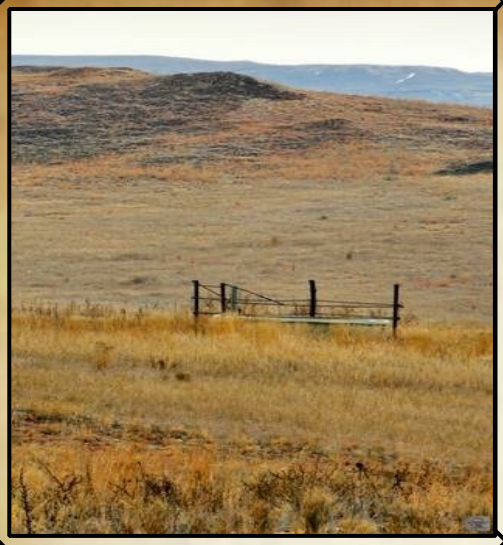

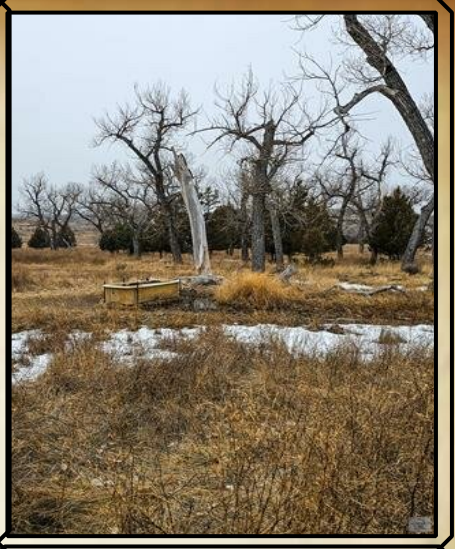

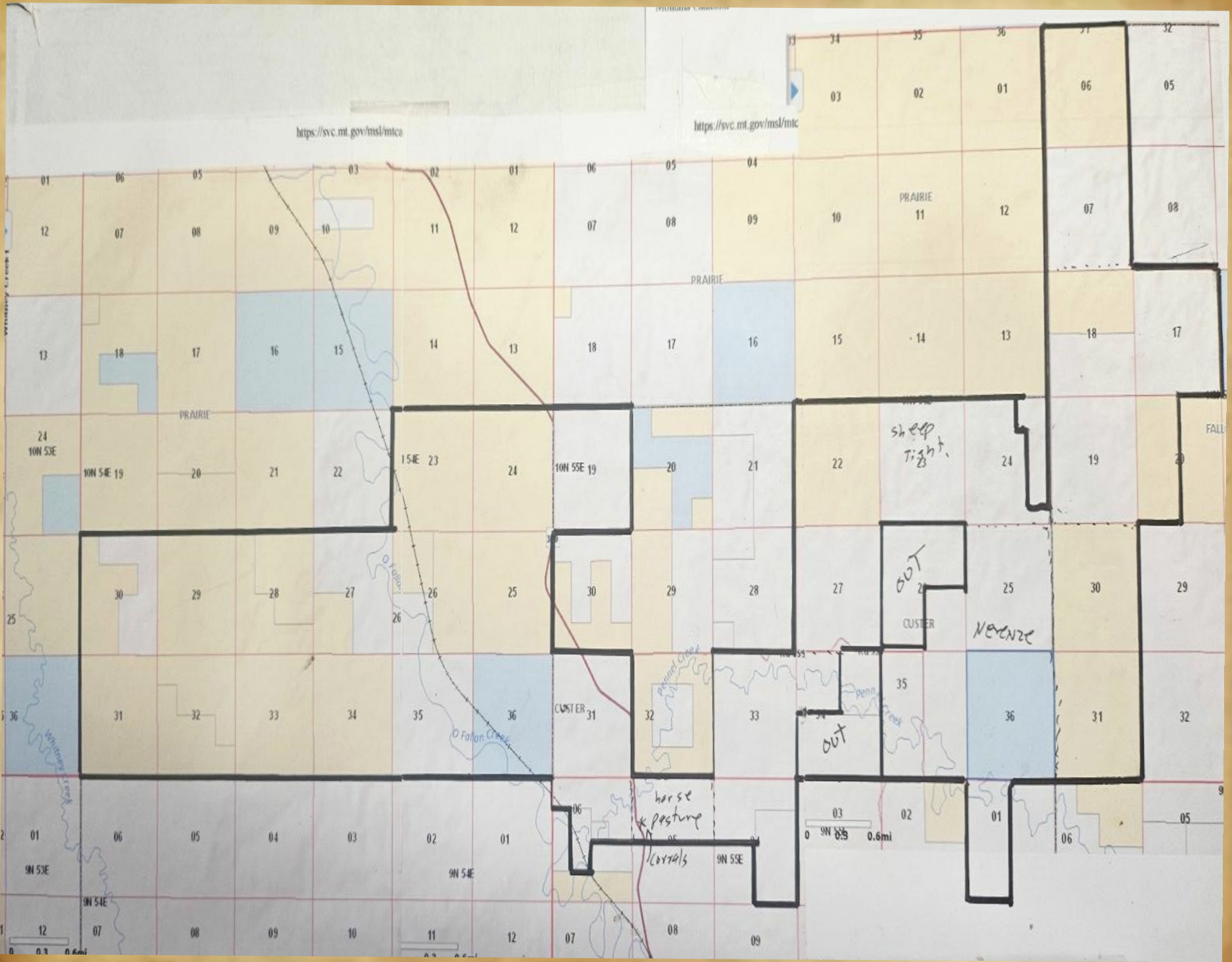
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