



A Bountiful Harvest on Rancho Mission Viejo



Restaurants, grocery stores and pre-packaged food providers from throughout California, across the nation and even those in Japan and other foreign markets all have something in common. Many of the fresh lemons they use as garnish and as ingredients in their mixes, sauces and recipes came from the same source — Rancho Mission Viejo.

“One of the best kept secrets in Orange County today is that Rancho Mission Viejo is the largest supplier of lemons in the region, and one of the biggest suppliers in Southern California,” said Gilbert Aguirre, Rancho Mission Viejo’s Executive Vice President-Ranch Operations. “We currently have about 500 acres of ranch land in citrus production. We’re harvesting lemons four times a year now, which translates into about three semi-trucks of lemons a day!”

Aguirre noted that last year the Ranch family planted 15 acres of Hass avocados and could be harvesting them as early as next Spring.

“From its location in and around gently rolling coastal foothills, Rancho Mission Viejo benefits from a year-round moderate climate,” said Aguirre. “This micro-climate allows us to plant both lemons and avocados in key spots throughout the Ranch including portions of Chiquita Canyon, especially near the existing Chiquita Waste Water Treatment Plant, and in other locations north of Ortega Highway. Just last year, we planted another 3,200 lemon trees on

20 acres and about 2,000 five gallon avocado trees. All of the trees are growing at a great rate.”

The first citrus pick of the season was completed in March. The second pick is now underway, and will be followed in succession by the third pick in June and the fourth and final pick in September. The lemons from Rancho Mission Viejo are sold on consignment through an independent packinghouse under the Grimmway Farms label.

“The perpetuation of O’Neill/Avery/Moiso family agricultural operations is a key component to the comprehensive open space preservation and land use management plan for the remaining 23,000 acres of Rancho Mission Viejo,” said Aguirre. “Through this Ranch Plan, we intend to help feed America and other nations, from right here, at Rancho Mission Viejo.”

To learn more about The Ranch Plan, visit www.RanchoMissionViejo.com.

Saddle-Up for Spring Round Up

As the hills turn green and the days grow a little warmer, the beginning of spring on Rancho Mission Viejo is marked by a traditional celebration of the proud ranching heritage of the O’Neill/Avery/Moiso family.

Recently completed was the Annual Spring Round Up and Branding, a time when calves born during the fall are gathered from the different pastures on Rancho Mission Viejo and herded into centrally located corrals for medical inspection, de-horning, inoculations, and branding with the “Rafter M” brand.

“This is really what Rancho Mission Viejo is all about,” said Tony Moiso, President and Chief Executive Officer of his family’s cattle ranch. “Since 1882, our family has maintained a cow herd on this land. And, every spring, we perpetuate the tradition by rounding up, branding, and inoculating the calves. Our hope is that, through The Ranch Plan, we’ll be able to continue cattle ranching on our land for the benefit *and* enjoyment of future generations.”

Visit www.RanchoMissionViejo.com and click on “history” to learn more about life on the Ranch.



THE IMPORTANCE OF RAIN ON RANCHO MISSION VIEJO

From the late 1880s through the 1920s, Rancho Mission Viejo was home to Orange County’s biggest wheat and barley fields, as well as rows of black-eyed peas and sugar beets. Since the 1960s, the Ranch family has annually planted grain crops; including the 1,500 acres of barley planted just last fall.

“From winter through spring, cattle graze on the southern end of the Ranch,” said Derek Knobel, Rancho Mission Viejo’s Ranch Manager. “In Summer, when the grass has turned brown, we move the cattle over to the north side of the ranch and allow them to graze on the barley. Since barley is a dry farming crop, we’re dependent on the rains from winter and spring to make the stocks grow so that we’re able to feed our cattle without importing feed.”

Added Knobel: “As the farmers and ranchers all across America say, ‘pray for rain – just not too much and not too little.’ ”



HISTORIC PLACES TO BE PRESERVED

An underlying goal of The Ranch Plan is the family's intent to preserve nearly two-thirds of Rancho Mission Viejo as open space.

Equally as important is the family's commitment to preserve several of the most treasured historical sites on the Ranch.

Provided is a map and list of these proposed places to be forever protected by the family.



- ① *Rancho Mission Viejo Oficina – Rancho Mission Viejo Headquarters.*
- ② *The Ranch House*
- ③ *The Cow Camp – the heart of all Rancho Mission Viejo cattle ranching operations.*
- ④ *Campo de los Amantes – an historic campground and picnic area.*
- ⑤ *Campo Portola – the main campground for the riders of El Viaje de Portola, the annual trail ride commemorating the 1769 explorations of Gaspar de Portola.*
- ⑥ *Bull Camp – a scenic pasture highlighted with stands of heritage oak trees.*



RANCHO MISSION VIEJO

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*I thought that you might find this of interest -
Best Regards,
Tony Moiso*