

Letters to the Editor

Hi Abbey,

My name is Armando Nieto. I'm a 2nd-year veterinary student at Colorado State here in Fort Collins, Colorado. I'm also a subscriber to *Rangelands* magazine, and I just wanted to drop you a line to tell you how much I enjoyed your story about your internship experience in South Africa. I just returned last month from a similar experience in Mexico, where I lived for 6 weeks with the family of another HM [Holistic Management] Certified Educator—Ivan Aguirre—at their ranch in the Sonoran Desert.

I had learned just enough to make me curious about Holistic Management a little over a year ago when I was in graduate school, and the more I learned, the more I realized that there is a lot more to animal health than just healing the sick ones (or sending them down the road).

Ivan and his wife Martha showed me a new way of looking at animal health and productivity that incorporates a whole slew of other factors like the health of the land, biodiversity from insects to deer and grass to trees, and most especially the commitment and lifestyle of the people managing the whole show—all the same things you learned and wrote about.

Working with this family that was really living the philosophy of HM really put a lot of things in perspective that I had been trying to reconcile in my head for a while now—issues of sustainability, and animal health and welfare, and food production, and water use and desertification, and rural community health, and so on. I came back to the states preaching this new philosophy (new to me, anyway) to my friends and family here, and I mostly got a lot of semi-blank stares.

So I was completely blown away when I got home and found this magazine in my mailbox talking about how you worked toward getting to Africa, and how you got down on your hands and knees to get a better feel for the land, and how the people there took you in like family, and especially the opening sentence about Allan Savory changing your life—it was like I was reading a story about my own experience.

Anyway, I'm typically not one for sending random E-mails off to people I don't know, and I don't imagine you're much more accustomed to receiving them. I just wanted to let you know that I thought your story was great for a number of reasons, one of which is that this is the first article about Holistic Management that I've read by anyone under about age 40.... Maybe our generation is starting to get the message.

So good luck in your current endeavors, and thanks again for the great article,

Armando Nieto

Editor's Note: This letter was sent to the author, Abbey Kingdon (Volume 27, No. 4, August 2005, "After Africa: Finding Home Again"). The writer of the letter, Armando Nieto, and Abbey graciously agreed to allow the letter to be published.