

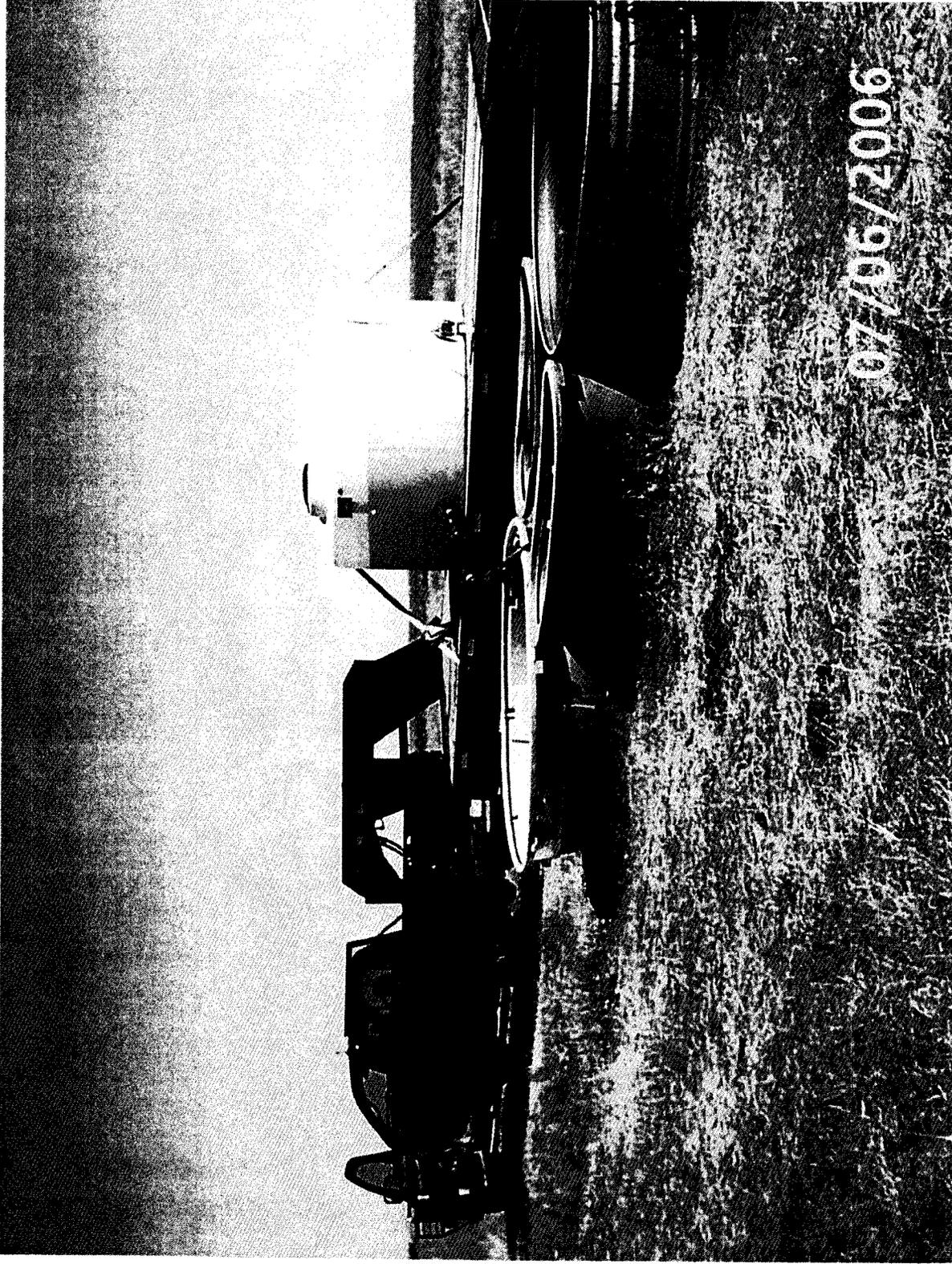
History and Needs of the Porter Ranch

My great grandparents moved and established homesteads in the Decker Montana and Sheridan, Wyoming area in 1914 and 1917. Each of them weathered many obstacles such as the drought and the great depression. Yet all of their hard work paid off for the both of them when they purchased land. My grandparents bought their own place in 1943. Through out the years grandparents have bought more land and inherited parts of their parent's place. My grandmother still lives on their place and manages it. Growing up I spent the summers out there. In the mid 1980's I started working out there in the summers for them. In 1991 to the present I have been working full time.

About the mid 1980's is when the drought began and our reservoirs started going dry. We had no choice but to drill more water wells and deepen some of them because they were also going dry. Since then we have been searching for water for our livestock and every year it becomes more difficult. In 1997 we started experiencing continuous problems with our well at the house. In 2006 we had drilled four wells at the house, with one of them being a dry hole and another going dry after a few years of service. The final well that was drilled in 2006 was 500 feet deep and had not very much water. Just when it was looking hopeless, that same day, an oil and gas company knocked on our door to talk to us about developing our coal bed methane gas minerals. They put in a cistern in for us and we started to use the water from the methane wells. This water is the same water we have used for years it just comes from deeper coal seams.

Being ranchers who respect every ounce of water we can get our hands on, it doesn't make much sense to waste it by be pumping down rivers or put into lined ponds to be evaporated back into the atmosphere. When it could be utilized for watering livestock and for irrigating. Another oil and gas operator has put in water tanks in some of our pastures for the cattle and wildlife.

Our solution is use the water. It's a necessity for survival for ranchers, livestock, and wildlife! It just makes sense. Why can't we put this water into dry reservoirs to water our livestock? In Wyoming, the ranchers who irrigate what was dry land are getting around three to five tons of hay an acre per cutting. These hay fields use to produced nothing but sagebrush for prairie dogs to enjoy. We need to get our priorities straight.



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Testimony before House Agriculture Committee
HB 575
2/17/09



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