

PEN RIDER / PEN CHECKER

# What do they do?

Pen Riders / Pen Checkers are responsible for maintaining the

health and safety of the cattle and performing disease and pest

prevention activities. They move cattle from one location to

another on the farm or off-site. They handle a horse to move,

separate and sort cattle. They operate farm equipment, tools

and technology during all phases of production.

# A day in the life…

Cy has been a pen rider at Monarch Farms for seven years. His day starts early—around six a.m.—and seldom ends until seven or eight o’clock at night. For most of the day, he rides the pens where the cattle are kept and keeps a sharp eye out for signs that the animals are stressed, unhealthy, or at risk. He can recognize the effects on the cattle of various parasites, such as ticks, fleas, and even vampire bats.

He’s responsible for keeping the animals fed and watered, so twice a day, in the early morning and in the evening, he distributes or replenishes water, salt licks, and feed as needed. At feed times, he checks to make sure the animals’ feeding habits are healthy and normal, and reports any unusual behaviour to his supervisor.

He has ridden horses since childhood, which is an essential skill in his job. He spends much of the day on horseback, not only to move around the farm, but to move, separate, and sort cattle throughout the day.

While he has learned to work well with animals, he has to work well with humans, too. He coordinates his activities with the feed truck operator, the veterinarian, the feedlot cattle worker, and other workers on the farm, and part of his job is to move the animals from place to place quickly and calmly so that these workers can do their jobs more efficiently.

“The work is hard, the days are long, and the animals are never going to thank you for the great job you’re doing,” Cy observes. “My job satisfaction comes from being outdoors, being close to the animals, and knowing that I’m helping to keep them safe. If those things are important to you, there’s no better job in the world.”

# learn more about this job

See a complete **job description** for this job.

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