The next generation of cowboys is raring to go! Dell’Orto brothers, three-year-old Waylon S. and 11-day-old Knox Wyatt, are pictured at their first calf branding for 2017. It is the beginning of Waylon’s fourth branding season and he is already showing Knox the ropes. Chances are they both will be participating in many brandings to come.

They live in Mokelumne Hill, Calif., on the Dell’Orto ranch which has been owned and operated by the family for several generations. The brothers are the sixth generation. Ranching roots run strong and deep for these boys. Both sides of their family have been grazing cattle in the Sierra Nevada foothills since the late 1800s. Nine sets of grandparents—going back to their great-great-great-grandparents—have all taken on the task of raising cattle in the foothills of the Mother Lode, as well as grazing cattle during summer months in the High Sierra of Amador, Calaveras and Alpine counties.

Families in the ranching business tend to help each other during their busy seasons, which include calf brandings and cattle drives. Waylon and Knox’s parents, J.W. Dell’Orto and Anne Wooster Dell’Orto, grew up together on such occasions, and the two families continue to work and play together.

Pati Wooster and Robin Dell’Orto are grandmothers to Waylon and Knox.