

Man's Best Friend

► Treat your canine companion, find your next ag job and listen to brand-new tunes from Texas music icon Aaron Watson.

COMPILED BY ABIGAIL BOATWRIGHT

If you're looking for ways to give your dog some love, we're here to help. We have gathered a collection of canine accessories perfect for your dog's next visit to the barn. We've also got a brand-new job-search website geared specifically for work in the agriculture industry, and a new album serves up more classic songs from one of Texas country's favorite artists—Aaron Watson.

Play Fetch

Whether you need a cold-weather blanket, a harness or a toy, these dog products are sure to become favorites.



Terrain D.O.G Reflective Neoprene Lined Dog Harness

Make sure your dog is comfortable and visible day or night with this neoprene-lined harness complete with reflective strips at multiple angles. Blending the right amount of pressure distribution with comfort, this harness has contrasting colored neoprene padding on the belly and chest straps. It can be adjusted with four slides for maximum comfort and range of motion. Price: \$22.99. Available in three sizes and 14 colors from terraindog.com.



Pure and Natural Pet Grooming and Cleansing Wipes

You love your dog, but her penchant for running through the mud leaves undesirable paw prints all over your truck. These wipes from Pure and Natural Pet gently clean away dirt, debris and odors from all over your dog's body without drying her skin. These wipes are biodegradable, paraben and sulfate free. They contain natural ingredients such as jojoba oil and calendula oil and extracts of oatmeal, chamomile and rosemary, as well as lavender oil. Available in convenient flip-top canister with 50 wipes. Price: \$11.99. Available from pureandnaturalpet.com.



Kong Squeezz Ball

Perfect for a game of fetch, the Kong Squeezz Ball has great bounce. The recessed squeaker adds to the fun while keeping the ball safe. A grippy texture makes the ball appealing to chew on. Available in three sizes and four colors. Available at your local retailer.

Weatherbeeta Comfitec Windbreaker 420D Deluxe Dog Coat

Keep your canine warm and dry with this 420-denier coat from equine blanket maker Weatherbeeta. Lined with boa fleece, this dog coat features a full wrap belly closure and a collar with a leash hole. Showerproof, breathable and reflective, this coat comes in four colors and sizes from 12-inch to 32-inch length. Price: Starts at \$29.95 from weatherbeeta.com.



Tug N Toss Jolly Ball

For the dog that loves interactive play, the Jolly Ball is a great toy for fetch or tug-of-war, thanks to its handle. No need to inflate, and it won't deflate, even with punctures. This toy can float and bounce on water for extra fun. Available in multiple sizes—this version is 6-inch and also available in red. Price: \$10.99 from nrsworld.com.

Weaver Leather Floral Tooled Dog Collar

Give your pet a collar to match your belt, like this floral tooled collar from Weaver Leather. Lightly oiled leather is stained with an antique finish to show off the intricate floral tooling and white buckstitching. This collar comes in ¾-inch and 1-inch widths and seven lengths. Price: \$13.39 from ridethebrand.com.



Music Icon

Aaron Watson's *American Soul*

Inspired by America itself and the difficult circumstances the U.S. has experienced in 2020, Aaron Watson's album titled "*American Soul*" contains 10 tracks produced by Watson and Phil O'Donnell. A husband, father and hardworking man, Watson embodies the values Americans hold dear, and those values are conveyed through his latest songs such as "Long Live Cowboys," "Dog Tags" and "Touchdown Town."

Fresh off his 2019 album "*Red Bandana's*" success—the album opened at No. 2 on Billboard's Country Sales Charts—Watson was recently inducted into the Texas Cowboy Hall of Fame. Forbes dubbed Watson "one of country music's biggest DIY success stories." After 20 years in the industry and more than a dozen albums, Watson has remained true to his roots and continues to write and produce classic country tunes at home in any honky-tonk across Texas. His album "*The Underdog*" was the first independent album in the history of country music to top the Billboard Country Albums chart, and he continues to chart his own path as an indie artist.

The digital version of "*American Soul*" was released January 8, and the physical album release is on February 5, available wherever you buy music.

AARON WATSON AMERICAN SOUL



Of the West

FINDING A JOB OR FILLING A POSITION IN THE AG INDUSTRY IS HARD. Scrolling through LinkedIn can be helpful, but when you want a job on a ranch, for example, traditional job-hunting sites just don't have the jobs found through word-of-mouth.

Jessie Jarvis understands this pain point. As a rancher, someone involved in the western apparel and lifestyle industry and with experience in communications, she has experienced the frustration of fruitless job searches while seeking agricultural positions. On the plus side, she has also connected many job seekers with ag positions, and vice versa.

"Earlier this spring, before COVID lockdowns started, in a one-week span, I think I had four or five people reach out—whether it was for an open position, or more of a trade or service-based role—or were asking if I had heard of any open jobs in the industry," Jarvis said.

Watching folks get furloughed or laid off during the pandemic, Jarvis knew these men and women would need to re-enter the workforce. This chain of events inspired Jarvis to build a platform to reach the most amount of people to help strengthen the workforce in the agriculture and western sectors. That platform is called Of The West.



"The ultimate goal for Of The West is to bring together the members of the agriculture and western industries, giving them easier access to one another when it comes to looking for employment, looking to fill employment positions and looking to hire (or be hired) in trade or service roles," Jarvis said. "So much of the work done in those fields require experience or inherent knowledge, and until now, there hasn't been one specific place where individuals with that particular experience or knowledge can go to find who they're looking for."

The platform includes any and all areas of the western and agriculture industries, including rodeo and equine positions. Jarvis hopes to bridge these two industries, highlighting the similarities rather than perpetuating the stigma of a divide between agriculture and the rest—western, rodeo, equine.

"We are very small in numbers, and we all have a similar goal, which is to keep our way of life alive for future generations," Jarvis said. "I think we need to do a better job of coming together, and I think Of The West can really aid in that by bringing all of those industries or sectors together under the same roof." Of The West also aims to

highlight jobs both physically on the farm, ranch or arena, and in the office space.

"I like to think you can't have your boots on the ground if there isn't someone in an office designing those boots or someone in the factory building them," Jarvis said. "People filling roles in offices, production facilities, driving down the road as industry representatives, are just as important as those who are in the dirt. It takes every single one of us, regardless of where we're at logistically, to make these industries successful, and I hope that Of The West can really bring awareness to that."

Jarvis stresses that for Of The West, western is a way of life and shared set of values, not a geographical reference. The platform includes both in-person and remote positions—extremely helpful during pandemic times.

"I'm really hopeful that Of The West can help bring awareness to more positions, and in turn, bring more opportunities to the incredibly talented individuals who live in rural areas but don't have the option to relocate for certain positions," Jarvis said.

Of The West launched January 1 at ofthewest.co (note the .co rather than .com). Start by signing up for a platform to access both the Jobs and Trades sides of the platform. You can then favorite specific positions and businesses, see resumés and apply for jobs.

