

# Hofsteder Ranch by Tom Cartos

## Background

The Hofsteder family were among the first to leave the Empires protected lands and try to make a new life in the freeholds to the east. Life was hard at first, but they quickly learned the best ways to make use of the resources available and what started out as a small wooden house with a couple of sheds has grown in the extensive ranch that stands on the same site today. Dozens of acres around the ranch have also been successfully converted into farmable land and they now supply most of the local settlements with grain, cattle, milk, horses and meat.

Over the last few nights there have been break-ins. This is not unheard of in what is still a largely lawless region, but these episodes have been different. Some of the outer perimeter fences have been smashed down and only one or two of the cows have disappeared at a time, whereas bandits would generally be much quieter, using the gates and attempting to rustle all of the cattle in one go. Larger monsters and creatures occasionally roam the plains nearby, but there was no sign of blood and the remaining animals were quiet and unspooked throughout.

Even stranger is that Gus, the lead farm hand, heard and saw nothing. His eagle eyes and alertness normally keep him well informed of all the goings on around the ranch, both night and day. After the third similar attack Vardin Hofsteder, the head of the family, has put out word in the local town that he is looking for adventurers willing to investigate.

## Grid Information

**GRID SIZE – 44x34 (300DPI)**

**VTT SIZE – 6160x4760 (140DPI)**

**RECOMMENDED PRINT SIZE – A0/ANSI E**

## Design Notes

### Hofsteder Ranch 01 – Farm

- **01** – Grain Silo – Stores of grain from the wider farm are kept here for sale
- **02** – Corral – Mostly grazing for the cows, horses and occasionally sheep. A couple of jumps are also set up for training the younger horses.
- **03** – Cow Shed. Ladder up to **22**
- **04** – Dung Burner – Best way to get rid of excess manure that can't be used on the farm
- **05** – Chicken Coops
- **06** – Bee Hives
- **07** – Water Pump Mill (Base) – Water is scarce in the area, and the easiest way to access it is through wind powered ground pumps like these

- **08** – Water Tank (Base) – Water store for the house and farm
- **09** – Horse Stables – The ranch looks after horses for other families as well as their own stock. Ladder up to **24**
- **10** – Workshed – There is always something to be built or fixed on the farm
- **11** – Wheat Farm – Smaller crop for household use. Additional larger crops are grown on land around the ranch for sale.
- **12** – Vegetable Farm – Primarily growing fodder for the animals
- **13** – Porch – Large outdoor area
- **14** – Herb and Vegetable Garden – Small vegetable plot for household use
- **15** – Dining Area – The family are often joined by the farm hands, so have additional fold out tables stored nearby to extend the space.
- **16** – Living Room – Nights are often spent sitting by the fire and playing the piano.
- **17** – Kitchen
- **18** – Bathroom
- **19** – Master Bedroom
- **20** – Second Bedroom
- **21** -Outhouse

### **Hofsteder Ranch 02 – Barns**

- **01** – Grain Silo – Stores of grain from the wider farm are kept here for sale
- **07** – Water Pump Mill – Water is scarce in the area, and the easiest way to access it is through wind powered ground pumps like these
- **08** – Water Tank – Water store for the house and farm
- **22** – Farmhands Break Area – In between working, the farmhands often gather here to eat, drink and play cards.
- **23** – Additional Household Stores – Non-perishable food items and general homeware that cannot be stored in the main house is kept here
- **24** – General Supply Storage – Sacks of flour, bales of hay, un-weathered lumber, barrels of mead and a number of other general supplies are stored here, hoisted up via the winch.
- **25** – Lead Farm Hands Lodging – The lead farm hand chooses to sleep here at night to be closer to the horses, and to be able to keep an eye on the ranch. The other workers live with their families nearby.