Update from the Feedyard

By: Chip Kemp

After a rough start to the year, the weather has been very kind to your calves in recent weeks.

The University of Missouri facility has dealt primarily with dry, mild temperatures over the last month.

As you can imagine, each of your calves seem to be appreciating that situation.

Also, we are in the midst of planning the ultrasound date for your calves. Likely, by the next newsletter that information will be posted.

We are excited about the opportunity to host our Steer Profitability Competition Field Day in Columbia, MO on April 14th.

This will be a great educational event and an opportunity to see how your projects are progressing at the feedyard.

Please let us know if you are planning on attending the field day so we can plan accordingly. We need those RSVPs in order to plan the event accordingly.

Again, your calves are continuing to excel and impress not only ASA staff, but University of Missouri staff as well.

And finally, we are quickly approaching harvest times of your calves. Those decisions will start coming together in upcoming weeks. We will keep you aware of those details.
5 Lessons Learned From Beef Cattle and My Customers

Editor’s Note: This article was originally written by Anne Burkholder for BEEF Magazine and was published on February 5, 2015

I grew up like the vast majority of Americans – two or more generations removed from the farm.

I had never even heard of a feedyard until I toured my future father-in-law’s; inaccurately thinking that all cattle traveled straight from the pasture to the packing plant.

Two years later (June 1997), I went to work at the feedyard.

Amidst the animals, the land, and the never-ending list of chores, I’ve learned powerful lessons that guide me on my journey of humanely raising food animals.

Each day, I look at my feedyard with two sets of eyes: those of a cattle feeder and those of an advocate.

Today, I share thoughts from both perspectives as seen through my crystal ball for the future of the beef production.

5 Lessons I Learned From My Cattle

1. Proper preconditioning is vital to animal performance. Take the time to vaccinate, provide good nutrition early in life, and teach your cattle to trust a human caregiver before they leave the home ranch.

2. A calf must be bred with an innate desire to live (vigor), and phenotypically capable of remaining healthy all of the way to the packing plant.

This includes having a physical structure that allows it to attain an appropriate harvest weight without compromising welfare.

3. Limiting stress on cattle is critical for both calf health and performance. To effectively limit stress, cattle caregivers must work together in order to continuously meet the needs of the calf.

Sharing information up and down the production chain, as well as working to limit transportation and acclimation stress, allows the calf to remain healthy and efficiently convert resources into high-quality beef. Collaboration provides the key as the animal moves from one farm to another along the production chain.

4. Establishing a “partner mentality” allows for improvement in animal care as well as beef quality. Together we get stronger. Together we work for continuous improvement.

Together we grow beef that we are proud to share with our families. There is very little room for “I” in the beef production chain, a concentration on “we” creates sustainability as we look to the future.

5. It is the little things that count. Paying attention to detail when caring for a prey animal is a critical component for success.

Cattle are creatures of habit as well as being sensitive to their environment. Learn to “think like a calf” so that you can set him up for success.

5 Lessons I Learned From My Customers

1. Don’t do anything on your farm that you cannot explain. What people outside of your farm think is important – they ultimately sign your paycheck.

2. Tell the true story – be real, be personal, be sincere. Focus on what you know – your farm – yet recognize that there are multiple ways to grow food with integrity.

3. Understand that you will have to share of yourself in order to build trust. It is people who have relationships and establish trust – there has to be a personal commitment that goes with making your farm transparent.

4. While drama can escalate fame and create temporary social media hype, that type of outreach rarely creates trust.

I more closely resemble the “tortoise” of the blogging world, than the “hare.”

I believe that meaningful engagement stems from genuine dedication to both transparency and empathy.

5. Agriculture needs to “pack.” We need to be dedicated to our common ground as farmers/ranchers while also celebratory of our differences. Ridiculing our contemporaries and professional consultants does nothing but cause industry self-destruction.

Whether this belittling is done for personal marketing gain or simply in spite, it is unacceptable.

A few weeks ago, a student in the Kansas State University Masters of Agribusiness Program asked me how (as an outsider) I had become liked and accepted by the “beef family.”

I laughed a bit and told him that the jury was likely still out relative to whether other cattlemen really liked me.

Instead of focusing on popularity, I made the choice many years ago to concentrate instead on earning respect by demonstrating that I had something meaningful to share.

This morning, I walked onto the stage at the national Cattle Industry Convention to accept the honor of being BEEF magazine’s 2014 Trailblazer Award winner.

If asked 20 years ago where I would spend my 40th birthday, I do not think that I could have ever conjured up this answer.

I am thankful, I am humbled, I am proud, but most of all I pray that my efforts will spark positive change in both beef animal welfare and advocacy.

I tell my daughters that “The road to excellence is rarely comfortable. Excellence isn’t about comfort; rather it is about reaching above and beyond your capabilities in order to accomplish far more than your dreams.”

I believe that there is excellence in all of our futures – we simply need to be brave enough to work for it.
SPC Speaker Spotlight

*Trevor Tuell, Diamond V*

Trevor was raised on a family owned feedlot in Eckley, Colorado, where he later became Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Over the last 15 years, his role at the yard grew to include the management of the custom cattle feeding operation, employee hiring and management, commodity purchasing and risk management, and the development and implementation of herd health programs.

During his time as COO, Trevor started two additional subsidiary businesses. Tuell Cattle, LLC, was created in 2005 and is focused on the production and sales of seedstock to develop alliances between feedlot and cow-calf producers. Premium Sourced Cattle, LLC, was started in 2012 and assists leading food service companies in developing branded beef programs that help producers become more profitable and sustainable while meeting consumer demand.

Trevor graduated from Colorado State University with a B.S. in Animal Science, where he was a member of the Reserve National Champion Livestock Judging Team.

Prior to returning to the feedlot in Eckley, he held the titles of Director of Colorado Beef Quality Assurance, Director of Environmental Programs, and Interim CEO for the Colorado Livestock Association.

Trevor now serves as a Regional Sales Manager for Diamond V. He is based out of Windsor, Colorado.

Gottsch Livestock Feeders

Please watch the YouTube video linked below that highlights Gottsch Livestock Feeders.

This is a great video about life on the feedlot and what goes into a successful operation.

Remember, being involved in the cattle business is still very much a people business, regardless of what sector you are involved in.

Cultivating strong friendships and lasting relationships with customers are the key to success in this industry.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_Knd8O5jZhI&t=86s

SPC Field Day

Please join us on Saturday, April 14, 2018, for the Steer Profitably Competition Field Day.

The field day will be held at the feedyard in Columbia, MO.

The SPC Field Day will be an opportunity to not only see your steers, but meet with ASA and University of Missouri staff who are heavily involved with the SPC.

Participants will also learn from a number of hands-on stations geared towards DNA, feeding and feed intake data, and carcass ultrasound and records.

In order to host the field day, we must have at least 10 participants attend the event.

Please RSVP by March 15, 2018 to help with meal counts and planning.