

BeefTalk 486: Maybe We Should Slow Down and Ask for Directions

Perhaps now is the time to stop, ponder a bit and appreciate what we have.

As the year comes to a close, many thoughts come to mind. These thoughts are embedded with questions. What makes these thoughts unique for each person is a combination of time and place.

Questions for older or younger people are anchored at a different point in time. Of course, someone living in Argentina is going to view things differently than someone living in the United States.

We are products of our environment, locally anchored and educated. And then, from within ourselves, we each derive a concept of what should and what should not be.

We live differently. We eat differently. We even may have different fundamental values. There is little wonder that some days we find ourselves puzzled as we peek into the world but then return to our own safe havens.

The world is a good place, but the busyness of the world tends to drive us hard. Often, it is with an opinionated position that we envision to help those we encounter and ourselves. These encounters often are mixed with good and bad feelings. Nevertheless, the close of day tends to bring us some rest and feelings of accomplishment.

But the busyness does not end. With the passing of time, even our roots tend to start to be transparent and those anchors we cling to slowly disappear.

Perhaps now is the time to stop, ponder a bit and appreciate what we have, at least until the next train arrives.

I like to ponder a return to the barn that we have left. The old, large, red, hip-roofed barn was meant to shelter the obvious and the unnoticed.

Perhaps the anticipation was heightened when, after a walk through cold, blowing winds and significant snow, the barn doors brought a sense of welcome. There were 12 cow stanchions and, when filled, each cow quickly would look and then return to what cows do, which is eat and chew their cuds.

The horses were stalled on the other side of the barn, with various calves penned throughout. Add in some cats, a dog, maybe a guest or two and that was pretty much the barn.

Other livestock had their quarters, but the barn was the hub. Morning and evening brought the buckets for milking, setting the daily schedule of cleaning the gutters, feeding the cows and all the other chores that needed to be done.

The day would end when all the chores were done. When we heard mom ask if the lights were out in the barn and the answer was yes, we knew supper soon would be served. Evening did not arrive until the barn lights went out and all were settled.

Those times were tough, too, and hardships were more average than rare. Modern times have allowed for certain hardships to lessen with the more food that is produced.

Yes, the work is still there, but it is different. The barn no longer has the cows and no one waits for the lights to go out.

The busyness remains. Production agriculture is more productive and there are fewer daily chores. Where did all this busyness go?

The answer will not be in tomorrow's paper or the next or even next week's. Until we figure things out, we should hope that somewhere there remains a barn with a stable waiting for new life.

This barn, when the door opens, will find the cows passing the time between feedings by quietly rechewing the current meal and trying to get comfortable. These cows will stretch their necks in anticipation of another feeding but quickly settle again with no concerns.

Perhaps that is why we need to pause as our year ends to ask some questions, take time to ponder the answers and, above all, look for the stable with a manger.

There is so much we do not know. Maybe we should slow down and ask for directions.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at <http://www.BeefTalk.com>.

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