

BeefTalk: Saddle Up To Lasso Some Hope



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There are times in this world when all of us need to stop, take a deep breath and reflect. Last week, two of those times, Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 11, 2011, were remembered. Our normal activity needed to stop as we remembered those dates.

Yes, the sun came up and the sun set. Our lives continued and our many daily activities were more than likely completed, but things are different. Living is vast and tough. If in doubt, simply look at those many calloused hands that are around us. They reflect, as do our other attributes, the many bumps and bruises we may claim on any given day. We call it living.

However, it was nothing like the news on Sept. 11, 2011. We were reminded all too well how fragile life is. On Sept. 11, all our hearts went out to our neighbors to the east as we individually and collectively huddled to hear the latest news about the World Trade Center, Pentagon and Flight 93.

Our priorities changed for that day, plus the weeks, months and years that followed. Initially, our pace was a half step off and the conversations a word or two short. Perhaps a look was all that was needed. The children sat closer and their eyes were empty, almost afraid.

I like to recall a memory I had of that day. It was a memory of a young, tragic death. I remember returning from the funeral and picking up an egg that was hatching. Emerging from that egg was a new life that was unknowing of the day's events. Earlier in the day, the youngster, with all its might, started breaking through from the only life it had ever known.

There really was no reason to break through the shell because the youngster had been well-cared for and all its needs met. However, the youngster kept on pecking. At first, there was just a crack and then a second crack. The cracks were followed by a split and then a hole. Through the hole came the most beautiful light the youngster had ever seen. So the pecking continued. With unending persistence, the youngster circled inside the egg with only faith that a better life existed on the other side.

As the outer shell began to give, the youngster stretched with the power of Samson. Gradually, the egg gave way in my hand. With toes clenching the larger part of the egg, the youngster gave a final thrust and was free. Blind, unending faith brought the youngster from the security of the egg to the vastness of a new world.

The hatchling had no knowledge of how tough life can be. It only knew the brightness of new life and was ready, willing and able to secure tomorrow's future. For what were tears for me was morning dew to a youngster with nowhere to go but up.

We have had 10 years of hatching eggs. Still, for those of us here today, there is a void. The future will be secure, fall roundups will continue and next spring's calving will bring smiles to our faces. However, life is now different.

If one looks up into the crystal-clear North Dakota skies as those majestic planes leave their powdery white trails across the blue sky and disappear over the horizon, one has to wonder when we truly will be international in scope. We feed each other, but we also hurt each other, which is truly a challenge within the fragileness of life.

Ten years have gone by, but the feelings have not faded. We must remember that we still are "one nation under God." For all those who still walk this very fragile life and all those who have given their life, we must rest assured, even though the horse was not saddled on Sept. 11, 2001, that today the horse is saddled.

Healing is good and time helps. Forgiveness ultimately allows the final chapter to be closed. For all those eggs that have hatched in the last 10 years, we all know what we need to do.

So, mount up and let's go lasso some hope. In our world, hope sustains something very precious. That something very precious is us. As we sift through the physical, spiritual and emotional rubble of the events of Sept. 11, 2001, we must continue to resolve to realign our priorities.

As we throw that last bit of hay to the cows or gather one more calf that somehow managed to slip past the gate at sundown, tomorrow is another day. Let's all vow to grab on to a hand we never have held before, smile and wish that person well. Then the world truly will be a better place.

May you find all your ear tags.