

## Ear Tags are Only for Those Who Surrender

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The first responder team was out the other day and was lost--at least those of us who wanted to know where they were could not locate them. This particular responder team is a mobile cattle-working facility operated by the North Dakota State University Dickinson Research Extension Center.

Currently the team includes five people who can react in the event of a beef cattle crisis. Their equipment consists of a For-Most hydraulic chute pulled by a one-ton diesel crew cab pickup and a Wilson alleyway, pulled by a pickup.

Last week, the team was also pulling a second Wilson alleyway and a breeding and ultrasound box for reproductive evaluations. Along with the equipment, two generators are required, plus the electronic ear tag reader and computer.

We could not locate the equipment. They were roughly 8 miles north, 14 miles east and another 5 miles north of a major highway. Everyone had cell phones, but cell phones don't work in all areas of the country. The crew was working, and we were just trying to catch up with them.

The producer had worked the previous day rounding up cows and calves but, when the crew arrived, he was still 40 plus pairs short. The penned cattle needed to be worked anyway, so the crew began pregnancy checking and vaccinating calves while others were busy looking for the missing portion of the crew.

This story illustrates a common point: not all cattle can be found and, even if located, not all individual cattle can be accounted for. The first responder team was conceived to assist in the working of cattle in remote areas if the need arises. Just how remote was not probably fully appreciated until the trip started.

I have addressed this point many times, that cows are not always easy to find, but for some reason, when we couldn't even find the crew, equipment and rigs, it really drove home just how difficult gathering cattle really can be. Difficult may be an understatement, without some appropriate adjective in front of the word. In the mean

time, the team works cattle at various opportunities, in order to improve proficiency of working cattle.

Next week, all the Dickinson Research Extension Center's calves will have the opportunity to go through the facility and receive their pre-weaning vaccinations. The calves will receive a booster for the Clostridial diseases and disease caused by *Haemophilus somnus*, and an initial vaccination for the respiratory and reproductive diseases IBR, BVD Type 1 and Type 2, PI3 and BRSV, and *Pasteurella haemolytica pneumonia*.

Although the first responder team was initially developed to help in the time of need, the ability to give calves an appropriate vaccination regime is probably more important on a day-to-day basis. Today, many calves leave the comforts of home with no protection from the elements, particularly viral and bacterial attacks.

At today's calf prices, and even at yesterday's calf prices, the vaccination regimes should not be skipped. Granted, the debate will remain as to who should pay. The bottom line, however, is if you currently have an inventory of unvaccinated calves, then your inventory is at risk.

I would rather pull out, search out or simply discover and work a set of cattle anytime for the sake of vaccinating, rather than the dreaded day when we may be called to assist in the diagnosis of a fatal event, involving the rapid, acute death of cattle.

Yes, the cow prefers to live in solitude. She will not surrender without resistance, but let's not forget who is the boss.

May you find all your ear tags.

Your comments are always welcome at [www.BeefTalk.com](http://www.BeefTalk.com). For more information, contact the North Dakota Beef Cattle Improvement Association, 1133 State Avenue, Dickinson, ND 58601 or go to [www.CHAPS2000.com](http://www.CHAPS2000.com) on the Internet. In correspondence about this column, refer to BT0165.

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## 10 Signs that a Cattle-Working Facility Could be Considered Remote

1. Cows can't read signs.
2. Bulls don't follow directions, they make them.
3. Calves believe in flight, fight or just don't show up.
4. Out of sight: is out of mind, is no cell service.
5. Ear tags are for only those who surrender.
6. To a happy cow, EID is short for "Enemy In Distress," that's you.
7. Even a good radio wave won't go down that slope.
8. Only the neighbor's bull really knows what happens after midnight.
9. You thought there were how many cows?
10. Did I really say just down the road a piece?