

## We Have Lift Off

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“Lift off, we have lift off” was, and perhaps still is, a common phrase. The meaning, however, has probably softened since the early Mercury, Gemini and Apollo space missions were a part of most of our upbringing.

The sheer thought of sending something as large as a space shuttle into the unknown had to be mind bending. As time evolved and the program matured, “Lift off, we have lift off” was chiseled into many of our minds, was associated with success, tackling the unknown and maybe even those things previously thought unreachable.

Toward the end of the 1960s, specifically the summer of 1969, man actually walked on the moon. Pictures of people watching television sets around the world soon became the news, bringing to life the remarkable story. In the end, the achievement was obviously exhilarating for the crew, but the news was about all of us, standing baffled at the realization that the world is big, but the universe is even bigger.

The image of the earth simply floating in space or rising over the moon’s horizon was an inescapable acknowledgment of our tiny existence. It pounded home the finite nature of the earth we have all been called on to coexist and to sustain. The vivid outline of continents, separated by water, revealed for the very first time the earth as a whole, a home for all.

This imagery sets the stage for the beef industry that, when compared with the age of the earth, is in its infancy. The beef industry has been domesticated for less than 10,000 years. The earth is still our home, our market and the only real reason we all exist. Beef production is about food and providing protein for the people of the world.

Grabbing a globe and putting faces to the people around that globe is something in which the beef industry has always prided itself. From the wandering nomads of one continent, to the fenced paddocks of New Zealand, the roving hills of Scotland and the checked sections of our Midwest, one common thread is always very true: cattle producers love cattle, love the husbandry, love the

industry and love the heart warming sensation of feeding others.

As the school year comes to a close, all families realize the time to move on is real, painfully real. Sons, daughters, relatives and friends prepare to launch their own careers, and yes, “Lift off, we have lift off.” Here at the cross roads of North Dakota State University and Dickinson State University, the student population is mixed. Some students find their home in Canada, some other parts of the world and some just across the street.

The world is truly a small place with real faces, real smiles, real feelings on all sides, sides totally indistinguishable from space in 1969. The Iron Curtain, the Berlin wall, the Great Wall of China, the 49th parallel and all man made borders will eventually be lost in time.

This summer, the Dickinson Research Extension Center will again be out and about working, gathering, tagging, vaccinating, weighing and just plain enjoying cattle. The summer interns, the seasonal students, even the seasoned crew will be watering the roots of future tales, tales to lighten and speed along the upcoming winter. The students returning to Canada and other parts of the world will do the same hopefully, using all the knowledge and skills learned the past year.

Yes, we have lift off, but remember the world does not have borders, only people do. Cattle producers love cattle, regardless of borders. Success is measured in the heart, not in the pocketbook. Have a safe summer.

May you find all your USAIP 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 BT0194.

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