

## Would You Prefer Doggies or Dogies?

By Kris Ringwall  
Extension Beef Specialist  
NDSU Extension Service



The lists on the refrigerator (or mailed to the North Pole) add to the rush of the holiday season. Reviewing the lists for the naughty or nice check is noted and the rest is history. Or is it?

The huge package could be a dream come true. Having written and checked the list twice, what was in the box had to be what was on top of the list. The box shook and wiggled and even an occasional sigh could be heard.

Could it be those cute, lovable dogies from the neighbor down the road? One only could hope as the wrapping was hastily thrown aside and the top of the crate was about to be opened.

Boy, you should have seen the look of bewilderment as two, rough, baby calves jumped from the box anxious to nurse anything that would stand still. How could this be?

The list was clear and double checked. Right there at the No. 1 spot was dogies. All fall, that new batch of pups had chased everyone on bikes and certainly needed a home.

However, maybe checking the list twice was not enough. Did you write dogies instead of doggies?

A third check revealed that written on top of list was dogies, which are motherless range calves. Loveable as they may be, they are not cuddly, friendly puppies that were so desired.

How sad, no puppies this year! However, rest assured that as these two dogies grow and mature, their value quickly will outpace the disappointment. The cash in the bank should look good as the list is remade for next year and doggies are at the top of the list.

Although seemingly simple, the point today really is not. Words and the correct understanding of those words are important in our world. Using words correctly is critical, even for Santa.

One misplaced letter can change the outcome from black to white and the consequences can be heartbreaking. The use of the English language starts before we actually start to talk and remains with us until our last

breath, so we should use it wisely.

Doggies versus dogies was pointed out by Brian. He noted the misuse of the word in a previous BeefTalk. Brian noted, “when I turned to your BeefTalk article in the Prairie Star today, my first thought was: Why would you be writing about a bunch of dogs (doggies) in a beef article, then thought maybe it was about Blue Heelers, Australian Sheepdogs, etc. Nope, it was about calves. Oh, you meant dogies, those motherless calves in a range herd. But I suppose you were going to bring them all in, not just the motherless ones.”

I commend Brian for noting the oversight. In the process, the article was read for its meaning, not just for the word. This is an important point, since many of us will grab, pick or simply choose to place meanings to words.

In the rush of today, we tend to want to grab a conclusion with a perception instead of fully understanding the expression of the word in the context of the sentence it was written in. These perceptions circumvent the meaning of what is stated, read or written and many times dismiss the adjectives, adverbs, nouns, verbs and other parts of the sentence that convey meaning and purpose to a thought that was meant to stimulate thinking.

Thinking helps us. The holiday season is a good time to slow up, spend a little more time thinking and even reread some of the many things we read and ask ourselves if we found the real meaning.

Well, Santa messed up, but it was not his fault. We all need to do our best, share our thoughts and communicate well and, in the end, the world will be a better place.

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 BT0383.

---

