



BeefTalk: Life Goes On

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Time out has been called, which is not a bad move when the week is flying by. Things should be normal, but what is normal?

Several events can put normal into perspective. The morning was quiet because the power went out, which unexpectedly shut everything down.

The computer servers were messed up and the workplace quickly came to a standstill because the computer screen was blank. New definitions of patience by all those wanting to get some work done resulted.

We were blessed with rain, but somehow one of the pickups got confused on the change in surface and ran into a cow panel. It was nothing serious. There were no injuries, but there is additional depreciation. There was a quiet discussion and life goes on.

Tomorrow is a cattle working day, so the chutes are on the move, or are they? Unfortunately, the hydraulic pump was on the other side of the fence as the pickup and chute made the move.

Records are good, but the sound of the keyboard dropping does not quite match the sound of pickup applied tension on hydraulic hoses as they stretch and snap. Additional background noise is choreographed when nails simultaneously hang onto the post in which they were nailed.

This is a prelude to the tremendous snap of hoses and pump clamoring to hang to the chute. Even without a good conductor, the immediate chorus of co-worker concerns brings new words to the English dictionary that is sung in an ever-increasing crescendo.

On a personal note, I did once drive away from a gas station without removing the gas nozzle from the car tank. Glancing in the side mirror, the amount of stretch in a gas hose is amazing. Equally amazing is the distance a gas nozzle can fly. Most amazing was how kind the gas station attendant was.

However, that being said, that event was minor compared with trying to pull a pump for a hydraulic chute through a fence. This brought about a slightly more pointed discussion. Life goes on, the midnight hour will come, but we need to be ready to work the cattle tomorrow.

Well, the day did come to an end and life did go on. Tomorrow, the cattle will be gathered, processed, tagged with high-frequency electronic identification tags and moved through the local auction barn.

The movement will be quick, as will the tagging, tag reading and subsequent data management. By the time the lights go out, the cattle will have been gathered, worked, moved through marketing channels and back to rest.

Interestingly, the data also will have been gathered, processed, moved to North Dakota's animal tracking database and put to rest by the end of the day. We hope, the data will remain at rest forever, safely tucked away underneath the state capital.



Good Day or
Bad Day, Life
Goes On!

However, if for some reason a call goes out to crosscheck cattle in response to an outbreak of a serious beef cattle health issue, the data will help quickly locate, isolate and contain those animals that may have been in contact with problem cattle and the health issue resolved with as little impact as possible on the nation's beef industry.

However, tomorrow also will have challenges. Pickups need to start, equipment needs to be tuned, horses need to be saddled and cattle need to cooperate. The crew needs to get a good night's rest and all hands need to be on their toes in the morning.

A wrong move, thought or reflection could be the difference between a great day and one that ends with another one of those little discussions. The beef industry is a great industry, but often underestimated is the effort it takes on some days. It's an effort made entirely of people who are dedicated to a life in the beef business.

May you find all your ear tags.

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

For more information, contact the NDBCIA Office, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601, or go to <http://www.CHAPS2000.com> on the Internet.

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