



BeefTalk: Why Are the Raspberries Still Here?

If we are going to feed the world, we at least need to engage the world.

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In food production, things are never the same because many variables come into play on a daily basis.

The other day I noticed the raspberry bushes were full of raspberries. Most would say that they are supposed to be. However, the real answer is that the raspberries are not supposed to be there because the birds always eat them.

One could put bird netting on the raspberries to protect them and make a modest attempt to harvest them for eating. In the end, the wind seems to have a different opinion, so Mother Nature wins and the birds eat the raspberries.

The only thing gained by the netting effort is a dash of frustration not there before attempting to save the raspberries. As I stood eating the raspberries, I could not help but wonder just where the birds are.

There are a few more cats around. Last year's winter appeared to have killed off all the territorial tomcats. However, Mother Nature provided a new class of cats that are sleek and ready to hunt. In fact, one ran past the shop carrying a gopher the other day. The only remorse was that it was not a pocket gopher. Still, birds always seem to keep ahead of the cats.

The low temperature the other night was 39 degrees, so I had to take a quick glance at the calendar to remind myself it was still August.

Last year at this time, the cows were hungry and the main points of discussion were how to cull the herd before all the grass was gone. By year's end, the grass and many of the cows were gone. Probably the biggest regret was not selling more cows.

This year, it is still raining, the grass is plentiful and the hay is wet. The occasional dry day allows for rolling hay.

The next question will be: "How do I feed moldy hay?" The answer: "You don't, at least not without a proper lab test to understand what living organisms inhabit your hay pile."

Water does some interesting things. The greatest is the enhanced diversity of all living things. Life that seems to fade away in dry years remarkably reappears with the rain.

Anyway, I still don't know where the birds are, but anyone who actually knows how to put up hay will shine this year. In the big picture, food production takes a lot of experience.

Those neatly wrapped packages in the grocery store do not just appear. Food production takes a lot of experience.

Images



Where did all the birds go?
Too many of us did not even notice the birds were missing.

It is the experience that we cherish and look for, but unfortunately it often is hard to find. How many times can a summer be different?

Very few summers are ever the same. The process of making a living out of each summer is complicated.

For the beef producer, the increasing challenge is to find time to mix and match all that Mother Nature throws our way, but still fulfill the expectation of the consumer who desires to pick up those neatly wrapped packages in the grocery store.

The expectation of the consumer is real. Just try working the counter of a quick-service restaurant and run out of a menu item. Mother Nature can be frustrating, but an irritated consumer can be downright mean.

Let's return to four things that as beef producers we should keep thinking about. The four are food safety, seamless regionalized calf-to-feedlot health connectivity, implementation of improved RFID (radio frequency identification) technology and value capture for the producer.

The world is changing. If we are going to feed the world, we at least need to engage the world. Perhaps that means giving a little, which also means we get a little.

Beef production makes sense. Eating beef makes sense.

We just need to make sense of a more complicated system that still does not know where the birds went. What really worries me is that too many of us did not even notice the birds were missing.

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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Attachments



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(bt081309.pdf - 56.17 Kb)



EPS - Where did all the birds go? Too many of us did not even notice the birds were missing.
(bt081309.eps - 455.09 Kb)