

BeefTalk 780: Blue Moons and Summer Blues

The current low grain prices and ample forage availability can make beef industry expansion a reality.

Recent discussions of cattle cycles are a reminder that we actually have cattle cycles.

All industries cycle, and even the staunchest denial eventually will cycle away. Interestingly, many successful individuals were and are successful because they entered and left a business at an opportune time.

Timing creates cycles. But our need for food does not cycle, and producing food, among economically driven supply cycles, is challenging. However, the lessons of the past are the truths of the future.

Understanding these trends is important. But so are the cycles of life, and fitting life into business is critical.

The recent passing of a blue moon soon will be followed by the passing of summer. A blue moon is the second full moon in the same month, something that doesn't happen that often (the next blue moon will be in January 2018). But, like life, it will happen.

Today, the stability of life and the things we want are in a state of influx. Each generation defines needs differently from wants. In tough times, the "want list" is long; in good times, the "need list" is long.

Generations change and attitudes cycle throughout our journey in life. We grow, starting short and growing slowly. We gain in height. We grow up, which has lots of challenges. Each challenge is a goal to achieve, much like a spot placed on the wall. If this spot is out of reach, as children, every time we walk by, we will jump and try to touch the spot.

We keep trying until we actually have grown enough to touch the spot. After that, every doorsill in the house gets slapped. Pretty soon, the floor and obvious handprints on the ceiling need to be cleaned. That is good because soon the children leave and the prints and activity slowly disappear.

Things seem kind of quiet, and then we discover the ground is getting closer. One reaches up to remember the good old days and the doorsill, now unreachable. Eventually, as the ground gets closer, reaching down to touch it is difficult. This is life.

We try to come to an understanding of how we fit into life. We are tempted to settle under the tree and let life pass by. This life of ours is precious, but certainly with all the signs, we also know this life is temporary at best.

This process, this journey, this marvelous walk we are on brings us here today. We are all sizes and shapes, changing daily. We know, just as we started life wondering who is going to tie our shoes, we will end life wondering who is going to tie our shoes. We will search, and if not careful, we could grow weak. We come to realize that this marvelous walk of life needs sustenance, food, so our journey can continue. That food, both physically and spiritually, is critical for our journey to keep going.

As the seasons change, one cannot help but recall how life cycles. All the things around us follow the same path we do. Even rocks, those things we cannot imagine moving, slowly move through the Earth's crust, slowly changing. We call this process metamorphism.

The point is, the active discussions on cattle cycles have returned. Throughout life, these cycles, just like a blue moon, occur. With each decade, the cycle may seem similar, but the meaning changes, as do individual responses. In a pure economic fashion, the buy/sell mentality should win out. But, eventually, balance for all that is around us happens; where and how, we may not control, but happen it will.

The current low grain prices and ample forage availability make beef industry expansion real. The process can be dissected intensely, but with so many cows having left the industry, there is obvious room to expand.

The current word is "excitement." Interest in the maternal side of the beef business always is exciting. Interest in the oil business always is exciting as well; a news story that flashed by reported oil is in the \$30-plus dollar-per-barrel range.

Expansion, stability and liquidation are common business terms. The obvious is not always the course chosen, however. The dollars and cents do not always drive the discussion. Sustainability may not be dollars and cents. But feeding the world will remain a challenge for generations to come.

The challenge during times of people against people is to remember that someday, someone has to tie our shoes. Friends, family, co-workers, both near and far, will need to work together in a broader picture of all those industries that ultimately will feed and serve the world. And, as the cattle business expands, markets will be generated.

However, along with profit will come loss. Perhaps sustainability is a good thing, but more importantly, it's the people we are all about. Change with compassion and understanding is good.

May you find all your ear tags.

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

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