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## BeefTalk: Am I Satisfied?



**Saying you are happy, satisfied and content with what you're doing is OK.**

By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist

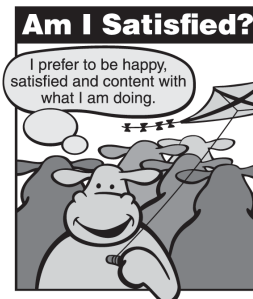
NDSU Extension Service

"Am I satisfied?" That is a pondering question for the various aspects of the business of beef production.

The question also reaches beyond the business, into the personal satisfaction one derives from being an agricultural producer. The root of the question rests at the heart of the operation, the herd, and any evaluation needs to start with browsing - browsing the cow herd, the bullpen, the yearlings, the replacement heifers, the various ages of calves - and then ask, "Am I satisfied?"

Then branch out and browse the many

### Images



Am I Satisfied? I prefer to be happy, satisfied and content with what I am doing.

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performance indicators that document the type of cattle raised. "Am I satisfied?"

The next step goes a little deeper, as we browse the checkbook, the income statement, the sale records, the profit and loss statement, the tax forms and other statements that involve the finances of the business. "Am I satisfied?" And perhaps you can ask a second question: Are the cows providing such that hard work and dedication are converted to enough cash to offer some alternative opportunities?

And lastly, look around and list the people one does business with in the process of actually producing beef. Ask again, "Am I satisfied?" Am I meeting and associating with an expanded group of friends who help one relish the chosen path of life?

These are not easy questions, but all need to be addressed at some point in life.

Many presenters at conferences, meetings, bull sales, auction barns and other beef gatherings certainly offer an opinion as to how they see beef production integrating with life. Some of these gathering will have one wondering what the right course is. The answers to the various "Am I satisfied?" questions go back to how a producer gauges satisfaction with life and living that life by obtaining support within the beef industry.

So what is satisfaction? As a teacher, I see people

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inclined to seek further understanding, but in reality, people generally do plateau as they reach their individual points of satisfaction. In fact, many actually can be annoyed by those who persistently seek change.

I always will remember a call that I received from an elderly gentleman. He had been bothered by persistent recommendations to change his beef operation and switch breeds of cattle. The breed he was raising was considered out of date. I listened as he reviewed all that he had done during a lifetime of involvement with his current breed. He was proud, despite some market discounts and neighborly jabs.

When he got done, I asked him, "Are you satisfied with your cattle?" And he said, "Yes." I said, "Then why are you asking to change?" He was simply seeking permission to say yes, yes he was satisfied in what he was doing and certainly enjoyed his days.

When our days draw short, is it not that satisfaction we are seeking? What difference does it make if the world does not agree? As long as we know what we want to do and have sought and found a way to accomplish our task, then when accomplished, should we not take the time to relish what we have achieved? Yes, we should.

That being said, we do know the world will change and so will the beef industry. And, unfortunately,

some change comes in the form of mandates rather than polite suggestions and sets back our level of satisfaction. In fact, we even can enter a level of frustration. But there is a big picture. We each need to find our spot, create our nest and re-seek satisfaction even when the nest we had incurs a hit and significant adjustments need to be made.

Removing frustration is not easy. Take another good look at the operation, browsing the cattle, reviewing the checkbook, monitoring the performance and noting one's friendships. Ponder how change can adjust each of these steps, and once the change is made, ask again, "Am I satisfied?"

We are generally very adaptable. As times move and our families and friends change, we tend to change with them. But still, someone always seems to be telling us what to do. Perhaps a listening ear, some pondering, a thank you for the input with a suggestion for improvement will lead to personal reflection on how we proceed.

If, in the end, we do not achieve some level of personnel satisfaction within our chosen occupation, then our life's objectives and goals really need to be revisited. The sophistication of the world, along with its ever-increasing, very detailed and technical sensitivity, can send us wondering and pondering what we should be doing. Saying, "No, thanks, I prefer to be happy,

satisfied and content with what I am doing" is OK.  
Now I can decide what bull to buy.

May you find all your ear tags.

For more information, contact your local NDSU  
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#### Attachments



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