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BeefTalk: Thanksgiving and Finding a Whisper

Take time to listen to what's happening around and within you.

By Kris Ringwall, Beef Specialist

NDSU Extension Service

Thanksgiving is a time to ponder one's own goodness.

Thanking those who we work, live and associate with is important. But thanking oneself also is important.

Today's fast-paced world has us running. Agriculture is no exception: The peaceful valley filled with cows lolling in the grass simply may be our world. But can it be? Maybe.

When we run, we meet (or pass) someone who is walking or running. We become so focused on the finish line that we miss life and those we pass.

Images



Thanksgiving - Finding a Whisper

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Time is of the essence because the need to move quickly dominates our life. But then we turn on the radio, put on the headphones or start punching buttons on some device to fill the void.

Whoever would have thought that the most addictive force in the universe would become sound? By the very essence of nature, sound is the ability to communicate. The daily needs, points of interest or the day's activities are passed on with sound. In the past, the rest of the day was one of nature's silence. The passing of a breeze could be noted.

Today's sound devices have crowded out nature's silence. For many, total silence for five minutes is the hardest feat of the day. Youth and silence are incompatible. So why should we be concerned? Why not simply turn up the sound and block out the world?

That seems to be a common approach: as people come and go, the silent stare with earphones. It's not bad, but is there more to life, more to find, more to explore? What happened to the whisper, the quiet sounds that hardly could be heard?

Today, whispers are not something we hear because something always seems to be making sound: outside traffic, the neighbor's dog, bellowing calves, the simple chatter of people that all note a busy life. To escape, we engage a sound device: television, radio, headphones or some

other various electronic devices.

But where are the whispers? We need to talk to ourselves, we need to seek and participate in the world of silence. We need to take charge and feed ourselves with the goodness we deserve. Maybe we are that goodness. Once we better appreciate ourselves, we can better understand our world and, maybe, just maybe, relax, walk, talk and pleasantly greet those outside of our circle we were not planning to meet. Perhaps then we can start to know one another.

Perhaps many have long since quit reading this BeefTalk, a casualty of the fast pace. In the world of beef, or any livestock for that matter, silence is critical. It's where we sit back and observe, take mental notes, wonder why, to better gauge the management of the herd with the individuals within the herd.

Animal husbandry means seeing the need, the desire to take that special moment to watch a calf breathe, drink and eat, and formulate a conclusion as to the welfare of that calf that day. The quickest way to leave the beef business is to see only the herd, the pen, the pasture, the load, without any thought given to the individual. Watching cattle with the headset on or with the thumbs ready to text makes no sense.

When training a dog, or in training in general, where the eyes and nose go, so does the mind. In

moving cattle or other livestock, the ability to read the subtle cues of body movement and associated body language creates a successful outcome. If you can hear the whispers of livestock and whisper back, the relationship will prosper.

Where will future beef producers come from? The answer: those who learn how to whisper, to appreciate the living as the living, not a process. The same is true with us. When we listen to the whisper, which may even come from within, our lives prosper.

As we learn to appreciate what we do as providers of nourishment for those around us, we also must come to appreciate what we can do for ourselves. Life is not a simple chart that has a one-way arrow to what someone else thinks is success. Rather, life is long path of many turns with many crossing. At each crossing, we need to stop and ponder and then move on.

Sometimes we make the right choice, sometimes we make the wrong choice, but we always have another path and another crossing. Perhaps if we can see the joy that our own lives bring to others, we can bring that same joy to ourselves. Our own happiness should not be set by someone else's goals, but by our own thoughtful efforts. How many goals we should achieve, or as some would say, the "bucket list," is not as important as living with the joy of those that we do achieve.

Thanksgiving is a time to ponder, to listen, to catch a whisper that simply may be floating by. Once found, seek a quiet place, seek a place of reserve, and ponder just how marvelous it is. No one is more unique than oneself, and the only one who knows your own full uniqueness is you. It's Thanksgiving, so take time, listen to your whisper and say thanks.

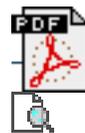
May you find all your ear tags.

For more information, contact your local NDSU Extension Service agent (<https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/extension/directory>) or Ringwall at the Dickinson Research Extension Center, 1041 State Ave., Dickinson, ND 58601; 701-456-1103; or [✉kris.ringwall@ndsu.edu](mailto:kris.ringwall@ndsu.edu).

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Attachments



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