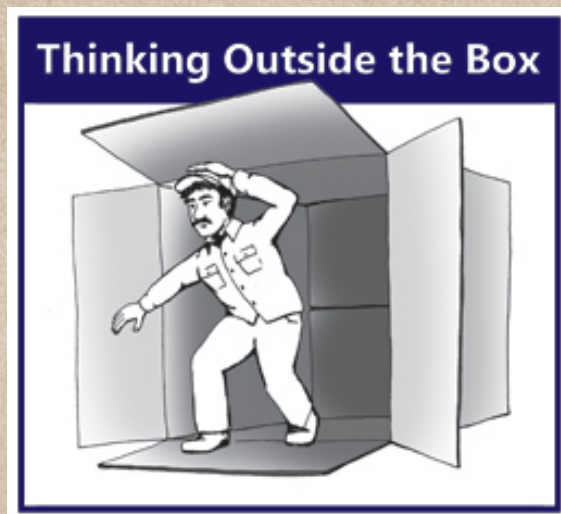




BeefTalk 603: I Wish They Were All Like That One!

SUPPORTING MATERIALS



The cow-calf producer sees the business differently than the backgrounder or feedlot owner.

What could the world be? There are times when that is a good question to ask. The answer rests with ideology and expectations. There certainly will be more discussion if one does not restrict those expectations.

The old saying of thinking outside of one's box is very real. If we only stay within our own box or environment, we do not really expand our thinking. With no expansion of thought, we never will know what the world could be. We may not want to tackle such a big question. However, we could ask: What could the beef industry be?

What also holds true is that, if we stay within our own confines, we never really expand our thoughts beyond what we already know. Sometimes, in fact more than sometimes, fellow producers are criticized for thinking outside of the box.

What could the beef industry be? We never will know if we don't go looking. Where do we look? Well, a starting point is the beef that we produce.

We are familiar with the world of average performance and average profit or loss, but averages hinder opportunity. The real challenge is to identify individual animals that are not average and do not do what the average says they should do, and then determine if this outside-the-box individual is real or simply a temporary expression of something that never can be repeated.

Decades ago, we never would have fathomed the replication of an individual beef animal. Today, we can.

So what could the beef industry be? We can look for exceptions that stand out or are uniquely different. We can tag those individuals and maintain their identity throughout the beef industry. The point being is that industry change comes by identifying individuals and using those individuals in breeding programs that propagate change. That process is not a passive process, so we need to step up to the plate to do it.



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The beef industry is a very individualistic industry. Each producer, backgrounder and finisher designs and manages his or her operation. How our mind functions is similar for everyone. However, integrating current inputs with expected future outcomes creates numerous individual scenarios.

The cow-calf producer sees the business differently than the backgrounder or feedlot owner. The cow-calf producer conceives cattle, while the feedlot owner groups those cattle into manageable pens. The cow-calf producer always is looking for a bull or cow outlier that is different and can bring change.

The feedlot owner prefers slight modifications for the benefit of the pen. The cow-calf producer needs individual animal data, while the feedlot owner is happy with pen data. Trying to apply the same logic and operating principles does not always work. A seamless industry from conception to consumption is difficult. After years of trying, there seems to be some fundamental differences among those involved in the industry.

These are not bad differences, but they are differences. What is right in the beef business? That is a really big question. The answer will vary depending on who is called upon to respond. There are lots of things that are right in the beef business. There are a lot of different environments and a lot of different production systems that all come together to make up today's beef business. It is a business with a lot of great things going on.

In simple terms, success in the cow-calf business is gauged upon buying the right genetic package through the right bull. The feedlot will take the progeny of that bull or all the bulls and create a uniform pen.

Pen and herd mentality go together. The daily perusal of individuals takes place within the herd and a feedlot pen. How many times have we made the comment, "I wish they were all like that one!" That is the point. That statement allows us to dream just a bit, even though we realize that it never may happen.

To the feedlot owner, having perfect cattle would mean all those high-valued carcasses would line up on the rail and max out the day's proceeds. For the cow-calf producer, every cow would produce the most desirable calf. There would be no best calf because they would all be the best.

The bottom line is that we, at first, need to get out of our box and then dream. Once we wake up, we gather what we know to be the facts and then try to build on that dream.

What will the future of the beef business look like? I would be foolish to even guess, but it will not look like it does today.

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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