



BeefTalk 618: How to Survive the Cattle Business

SUPPORTING MATERIALS

How to Survive the Beef Business

Ten: Producers need to help each other.

Nine: Producers need to be present within the operation.

Eight: Producers can become too complacent.

Seven: Producers need to keep up with change.

Six: Do not let negative relationships drag the operation down.

Five: All producers must be prepared to deal with crisis.

Four: Producers must be leaders.

Three: Producers must be fiscally savvy.

Two: Producers need to challenge conventional thinking.

One: Producers should be a reflection on what life means and how we live.

Difficult summers mean problematic fall and winter challenges that ultimately may change the future of the farm or ranch. It is a fact of life that, as life goes on, the beef business is struggling.

As the Fourth of July passes by again and numerous gatherings of family and friends wrap up, there is a call for a little time to rest and catch up.

The celebrations are a reminder of the freedoms that we have. The responsibilities that go with that freedom are numerous, but the Fourth of July is a day to celebrate and set aside life's many heavy burdens with a lighter fare. As the many rockets let loose in the dark sky, we simply sit back and enjoy life, even if only for a few minutes.

The morning after, we clean everything up and life goes on. It's the "life goes on" part that quickly takes over and we are reminded that summer is well underway. For those involved in the cattle business or any part of agriculture, for that matter, the clock is ticking. Successful summers mean bountiful falls and normal winters.

Difficult summers mean problematic fall and winter challenges that ultimately may change the future of the farm or ranch. It is a fact of life that, as life goes on, the beef business is struggling.

The call to expand the cow herd continues to be repelled by forces beyond a producer's control. Currently, drought is driving the industry, but producers need to reflect on what to



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do and not what we can't do.

What can we do? I have 10 items to discuss.

Point 10: Producers need to help each other. Helping those who are neighbors, family or friends is paramount. Jumping through hoops, opening opportunities in situations that seem stagnant, shifting excessive burdens or simply adding words of encouragement to move forward always helps.

Point nine: Producers need to be present within the operation and provide consistent, predictable actions that make those they work or live with relaxed and encouraged. This means understanding the resources available, providing leadership and encouraging consensus within the operations on the use of those resources for a successful future.

Point eight: Producers can become too complacent. Producers need to know when congratulatory, appreciative praise is appropriate within their daily visits versus the occasional tap that is indicative of pending change. We can spend so much time admiring what we are doing that we miss the turn.

Point seven: Not all producers will keep up with the increasing changes in the world around them. It is important for producers to understand their own desires and the limitations those desires may impose on their operation. Appropriate acknowledgement always must be present within a producer's group of friends and family. However, a realistic evaluation of individual expectations and goals must be done. A ranch will be stronger when a strong, broad-based and well-focused team is utilized for open input and discussion of the future.

Point six: Do not let negative relationships drag the operation down. Not all people are congenial and easy to work with. Invariably, one will experience a negative personal interaction within the beef business or any environment. Again, don't dwell on negatives. Producers need to make an attempt to understand how these negative relationships develop and why the situation persists, but also realize that there may be no solution.

Point five: All producers must be prepared to deal with crisis. Even with excellent managerial processes, a crisis will occur. An appropriate assessment, evaluation and implementation of an action must occur with timely decisions and follow-up. All crises eventually must lead to preventive programs when feasible.

Point four: Producers must be leaders. Even if it is just within one's own operation, leaders listen, evaluate and respond. To successfully redirect or reinspire those one works with, leaders always should have an adequate working knowledge of the operation. When a producer becomes disconnected from the operation, it is time to move on.

Point three: Producers must be fiscally savvy because the world still functions on money. Without money, even the best idea withers. Appropriate management teams must be developed and utilized to assure a broad-based, thorough review of all aspects of management and the appropriate impacts on the bottom line.

Point two: Producers need to challenge conventional thinking. A new consensus will turn the fork in the road into multiple opportunities as we work together to enrich our lives, and create viable communities and individual lifestyles within the various environments in which we choose to live. All this should occur while we enjoy working in the beef industry.

Point one: Producers should be a reflection on what life means and how we live. Each of us has an obligation for the future and is called upon to look for hope and inspiration for a future that does not jeopardize our children or our children's children.

In the end, it's about people, not cows.

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.

