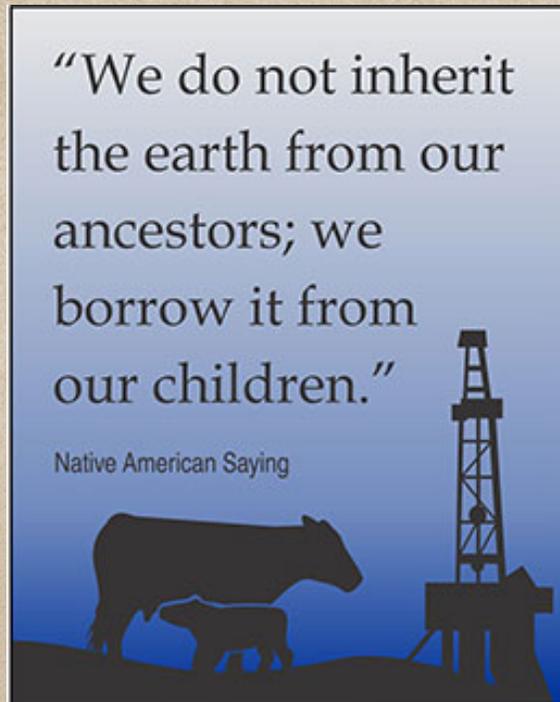




## BeefTalk 717: Beef and Oil

### SUPPORTING MATERIALS



*The center is integrating the changing dynamics of the energy industry into our mission.*

The changing world of western North Dakota is a hot and cold topic. In a sense, most would consider change to be a point of reality. Seldom, if ever, does one get to make a statement about life and then control that point for a lifetime. We call that change.

Change always has been present, sometimes slow, sometimes fast, sometimes desired and sometimes not, but still present nevertheless.

Energy development has brought dynamic changes to western North Dakota. Our challenge as a historically agricultural-based region is to incorporate agriculture and energy in a productive manner that allows the past, present and future to coexist.

At the Dickinson Research Extension Center, our legislatively directed mission is to do research on native rangeland, beef cattle and agricultural soil products while emphasizing conservation and preservation for future generations.

The center is integrating the changing dynamics of the energy industry into our mission by expanding our relationship with

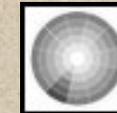
the energy industry and still working with producers on conservation and preservation for future generations. Interestingly, as the center prepares for the development of a drill pad within the boundaries of the center’s cattle pasture, this expanding relationship is conversational and physical.

Fences and cattle move, so patterns change and life will not be the same. An interesting point of change is that change can be from internal or external forces. In other words, self-driven or externally imposed.

This does not mean that one is more positive or negative than the other. It only means that the source of the change



Full Color Graphic  
[\[click here\]](#)



Grayscale Graphic  
[\[click here\]](#)



Adobe PDF  
[\[click here\]](#)

needs to be understood. Understanding the source helps, even if the outcome is still the same. Interestingly, these new developments are not new to those who came before us. Our ancestors also had to live with change.

Although unnoticed and without fanfare, the settling population has slowly died off in this state, and their sons and daughters are quickly leaving their shoes to be filled by a generation once removed. This generation no longer shares the deep roots of life on the land as the settlers knew it.

“It’s about people” was a phrase utilized by former NDSU President Joe Chapman. It’s a phrase that is at the core of what we do at the Dickinson REC.

To dismiss the need for people and minimize the importance of the sociological balance between urban and rural interactions and energy and agricultural interactions oversimplifies and destroys the sustainability of any social and production system.

The future of this region and the world must contain people in balance with the whole environment and sustaining dignified lifestyles. Those dignified lifestyles, always a potential loss in the winds of change, are at risk today. Not that current lifestyles are not dignified, but the whole mix of what it meant to be raised in total connectivity with the food around you through agriculture is no longer a majority thought.

Western North Dakota is at another “fork in the road” because it is dealing with problems associated with current and historical energy and agricultural systems. Although these systems work for some, the end result has been accelerated growth, leaving an aging rural agricultural population.

A concept of integrated agricultural and energy systems that are sustainable at the local level, keeps our rural population abundant, is beneficial to our urban partners and is capable of meeting the world’s food and energy needs is slowly emerging. However, it is in its infancy.

Did the settlers really think through all the consequences of pounding a claim stake into a piece of ground? Probably not, but the need at the time was a potato to eat, some eggs to collect, a daily bucket of milk, a cellar for dry goods and, they hoped, a piece of meat. Starvation drove many settlers here, not economics. Keeping the next generation here certainly is not dependent on food availability.

If care is not taken, lost in the generational transition could be a way of life or purpose of existence that have less tangible positive impacts on “it’s about people.”

The center will continue expanding our relationship with the energy industry and working with agricultural producers to continue to emphasize conservation and preservation for future generations.

However, the answer already may be known if one learns from the past by reflecting on this old Native American saying: “We do not inherit the land from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children.”

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.

