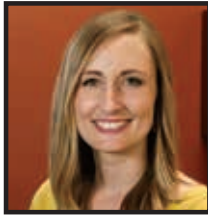


by Julie Mais  
Editor



## Weathering the storm

*One snowy, winter day when we were kids, my older sister, younger brother and I woke up to the news every child longs for — a snow day. Like with many farm and ranch families, our snow days didn't include hunkering down in the warm house watching TV or playing games.*

Cattle needed to be tended to, and my dad was happy to have three little helpers that day. So, we pulled on our Carhartts, zipped up our coats, located our warmest gloves and hats, laced those insulated boots and out the door we went tromping through snow. My sister and I were tasked with feeding hay to a group of cows on leased ground near my grandpa's farm. Dad and my brother dropped us off to grab the tractor while they went to check water.

We climbed onto and started up my grandpa's John Deere 4020. Now, my grandpa's tractor was equipped with a hydraulic loader, but not a cab. However, he so wisely fashioned a "windshield" out of plexiglass. Over time it became hazy and it wasn't the easiest to see through.

My sister drove the tractor up the driveway and took a left to head south toward the hay pile at the end of the hay field on the hill. We picked up a round bale and turned the tractor around to head back north. The frigid wind slapped us in the face. I couldn't tell you the low

temperature that day, but it was the type of cold wind that steals your breath.

My sister, the leader of our little pack, quickly devised a genius plan.



She would take the first shift standing up to steer the tractor and looking over the windshield. I would duck below and warm up.

When she says "switch," I would pop up to drive and she would find shelter from the wind.

A couple bales of hay later and we accomplished our task. We welcomed the warm cocoa waiting for us at grandma and grandpa's home as we thawed out.

### Mother Nature packs a punch


Admittedly, it's been a while since I've lived on a farm and had the days like the one I just described, but I'm thankful to work for the industry close to my heart and upbringing.

It's been a long winter here in the Midwest, and spring is a welcome sight. As I write this in the final hour of this issue's production, eastern Kansas is wet. It seems that almost

weekly since the first of the year until about mid-March we've have some sort of snow, ice or cold rain. And in some weeks, in true Midwestern fashion, it has been a few of each.

Catching up with my family and keeping up with friends on social media, I see cattlemen and women across the country who are battling Mother Nature. While the change in season often brings reprieve, it has its own challenges. Winter weather leads to rains and flooding. Gentle rains turn into violent, destructive storms. Summer dries out the soil and forages become fodder for fire.

In this issue, "Weathering the Storm," we share stories of Angus breeders who took some of Mother Nature's toughest blows — from fires to hurricanes, droughts to market swings.

It seems in the cattle industry, challenges are inevitable. The resiliency of cattlemen, and the animals they care for, shines through the darkest days. 

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

[jmais@angus.org](mailto:jmais@angus.org)