

by Shauna Rose Hermel
Editor



Health & husbandry

H.W. Mumford captured the connection of herdsman to herd health and well-being when he penned “A Tribute to the Stockman” in 1913. At the time, he was head of the University of Illinois’ Department of Animal Science and considered one of the foremost thought leaders in the field of agriculture.

More than a century later, after the adoption of countless technologies and herd management techniques, those words couldn’t apply more.

There is an art to caring for livestock. It is much more than dumping a measured amount of feed in a trough and making sure the herd has water, shade and all its vaccinations. There’s something

more that keeps a stockman at the gate until the last animal comes to the trough, taking time to recognize any change in behavior that signals an animal might not feel well.

Personally, I think it is an innate quality. I don’t think you have to be born into it, and I don’t think you can teach it. It’s part of a stockman’s being — a jumble of responsibility,

affection, enjoyment — that can only be considered a calling.

It’s hard to explain, but not hard to recognize. It’s definitely a bond that connects us as cattlemen.



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Tribute to the Stockman

Behold the Stockman!

Artist and Artisan.

He may be polished, or a diamond in the rough — but always a gem.

Whose devotion to his animals is second only to his love of God and family.

Whose gripping affection is tempered only by his inborn sense of the true proportion of things.

Who cheerfully braves personal discomfort to make sure his livestock suffer not.

To him there is a rhythm in the clatter of the horse’s hoof, music in the bleating of the sheep and in the lowing of the herd.

His approaching footsteps call forth the affectionate whinny of recognition.

His calm, well-modulated voice inspires confidence and wins affection.

His coming is greeted with demonstrations of pleasure, and his going with evident disappointment.

Who sees something more in cows than the drudgery of milking, more in swine than the grunt and squeal, more in the horse than the patient servant, and more in sheep than the golden hoof.

Herdsmen, shepherd, groom — yes, and more. Broad-minded, big-hearted, and whole-souled: whose life and character linger long after the cordial greeting is stilled and the hearty handshake is but a memory; whose silent influence forever lives. May his kind multiply and replenish the earth.

— by H.W. Mumford

