

CATTLE CULTURE

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

How to Handle the Herd

A role model shaped my view of what it takes to be the best producer.

No matter how many years you've been in the cattle industry, there's likely been one individual in your life who helped shaped the way you handle your herd. For me, that individual was David Medeiros of Rancho Casino in Denair, Calif.

David watched me experience the cattle industry through all stages of my life. From the bright eyes of an 8-year-old showing off her first blue ribbon, to a teenager learning how to navigate selling a bull to commercial producers, David was there through a lot.

Whether his phone rang during the early hours of the morning or late in the evening, David never once told my parents and me "no" when it came to my livestock. While I never did get a written list of rules about dealing with cattle from David, just watching him work taught me a few basics that have stuck with me today, even as I've moved way from my family ranch to pursue my own career.

Calm, cool, collected

All of us in the cattle industry have likely made a few jokes about the horrors of days spent working the herd. From bleep-worthy words that

slip out to "nicknames" assigned to those troublesome cows, things aren't always smooth sailing when you're spending the day at the chute.

David, however, did things without the drama. There were never any raised voices, no unfiltered words. The only three words that came to mind were cool, calm and collected.

A cattle producer is only as great as his love for his livestock. — Megan Silveira

For any of you who know David personally, I'm sure that this description is no surprise. Yet, for someone who had never been around cattle chuteside before the age of 7, I can't tell you how big of an impression David's attitude made on me.

He never expressed anything other than patience and kindness to my spoiled show cows and me. Come rain or shine, troubles with newborn calves or broken fences, David was always ready to find a simple solution to my herd's troubles.

Besides the importance of refusing to let even the worst of situations rile you, David taught me one other big lesson I refuse to ever lose sight of.

A cattle producer is only as great as his love for his livestock.

For as calm and put together as David always is, he never misses an

opportunity to spend time with his herd. Even in my earliest memories shadowing David, I remember how he would talk softly to the livestock as he worked them. He took every chance to give a cow a quick pat on the shoulder before she left the chute.

None of what David ever did on the ranch seemed like a chore. Fixing equipment or dealing with troublesome calves isn't the most glamorous work out there, but David never looked like there was anywhere else he would rather be than surrounded by his black Angus cattle.

To me, David is the ideal cattleman. He is knowledgeable and successful in the business world. Still, more than that, he lives to work with cattle. This is more than a job or a side hobby. In David's heart, this is his true passion.

Because of him, that's the view I'll forever have of the beef industry.

The best cattle producers don't go through the motions. They feel every loss and every win, but they manage to keep a smile on their face no matter the outcome. They don't lose their patience with their human help or the herd. They have zero doubts that God put them on this Earth to raise quality Angus cattle.

They don't just handle the herd. They live to do it. **AJ**