

CATTLE CULTURE

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

Inborn Fondness

What it means to truly love the work you do as a beef producer.

My freshman year of high school, I was able to compete in the FFA Creed contest. Over and over again I would recite the few paragraphs by E.M. Tiffany, doing my best to let my own passion for the agriculture industry shine through my words.

After the constant repetition, I can admit my younger self fell victim to not always finding the deeper meaning in each line. There was a phrase, however, that always has and forever will stand out to me — “inborn fondness.”

To me, that simple phrase was one of the most poetic ways to capture what we as agriculturists all share. Our desire to raise cattle, to be a part of this industry, comes from something deep within us. It’s a love that didn’t feel like a specific choice. It’s more of a calling that none of us could ignore.

For all that this phrase has meant

to me, I think in July, tucked away in the beautiful state of North Carolina, I encountered the perfect example of an individual with an inborn fondness for livestock.

Doc Goodson calls Springfield Angus in Franklin County home. Down a dirt road that shares the same name as his operation, there’s an Angus operation tucked away from the noise and hustle of the big city.

It’s a location with a rich history. 85-year-old Doc has loved cattle since he was a child, and he formed Springfield Angus in 1976. Producing quality black-hided cattle has always been a goal, and with technology like embryo transfer (ET) and expected progeny differences (EPDs), Doc is proudly calving 250 females today.


Doc met me halfway to the show barn, and from the moment I first shook his hand, I had no doubts that he was put on this planet to work with livestock.

It’s something you can hear in his voice when he talks about his herd, something you can feel when he smiles out at the views of the operation. His love for the cattle may be something he holds near to his heart, but it’s something that is clearly visible to the others around him.

When I spoke with Doc, I found myself met with the perfect picture of what our industry is. I think though we all share this inborn love for the task of raising cattle, it is a love so powerful that it becomes a visibly outward love.

The work isn’t always glamorous — it’s something we all know, and we’ve all said before. There are late nights and early mornings; hot days and rainy evenings. We get our hands dirty on a daily basis. We pour ourselves into our work, and we go through seasons when we see little to no benefit from our efforts.

Still, we wake up with joy for each aspect of livestock management.

It’s feels like it should be cliché with how much we talk about it, but for me, I truly think E.M. Tiffany had it right. We truly do believe that to live and work on a good farm is both pleasant and challenging. Because we know the highs and the lows of this life, and because we hold an inborn fondness for this industry, there’s no moment of discouragement that can ever outweigh the moments of beauty. 



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