Ever' Day Things

by Tom McBeth



The ghost of Christmas Future

Dear Santa

What should we ask for this Christmas? How 'bout a little more uniformity in the cattle in the country? It's nice to see the good cattle. It's also an education to see the "plainer kind."

I just talked to some folks who wanted top dollar for their cattle and were goin' to

use a bull they raised out of some plainer cows. There was also a 350-pound (lb.) range in the size of their calves, with some calves born in March and some in September.

Anybody who
thinks there is gettin'
to be too narrow of
a gene pool ain't
been out lookin' at
cattle in the
country. There
are lots of kinds
of cattle out there.
The ones I really

like are the cows that come into the sale ring with a big ol' set of antlers. They have that thin, hungry look and ears the size of an African elephant's. Their attitudes remind me of my ex-mother-in-law after she had been told she might be a little on the hardheaded side. I really said it as a compliment, but she took it the other way.

Now don't misunderstand what I'm sayin'. I got as good a mother-in-law now as a man could ask for, and I don't want her to think I'm stereotypin' mothers-in-law as a whole. There are good ones, and there's not-so-good ones — just like there's good cows, and then there's the "plainer kind."

It is amazin' how many good cows there are in the country. With some bulls that are a little better, there could be a lot more real good calves.

If we only could talk a lot of folks into gettin' a little more serious about gettin' better bulls and pullin' them out of the pasture after about 60-70 days with the cows and workin' their calves in the spring.

Whether for fall or spring cows, it don't

make any difference. We need to get

more folks to work on gettin' their calves more uniform to make a better product.

> Things are goin' to get like the hog industry, where the "plainer kind" just won't bring enough to put any money in the sock after a trade is made. Just like anything

else, folks won't do much changin' 'til they have to. If a lot of folks were proactive instead of

instead of reactive, it would be a lot easier for them to

stay active in the business.

We're gettin' smarter about things after the fact. I just wish I could see into the future like all those gals on TV advertisin' ESP and readin' tarot cards, tea leaves, chicken entrails, rotten eggs or whatever. Maybe we should get them to invest in some cattle and see how good they really are.

I just heard another deal that was pretty scary and that could make Christmas a little difficult for a long time to come. It looks like the EPA is wantin' to make cattlemen fence every stream in the country. It don't matter whether there is any water in it or not.

Have you checked the cost of fencin' lately? I am startin' to sweat over what the government is liable to do to business of any kind in this country — let alone to agriculture and cattle folks. If you haven't checked with your NCBA state affiliate or

the NCBA itself, you might look into it.

Just like most government employees, bureaucrats are paid to think up ways to cost us money. They haven't stopped to think that good pasture management is the way to keep streams clean and that the fence keepin' cattle out of them will cause more damage to the stream bank than cattle ever will. Most bureaucrats don't get out to the pasture much. They like to spend their time behind a desk thinkin' up ways to spread more environmentally sound bullsquat.

Sometimes we have to look at a situation and make sure we see what is goin' on. It is kind of like learnin' about Santa Claus when we're kids.

We need to heed the Master's message of peace, love and salvation that Christmas brings. Our neighbors and even the bureaucrats all are just folks. Us cowy types tend to want to keep to ourselves, and I can tell you that is not the way to make an impression on the public. They want to believe what's in the newspapers and on TV, even though they know it's mostly hype.

Let's say a prayer and pull our heads up out of the sand. We need to take care of our business and our children's business, as well as continue our applied environmentalism for a lot of Christmases to come. Maybe we ought to make it known that cattlemen and farmers practice applied environmentalism and have for a long time.

'Course, a lot of folks, even though they're skeptical of the government, want someone to take care of them instead of relyin' on themselves. Guess that's part of human nature for some.

Take care, and try to practice a little applied Christmas ever' day. Merry Christmas, and God bless us, ever' one!

Tom McBall