



Angus Stakes

► by *Shauna Rose Hermel*, editor

Facing the weather lions

They say if March comes in like a lion, it will go out like a lamb. Well, the start of 2005 sure makes one wonder if there's any lamb to be found this year. With earthquakes and tsunamis overseas, mudslides in California, frozen floods in Ohio, frigid temperatures in the Northern Plains, and our trademark ice in the Midwest, we're certainly witnessing quite a few weather lions.

Coffee shop talk

Back in Minnesota, we used to hear the ice on the lakes crack as it got colder. This year the ice on our deck is thick enough to make the same gunshot-like noise. Here in Missouri, producers were actually glad to see the 0° F nights because it froze the mud and gave cattle some solid footing and a dry place to lie, even if it did take some time to thaw out waterers.

Yep, this one will be discussed in coffee shops for years to come.

It's such a blessing to be in agriculture. Yes, it's hard physically and mentally to cope with being out in the cold or dealing with long bouts of rain, but at least in agriculture we are so much closer to the wonder that God put in this world to give us hope. Who would have thought the ornery cow would let you milk her standing in the middle of a pen because she knows her calf is too weak to do it on its own? How many people get to witness the appreciation of a herd of cows stringing out over a freshly unrolled big bale of hay or witness a cow furiously work over a newborn calf as the steam rolls off it to dry it before its ears have a chance to freeze?

How many people see the beauty in the frost as it clings to the tall grass and shimmers in the morning light? How many people see the pitch black of 2 a.m., only to look up and see the brilliance of the stars? How many people these days understand the extent to which weather events now will affect our future beyond the ski outlook and airport closings?

Even though I now sit in a warm office for most of those stormy days, the weather does affect me and the whole staff. Those ice days made us fret about getting this issue out on time. Some days it just feels like it's harder to get the job done than it needs to be.

It's the stories from home and the lessons of being a kid on the farm that help me deal with the winter doldrums. Being able to see the small miracles of hope is one of the greatest gifts of growing up on the farm. And

it's one of the greatest gifts you can share with those around you.

So, next time you're at the coffee shop or just sitting across the kitchen table from your spouse, be sure to share the miracles as well as the hardships. You'll make yourself and those around you feel a whole lot more like facing whatever weather lion is beckoning outside.

Information at your fingertips

Keep up with what's happening in the industry by visiting www.4cattlemen.com, providing coverage of the 2005 Cattle Industry Annual Convention & Trade Show. This event provides the largest and broadest-reaching annual forum of beef cattle producers in the industry.

Sponsored by Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., the www.4cattlemen.com site features coverage by Angus Productions Inc. (API) staff of industry news, market forecasts, new technologies and policy set to guide lobbying efforts in the coming year. Sure to be discussed at the meeting will be the Canadian/U.S. border reopening, emerging diseases, the national identification (ID) program, bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), export markets, the beef checkoff and many other topics.

The site will feature audios of some of the sessions, as well as industry news releases and API articles.

Don't miss new columns

In the last six months, the editorial team has been working on a new column lineup. Four columns make their debut in this issue (see page 46). More will premiere in the March issue. We hope you find these columns informational and inspiring. Be sure to give us your feedback to keep us on track in filling your information needs.

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