



The VIEW FROM HERE

Kyle Haley

If anyone embodies the “whatever it takes” attitude, it would be the men and women in production agriculture.

Long days, short nights and temperature extremes are no match for a producer determined to get the hay in from the field or the cows through the chute.

When it comes to hard work and determination, I’ll take someone who makes a living off the land every single time.

That said, there is an area where some producers don’t work as hard as they should.

Given the prevalence and relative affordability of things like artificial insemination, embryo transfer, DNA diagnostic tests, etc., the playing field is relatively level from a genetic standpoint.

The programs flourishing today and in my opinion, the future, will be the programs and individuals who outwork their competitors in the area of customer service.

If you take the airline industry out of the equation, when given the opportunity, most people buy their goods and services from people they know and trust. Sure, those people must provide a quality product, but in the end, it is the relationships that are built through customer service that turns first-time buyers into longtime repeat customers.

I for one sometimes pay a little more or settle for a little less just so I can buy something from someone I know, trust and like. Truth be told, most of us do it, in some ways I think it is human nature.

The nice thing about customer service is that it doesn’t have to be a big line item on the yearly budget. Phone calls, e-mails, personalized notes, etc. don’t cost much more than your time. My point is, whether you have five bull customers or five hundred, customer service is mostly about how having the “whatever it takes” attitude. If your product is doing its job, providing a little customer service is like icing on the cake.

The other bonus about stepping up your customer service program is that by rubbing elbows and staying in contact with your customers, you will much more easily be able to keep a pulse on how your product is performing once it leaves your place. Because in the end, if your product doesn’t deliver as promised, being a “good old boy” will only get you so far.

The other thing worth mentioning about customer service, is that it should be a year-long endeavor. In my opinion, customer service doesn’t begin and end with a call to a past bull customer the day before your sale to see how many bulls he needs again this year.

So, as you are sitting in your truck detecting heats this spring, or bailing hay this summer, I encourage you to spend some time evaluating your customer service plan. Ask yourself, “Is satisfying my customers a top priority?”

If the answer is yes, and I hope it is, the next and most important question becomes, “Am I willing to do whatever it takes to keep my customers satisfied?”

LW