



## Around THE WORLD

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Seems like in the last decade everyone has taken marketing to a whole new level. The efforts have increased demand due in no small part to the ability to create several different “Buy Products” from products that were once deemed less valuable.

Not so long ago, a cup of coffee was a cup of coffee. Whether you wanted regular or decaf was about the only choice you had to make. Have you been to a Starbucks lately? They have changed the way everyone looks at coffee and now many of their competitors are following suit. Now you need to be a coffee connoisseur to know which lever to pull at your local QuikTrip.

One thing we have learned from all of this is that we are a society that will pay handsomely if you give us what we want or satisfy our tastes.

Fortunately, the beef industry has recognized this. I don't think anyone can argue that the money spent to develop new cuts and/or “heat-and-eat” type meals has been well worth the investment.

Along with these changes has come a whole new assortment of markets. Seems like every so often a new company crops up that is targeting the taste and desires of certain consumers. The good news is that all of these companies need product and that means more opportunities for producers. It would be interesting to see the number of beef cattle that bypass the traditional

marketplace—namely auction barns—and go directly to some sort of specialty market. Many times a specialty product demands a premium, which in turn means more profit for everyone involved, including the producer who raised the raw material.

This is a crazy business. You have one company profiting off of the consumers who want to buy products consisting of higher quality grades (fatter) and you have another company profiting off of the consumers who want only the leanest (lower quality grading) beef.

The good news is, in either case, we are satisfying the wants of the consumer, no matter what their tastes are, and the ability to please a variety of palates has allowed us to increase demand.

In a nutshell, the past 10 years has brought on many changes in the marketplace and you can rest assured the next 10 years will bring even more change.

It's more important than ever to know what your cattle offer and the different markets out there that demand your kind of cattle. The cost of production doesn't appear to be getting cheaper any time soon, so it's as important as ever to make sure you're getting the maximum price for your product.

Who knows what is out there. I never dreamed I would see people standing in line to drop \$4 for a cup of coffee. **LW**