



The VIEW FROM HERE

Kyle Haley

For Sale: One barely used television and one pair of reading glasses.

At some point in time, everyone reaches their breaking point. Today was that day for me. I have had about all I can stand of the gloom and doom in the world today. The television, newspapers and internet are flooded with negativity. The headlines are dominated by unemployment figures, bailout waste, stock market woes, and the list goes on. It seems one has to search long and hard for any positive news these days. The closest thing I could find on cnn.com was a story about some kid who set a new record for Guitar Hero.

Don't get me wrong, I don't for one second think we can stick our heads in the sand and hope for better days. And I realize it is the press' duty to keep us informed, but I do believe it is unhealthy to spend too much time dwelling on the negative.

I am no economist, but I can't help but wonder what would happen if we spent less time focused on the negative and more time spent on how to actually improve the situation. People much smarter than me have suggested a great deal of our economic troubles are tied more to psychology than they are to market fundamentals. Whether it is positive news or negative news, as the snowball rolls downhill, it keeps gaining momentum and supporters until it takes on a life of its own.

I wonder what would happen if cattle people and others who make a living from production agriculture took a shot at running the country. I bet much work would get done with a lot less talk along the way. After all, we are used to facing down and dealing with elements out of our control.

My point to all of this is, whether you are an individual producer, a breed association, a small business owner or a country, time spent dwelling on the negative is wasted time. We didn't get to where we are overnight, nor will we emerge from this situation overnight. If there was a quick fix out there, I am betting someone would have found it by now.

It will take groups of people working together with common goals in mind. There will be mistakes made along the way and there will be non-believers dressed as advocates standing on the sidelines hurling criticism.

As my grandfather used to say, times like these will "separate the men from the boys."

History has shown that recessions are a great time to launch new companies. In fact, 16 of the 30 companies whose stocks make up the Dow started during recessions. General Electric traces its roots to the panic of 1873. William Hewlett and David Packard founded HP during the Great Depression. You can bet those boys weren't taking the advice of the so-called experts of the time.

I truly believe individuals with a positive attitude and a solid plan will come out on the other side stronger than they have ever been before. The same can be said for the Limousin breed and its breeders.

Considering what farmers, feeders, packers and retailers have endured the last year or so, many will no doubt dig deep and question their past decisions and business models, such as ignoring the benefits of crossbreeding and chasing high levels of milk production.

Given the breed's inherent advantages in areas like efficiency and red meat yield, it is hard to believe that cattle producers looking to gain an edge in those areas won't turn to Limousin to right some of their previous wrongs.

So far this spring, buyer-interest shows that exact thing may very well be happening.

And that is news much more to my liking.

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