

# Tame the Boogeyman

commentary by **SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL**, editor

As we look to the future of agriculture, particularly the livestock industry, we tend to focus on the obstacles, lumping them into one monstrous threat. That can be overwhelming. But nothing tames the boogeyman like revealing his true identity.

I've always liked *Star Trek: The Next Generation*, in large part because the show leaps past our current condition to a better world. It assumes that we earthlings overcame our problems — whether racism, military aggression, apathy or disease —

with human compassion, intellect, ingenuity, determination and grit.

And if we could come so far as a world, isn't it only logical to assume that Captain Picard and his crew could handle a simple trade dispute between two worlds? We trust the crew of the Enterprise to solve problem after problem, episode after episode. The reason we want to watch is to see just

how they'll solve the problem at hand.

## **Solid track record**

We don't have to wait till star date 41263.1 to look back upon our successes.

Men of vision brought British breeds to America to make a better beef animal. The pioneers suffered blizzards, droughts, theft and ridicule from those who thought Longhorns were the only cattle tough enough to survive the West. Those early pioneers had to help build a marketing system and find genetic lines that could thrive.

As an industry, we fenced the prairies and discovered ways to harvest forage to feed herds through the winter. We survived the Depression and war on several occasions. We learned how to vaccinate to protect herds from disease. To improve management, we developed technologies ranging from crossbreeding to cloning, from barbed wire to DNA fingerprinting, from swathing hay to modified intake regulators.

Episode by episode, with compassion, intellect, ingenuity, determination and grit, cattlemen have tamed the monsters that threatened their livelihoods. It's only logical to think we will use those same strengths to solve the challenges we face today.

## **Up to the challenge**

We don't have to face all the monsters at once. And we don't have to face them alone.

The first step toward overcoming a challenge is to understand what it is that you are facing. The Cattle Industry Annual Convention and Trade Show Jan. 29-Feb. 1 in Nashville, Tenn., will provide a tremendous forum for learning about the issues currently challenging the beef industry.

Visit [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com) now for a preview of the event schedule and links to registration information. Thanks to the sponsorship of Boehringer Ingelheim Vetmedica, Inc., Angus Productions Inc. (API) will provide real-time coverage of the convention and trade show at the Web site.

The convention will feature meetings of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA), the Cattlemen's Beef Promotion and Research Board (CBB), Cattle-Fax and the American National CattleWomen (ANCW). Items sure to be addressed include wildlife diseases that threaten cattle, country-of-origin labeling (COOL), the farm bill, national identification protocols, production and management topics, marketing structure, and new technologies.

At [www.4cattlemen.com](http://www.4cattlemen.com), API will present highlights of policy discussions, cattlemen's college topics, subcommittee and committee breakouts, award presentations, beef checkoff news, and new products presented in the trade show.

Attend in person, online or both, and play your part in history as one who helped overcome the challenges of the 21st century.