

Apply the science with a little cow savvy.



Shauna Hermel, editor
shermel@angus.org

I've always loved H.W. Mumford's "Tribute to the Stockman." To me, it captures the fount of good management — a heart for the stock and the land in one's care. What better way to start an issue focused on "Management Matters."

As columnist Dan Shike points out in "The Digestive Tract," starting on page 52, managing a herd of cows — or a feedlot full of steers for that matter — is part science, part art. A good stockman needs to be able to embrace both with equal fervor.

The artist studies the herd, the pasture, the community, recognizing when something is amiss — maybe encroaching weeds, dull hair coats, or a steer hanging back from the bunk. With an artist's view, the stockman sees the beautiful picture of how things should be — and recognizes when something is out of place. We call it cow savvy.

When something out of place diminishes quality of life for stock or people, the stockman seeks to remedy the situation. Truly, there are few things more disheartening than not having an answer to an animal's plight.

That's where the science comes in.

For every problem there's a solution, though it might take a little sleuthing to find it. To solve the problem effectively, you have to understand why it is a problem. That makes the stockman's knowledge — that cow savvy — a critical component for any research trial. After all, why spend time, effort and finances investigating a solution that has no hope of application?

Yet when possible solutions present themselves, stockmen owe it to the herd to consider the potential, even if it is different. Change may seem unessential, especially if you've gotten by doing it a particular way, just like your parents and your grandparents did. But, could change make things better? I've shared before how at one time I thought calving cameras were a luxury for the rich guys who didn't have enough places to spend their money. Now, I see the payback in hours slept and calves and ears saved.

Technologies that seemed "pie in the sky" a few years ago, seem more realistic now. Whether grazing systems, vaccine strategies, handling systems or feed supplements, consider the benefit to man and beast. Sometimes science helps discover the "why" something has worked for years, and sometimes it offers the solution we never imagined.

Good stockmanship guides good science, and good science guides good stockmanship. **ABB**

A Tribute to the Stockman

by H.W. Mumford

Behold the Stockman! Artist and Artisan.

He may be polished, or a diamond in the rough — but always a gem.

Whose devotion to his animals is second only to his love of God and family.

Whose gripping affection is tempered only by his inborn sense of the true proportion of things.

Who cheerfully braves personal discomfort to make sure his livestock suffer not.

To him there is a rhythm in the clatter of the horse's hoof, music in the bleating of the sheep and in the lowing of the herd.

His approaching footsteps call forth the affectionate whinny of recognition.

His calm, well-modulated voice inspires confidence and wins affection.

His coming is greeted with demonstrations of pleasure, and his going with evident disappointment.

Who sees something more in cows than the drudgery of milking, more in swine than the grunt and squeal, more in the horse than the patient servant, and more in sheep than the golden hoof.

Herdsmen, shepherd, groom — yes, and more.

Broad-minded, big-hearted, and whole-souled;

whose life and character linger

long after the cordial greeting is stilled and the hearty handshake is but a memory; whose silent influence forever lives.

May his kind multiply and replenish the earth.

