

COMMON GROUND

A year to improvise



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The year 2020 has already taught us a lot, though granted, the classroom has not been very pleasant so far.

Like most, I started into this calendar year making resolutions, setting goals and making commitments to be better than I was the year before. I am a planner by nature, so this all comes pretty easy for me. In fact, I actually like the process. I find it rewarding to map out my goals and work backward to put things in place that will hopefully lead me to that successful end. If done correctly, I review that plan on a regular basis, evaluate my progress and adjust as needed.

Even best-laid plans

This year those plans held together pretty well until about March. Then enter COVID-19, and the plan was thrown out the window. Our world was turned upside down in what felt like a matter of moments. For the staff at the American Angus Association, we were faced with the daunting task of maintaining the services and programs our members rely upon, but carrying out most all of those supporting functions from our homes.

Necessity truly is the mother of invention. Regardless of the amount of planning involved, sometimes you just have to throw those plans out the window, size up the situation and improvise. I know those in farming and ranching understand this concept incredibly well. It is just ingrained in how we do our job.

Everyday adaptations

Growing up on a farm, I probably didn't think much about this need to improvise. Equipment broke. Cows got out. It started to rain. The neighbor needed help. Whatever came up, you just figured it out and moved on. As a family, we never really planned anything too far out because our calendar was seemingly always determined by the weather. Admittedly, this was pretty frustrating to me as a little kid.

The response of the agriculture community through the COVID-19 crisis has been nothing short of amazing. Farmers and ranchers met the challenge with resilience, toughness and tenacity. Cows continued to calve, feed continued to be hauled, and this nation was reminded just how precious its food supply truly is.

Stay nimble

While I will continue to be an advocate of having a strong game plan, COVID-19 certainly reminded me that we must stay nimble. Market conditions change, which may dictate an adjustment to our marketing strategy. Available feed resources change, which requires you to modify your herd management. Sometimes it is a financial opportunity that presents itself for only a short window of time, and those who act quickly get the advantage.

Regardless of the situation that might present itself, stay agile and ready to respond. Never get too



Traits like tenacity and resilience are bred into cattlemen and women. They are part of our heritage, and they give us strength to face challenges, like COVID-19, along the way. Our communications team has shined a light on how that strength has brought us through crises in the past, and how it most certainly will pull us through crises now and in the future. Learn more about how the #AngusFamily is moving forward at www.angus.org/MovingForward.

“Never get too comfortable with the ‘way we have always done it,’ and always be on the lookout for those windows that close quickly but reap large rewards for those who can react quickly enough.”

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