



Cow Camp Chatter

by **RON TORELL**, long-standing educator and advocate of agriculture

Taking care of business

Is it any wonder that those individuals who are highly motivated and self-disciplined with good time-management and organizational skills are usually the most productive and successful in their chosen field? These people have the heart and passion for what they do. They are usually self-starters who know how to prioritize and multi-task in order to get the job done.

These are the people we search out to do business with. They can be counted on in every situation. They are dependable and good to their word. In every walk of life there are those who have a natural sense for taking care of

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business and those who don't. Although many of these traits may not come naturally to some folks, the good news is that they can be developed and fine-tuned over time.

Those of us in the beef business know only too well how easy it is to fall behind the eight ball at some point or another in the course of a year. After a long, drawn-out winter, spring hits full force, starting with calving. From there on out there's branding, breeding, turning out, fertilizing, irrigating, haying, moving cattle, marketing, weaning, shipping and so on. In between, we have to find time to fix fence, repair breakdowns, make management decisions and, at the same time, take care of the everyday necessities of life. As we ring in the New Year and resolutions are being made, we can be optimistic and plan for the upcoming year.

Setting priorities

If we let things slide, they continue to add up until we are overwhelmed.

We can't do it all, so unfortunately all of it doesn't get done. And what does get done may not get done well because we are just too strapped for time to do a good job. This is where advanced planning comes into play. By setting realistic goals based on our priorities we are able to enter the busy times with more efficiency and less worries while still giving it our best.

Organization and time management go hand-in-hand. The best place to start is by making a list of both your nonmonetary short- and long-term goals. Prioritize the items on your list in order to get the most demanding and tedious jobs done first. Post your lists in a conspicuous spot so you are reminded every day of your commitment to your goals and priorities.

Check them off as you complete them. You will feel a real sense of accomplishment when you are able to see the jobs checked off. Update your list periodically.

If you see something that needs to be done but you can't get to it right away, add it to the list. This written commitment will help keep you on track and encourage you to follow through with your plan. You will have to be ambitious and self-disciplined to make this work. Think ahead. Don't wait until shipping day to fix the loading chute. Put it on the priority list and fix it early. Take the time to make it a permanent fix to the problem.

A time-saver

Have you ever noticed how procrastination can cost you in the long run — both in time and money? Organizing the ranch shop for the first time in 20 years is a case in point. Imagine the time you'll save when your tools are arranged so that you can find the right one just when you need it. Chances are, with an organized shop you'll be more apt to follow through with a lot of the jobs you would have normally put off just because you weren't able to find what you needed to get the job done. During these long winter months, go out and tackle that bin of bolts you've been meaning to sort forever. You'll have saved both time and money spent in making a trip to town to buy what you already have on hand.

It's important to be realistic when setting long-term goals. Identify the areas that will add the most to your ranching operation's efficiency when they are restored. As unpleasant as it can be, digging post holes, setting corner posts, making gates and repairing fence has to be done. Approach the job with a



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different attitude. Imagine the time that could be saved if you could contain your cattle. Then get to work.

Set practical goals. Since it took several years for the fences to get into their current state of disrepair, it's going to take a good period of time to get them back in shape. Work on fixing a quarter to half a mile of fence a week during the time of the year when more pressing jobs are not overpowering. In just a few months you'll have repaired 5 to 10 miles of fence.

There are always obstacles to overcome while working toward your goals. Life has a way of throwing curve balls every now and then. It helps to remain focused on your objective. Get and stay organized. When you have down time, work on your list of goals. Be motivated to get things done and done right the first time. The best time to start taking care of business and reaping the benefits of a productive and successful life is now. Who knows? You might actually start enjoying the process.

That's enough for this month. A special thanks to my wife, Jackie, for her part in writing "Cow Camp Chatter." As always, if you would like to discuss this article or simply want to talk cows, do not hesitate to contact me at 775-385-7665 or rtbulls@frontier.com.