



Back to Basics

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Heart of the matter

I love the old saying, “he/she has a lot of heart,” meaning the individual has a passion to succeed and a love of life and work. An individual with a lot of heart will do whatever it takes to get the job done. When the going gets tough, individuals with heart get going. It shows in their positive attitude and actions. It is simply a pleasure to work and be around these individuals — whether man or beast.

Horseperson vs. stockperson

For example, owning and riding a horse that possesses a lot of heart is definitely one of the pleasures and rewards of life. Peddling a horse all day that has no heart and no gas in its tank is an experience I can do without. You have to experience these situations to understand them.

A true cowboy has a passion and love for the horse and riding. In fact, let’s refer to the cowboy as a horseperson from this point forward. I marvel at what a true horseperson with passion

and heart can do with a quality horse, provided the horse possesses the same passion and heart. An obvious bond is immediately formed between human and beast.

There is a staunch difference between being a horseperson and a cowman, or a stockperson. A true horseperson views the bovine as an instrument with which to work and train a horse. A true stockperson views the horse as a vehicle and instrument with which to get the cow work done. Which are you — a horseperson or a stockperson?

True passion

I am the first to admit that I am not a horseperson. I really enjoy riding a turnkey horse with heart. I can get the job done, provided a horseperson trained my trusty steed. Yet, I do not have the passion and heart to be a horseperson. My love, heart and passion lie with the science and the world of the bovine. I consider myself a stockman.

Seldom do we find an individual who is both a horseperson and stockperson all in one. We see great horsepersons who are fair stockpersons, great horsepersons who are lousy stockpersons, great stockpersons who are fair horsepersons, and great stockpersons who are lousy horsepersons, but seldom do we see great horse people who are also great stock people. I know of a few individuals who encompass both; however, they are few and far between.

So what does this article have to do with livestock production and marketing of beef cows — the subjects I am paid to address? Just like riding that horse without heart, if you have to peddle yourself all the time to get the bovine job done, perhaps you do not have the heart and passion for the business.

In my travels I see great people who are involved in beef production who should not be. It is obvious their heart and passion lie elsewhere. Some inherited the ranch and feel a sense of responsibility to take over the family operation. Others are afraid to pursue their true passion, whatever that may be.

Follow your heart

We live in a different world today than we did 20 to 50 years ago. If

When the going gets tough, individuals with heart get going.

your livelihood depends on producing and marketing beef cattle, yet your passion and heart lie somewhere else, you might consider bailing out of the ranching business. Recognizing the fact that the inflated cattle market we are presently experiencing is short-lived, now is a good time to cash in on

the equity of your beef cow herd and reinvest in the areas that capture your heart and passion. You may never again have the opportunity to get out at these price levels. This may be the chance of your lifetime to truly pursue your passion and follow your heart.

Leave the cattle business to those who have the passion and heart for it. I honestly believe the beef industry would be far better off if it were left to those with passion and heart for the business. Compare it to the many nurses, teachers, janitors, full-time mothers or secretaries. There is a staunch difference between the individuals who have heart and passion for their profession and those who are just there for the paycheck. Why should it be any different for those of us in the beef business?

As always, if you would like to discuss this article or simply would like to talk cows, do not hesitate to contact me at (775) 738-1721 or torellr@unce.unr.edu.

