

Patient, Tolerant, Yet Vigilant



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It's nearly one month after the presidential election. President Bush is still our commander in chief while President-elect Obama awaits inauguration along with an avalanche of challenges.

While disappointed in much of the incredible deficit pork barrel spending on President Bush's watch, I can't help being thankful for his steadfast military pressure and national security initiatives that kept harm's way out of this country and placed harm's way squarely on those who would like nothing better to do than harm us.

While our financial crisis has been traumatic to the entire economy in recent months, think what could have happened if our country had endured another devastating attack on U.S. soil. Markets will rebound and business will endure hardship during peaceful times. Our agriculture economy will prosper because we are the most highly technical agricultural economy in the world.

Because of President Bush, I am most thankful for the safety of my family post 9-11 and the sacrifice of so many American servicemen and servicewomen that have contributed to the peace in this country that has assured for my three boys the same opportunities I had at their age. For that we are all blessed.

Being a traditional conservative, I woke up the morning after the election,

put my boots and slacks on the same way, made my way back into the American Hereford Association (AHA) headquarters and conducted business as usual.

I woke up with a different feeling toward Barack Obama. He will soon be my president, and I cannot help but pray for his administration's success and hope that he will put the most capable and intelligent group of people in leadership roles within his Cabinet and beyond. My attitude changed from cynical and melancholy to one of genuine concern for his success.

Obama comes from a far different background than mine. I can't say I understand his upbringing, and I'm fairly confident that he may have very little understanding of my rural American and farm economy values, but we are both Americans.

By now, I'm sure he realizes that this country, with all its blemishes, is a great and powerful country of peace because he, a man of color with a liberal agenda, was elected to the highest office in the land and the most powerful position in the world. What an awesome responsibility he now bears to maintain that peace as our country works to retool our economy and sustain national security.

Now that we have a total change in the balance of power in government, I can't help thinking of how we as an industry must conduct ourselves in order to convey a level of understanding in those political forums that will have major consequences on our business livelihood.

While attending a California Cattlemen Association (CCA) meeting in August, I had the opportunity to spend a few hours with CCA President Bruce Hafenfeld on a four-hour drive through northern California. Bruce informed me of the challenges CCA was having in tackling liberal agendas that could hurt production agriculture and the beef industry in the West.

CCA took a proactive position to develop a relationship with the liberals in power rather than fire away at them. At the end of the day, the CCA representatives were afforded an ear, and politicians are now beginning to listen to the cowboys before they, the politicians, leap into their sometimes harmful agendas.

This relationship is what will be required for our industry to thrive. That's an attitude of tolerance and patience that we're not always prone to exhibit. Now, on the other hand, my patience will only take me so far. If our liberties are infringed upon or if government becomes bigger and more intrusive on our business, then the gloves are off.

During this holiday season, I continue to pray for those servicemen and servicewomen who remain in harm's way while spending the holidays away from their loved ones. I also want to wish all Hereford breeders a healthy and prosperous New Year.

Let's be patient, tolerant, and yet vigilant as we continue to build the business for our product, Hereford seedstock. **HW**