

Surrounded by the Best

Farmers and ranchers step up to help their neighbors.



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I am not sure where the old saying “lazy days of summer” came from because, in my experience, summers are anything but lazy. Many of you are busy with cattle work, summer sports leagues, preparing for county fairs, making hay, finishing up planting, putting the final touches on your entries for the Junior National Hereford Expo, or a combination of those, and a few other things on top of them.

As my sons have grown out of many of these activities, it gives my wife, Mary Ann, and me time to reflect and to wonder where time has gone. I remember the days when we volunteered for various local activities and how time consuming and fun it was to stay involved.

That just seems to be the way it is in rural America. It always amazes me to see how neighbors step up to fill in and help each other out in the time of need. We see examples of this everywhere we turn. In this issue of the *Hereford World*, the theme is “It’s the Hereford Way,” and you will see examples of how families in the Hereford breed step up by giving of their time and resources.

Stepping up to help

Over the past few years, we have seen devastating fires, storms, floods and other natural disasters that have challenged us and, yet, have shown the commitment not only of our Hereford family but of our rural neighbors and friends to help others get back on their feet.

It was recently reported that in western Oklahoma, cattle operation losses would exceed \$26 million this spring. In the last year alone, we have seen unbelievable fires from the Southwest through the Midwest to California and places between that have taken lives, livestock and thousands of acres of pasture and

fence. It does not take long after one of these disasters before the phones start ringing and farmers and ranchers everywhere are looking for ways they can help.

This willingness to help is not limited to just the adults, because we see youth organizations like FFA organizing trips to help rebuild fences. Others may organize an online auction to raise money to send to areas in need. I am not sure I could count the number of trailers I have seen on the road that were hauling hay to areas that needed some extra to get through the worst of times.

This winter was brutal on our friends in the upper Midwest. During some of my phone calls with breeders, they shared stories of how they would dig out of a snow storm to get to the cows and get them fed, just to see the wind and storms come through overnight and the process would start again the next day. During these calls, I could hear they were tired, yet determined, to keep moving and to get things done.

Not only are these disasters tough from a financial standpoint, but they are tough on emotions and stamina. This is what truly amazes me and highlights the importance of stepping up to do what we can in these types of situations.

We all understand that the agriculture community has a task unknown to many others — to feed a world population. Ranchers and farmers are unique in that they face this challenge without a need for praise or recognition.

With that said, I want to personally thank all of you. We all understand that we would not trade our rural lives with anyone. An agriculture community is a great place to raise a family, stay connected with basic values and roots, and, most importantly, keep ourselves surrounded by great people. **HW**