



..... **STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSES MOUTH**  
**Duane A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator, Webster County**  
**February 19, 2016 Edition**

Last week I discussed the “sweet and sour” story of a blind steer that was shown and sold at the Fort Worth Stock Show. I did receive quite a bit of feedback on this and I felt that we should give an update to the story, so let’s start with that and then take a look at some upcoming meetings that requires some attention. I thank Amanda Radke of Beef Daily for this update. She pretty much mirrors my thoughts on this issue and I think it is best just to parrot what she has determined.

According to what Amanda found out, Oatmeal was being held at a feedlot until he was cleared to be processed at Kane Beef located in Corpus Christi, Texas. Unfortunately 13-year old Kendyll Williams was still getting calls, hate mail and personal attacks on social media. Then on February 11, Kane Beef indicated on social media that “Kane Beef will not be processing Oatmeal the steer.” No further explanation was offered, leaving many to speculate about Oatmeal’s whereabouts. But then the very next day a Texas A&M University news release indicated that Oatmeal was donated to Texas A&M, where his cataracts will be studied by the Colleges of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences and Agriculture & Life Sciences. Fort Worth Stock Show officials most likely thought this was a great way to solve a problem.

They did not take the offering from the activists but instead decided to donate the steer, thus negating Kane Beef’s obligation to process the steer. In other words gave Oatmeal a temporary reprieve, plus meets a goal for education purposes of the FWSS. I think that is a great way for this story to take a detour. I agree with Amanda that while there is no word on how long Oatmeal will be used in the classroom; however, you would hope that Texas A&M would use him at least one semester for veterinary studies and perhaps the livestock judging team before ultimately being harvested to be studied and used by the meats classes and sold in the university’s meat lab — as that is the true intent and purpose of a market steer.

Unfortunately this story may have garnered too much attention for something so small in the grand scheme of things. We must remember that this is just one show steer at one show, but I am afraid things like this creates too much negative press for the beef industry. It’s gone way over the top but is an indication of how some people in our society view animals — as beings that shouldn’t be owned, managed, reproduced, studied, eaten, etc. We need to remind people that the ultimate goal of these folks is to eliminate the entire livestock sector, and while they probably think that is a compassionate point of view, they absolutely want to see the end of cattle altogether instead of enjoying them while they are here and benefiting from them nutritionally, medically and in our everyday tasks, after we respectfully harvest them.

I imagine we can never change their minds on that point, but it’s some good food for thought for those of us in the beef cattle business. Some say we need to understand their point of view, which is valid, but I guarantee these sort of people will not meet you half way, they will never see the way we raise and utilize animals in any other means than evil, perverted and inhumane. If you have ever gone toe to toe with these people you would find this to be true. While the solution for Oatmeal with the donation that will be used for research and for use by agricultural students makes sense in many regards; I also agree with Amanda’s question that “On the other hand, is it good that they in some ways caved to the pressures of the media and animal rights activists? By caving, it may send the message that perhaps the beef industry does assume some “guilt” about harvesting steers for meat, and it gives every kid who shows a market animal a bad reputation as someone who chooses to slaughter their animals for beef instead of donating them to sanctuaries and/or keeping them on their own farms until they die of natural causes.” We in the livestock industry will see much more of this in the future. Be prepared!

**Mandated Classes for Little Blue NRD:** I have been getting a lot of questions from farmers located in the Little Blue NRD about mandatory classes. Here is what I have found out: Operators of both dryland and irrigated cropland located in the Little Blue NRD District’s Water Quality Management Areas are required to obtain or renew their LBNRD Operator’s Certificate which must have been obtained before 2017. It must then be renewed every four years after obtaining your certificate, either by attending a class/seminar or on-line. This project is a joint effort with the Nebraska Extension and the Little Blue NRD. The Little Blue district includes all of Thayer County and portions of Adams, Webster, Clay, Nuckolls, Fillmore and Jefferson counties. Irrigated and dryland farmers in certain Little Blue Natural Resources District water areas can fulfill their four-year training requirement for water quality management certification by attending a couple of meetings that are coming up in this area including: the Elks Club in Superior on February 23 from 1:30-4:30 pm, and another at the Webster County Fairgrounds in Bladen, NE on March 10 from 8:30-11:30 am. For a full list of classes in the LBNRD and other options you can go to: [www.littlebluenrd.org](http://www.littlebluenrd.org) or contact the NRD office at 402-364-2145.

**South Central Nebraska Beef Seminar:** Kearney Co Fairgrounds in Minden on Friday, February 26. There is no cost to attend; however, pre-registration is requested by February 24 as a Prime Rib dinner is included with the meeting and we will need a head count. Registration and coffee will begin at 10:30 am with the seminar starting at 11:00 am and going till 2:30 pm. Topics include: Increasing Reproductive Efficiency of the Cow Herd; Matching Your Calves to a Backgrounding System; From Mineral Supplementation to Cattle Transportation; and Issues Facing Cattlemen - What Can We Do As Producers? Call Kearney Co Extension Office at 308-832-0645 or Franklin Co Extension Office at 308-425-6277.

The preceding information comes from the research and personal observations of the writer, which may or may not reflect the views of UNL or Nebraska Extension. For more further information on these or other topics contact D. A. Lienemann, Nebraska Extension Educator for Webster County in Red Cloud, (402) 746-3417 or email: [dlienemann2@unl.edu](mailto:dlienemann2@unl.edu) or on the web at: <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/webster>