

Meanwhile, back at the Running H...
She's running the wrong way
Darren Henry, Ph.D.

The last couple of weeks have really tested my ability to work with a level head. Normally, when I am not out working with young stock, I try to stay cool as a cucumber. If you ask my wife, who has worked thousands of head with me over the years, she'll tell you my fuse seems to get cut short before it is ever lit sometimes.

Some of us are built that way, we can accept the fact that our elected officials have lost their minds somewhere between their large intestine and lower sphincter, then turn around and beat our heads on the ground because the 4-year-old female standing in the middle of the grass keeps going the wrong direction. To some of us less evolved humans, we can't understand why she doesn't move the way we want her to move - even with our whistling and screaming.

Lucky for us, there are educational programs out there that can have an impact on all parts of our lives. Beef Quality Assurance, or BQA for those in the know, is just one of those programs. One of BQA's mottos is "The right way is the only way." If I may paraphrase, their main goal is to provide training and information to beef producers in the US, and the consumers of that product, of how commonsense ranching and accepted scientific knowledge can help to raise cattle under optimum management and environmental conditions.



Through programs like BQA, we can further improve ourselves and how we deal with those ornery ones that always seem to be playing on a team, but you're not sure it's the team you're on. In Georgia, we have a great resource in Mr. Jason Duggin. Jason is one of those fellows who when he is around, you know things are going to go right. He can keep even-tempered and calm when dealing with heifers and, even though I haven't been around to see it, I imagine he is a top-hand when it comes time for those yearlings to get shots. Here in Georgia, when I have a question about BQA, he is the man, and you may have already found yourselves in his presence at one of his BQA certification events. If you haven't, I highly recommend it.

There are other options for improving yourself and your handling skills. Sometimes all it takes is finding the neighbor who seems to have it all figured out. The neighbor who seems to never get red-faced and still somehow gets the job done. If that neighbor doesn't live by you, there is a group of folks led by Curt Pate, Ron Gill, and Dean Fish who travel this great country of ours on a NCBA-sponsored Stockmanship and Stewardship tour. These guys know their stuff. If you get the chance, go out and see them. You may have to drive a couple hours to get to their closest tour stop, but I imagine we can all take something away from those trainings.

Me, I am always trying to get better. I know what most of my shortcomings are, and I have my wife to point out the others. I know next week, it will be like herding cats again. I know I am going to be running up and down that field waving my arms and hollering because they are running the wrong way. It is amazing, no matter how many times I show them what the goal is, they seem to avoid it. They are going to be bunching up, pushing and shoving, and for sure and for certain, someone is going to get hurt. My goal is to be happy no matter how it turns out.

Well, I guess I have lamented enough on this subject. I keep getting out there for the same reason you do, if you are lucky enough - because we love it. And, really, I have no right to complain. I am the one who signed up to coach Pee-Wee soccer.



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