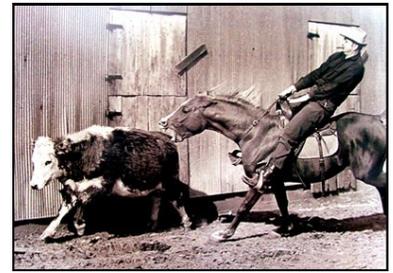


Computers - Cows and Cowboys

By Joan Herrington Thorne

What a combination? Today we as cattle producers are all exposed to cowboys, computers and cows daily. Some of us still don't fully realize we are sitting right in the middle of a computerized society.



Derry Brownfield and one of his cow ponies.

One of my old friends and bull customers, from a Missouri Radio Station made the comment one day that, "He didn't even know how to turn a computer on!" That really put a thorn under this old cowgirl's saddle blanket when I realized what that really meant. I bet if he checked he has more micro chips in that radio station than cow chips on his ranch. I still feel that every person carries the best computer in their head. Not IBM, Hewlett Packer or what is that spotted cow company? Oh yes, Gateway! They have not replaced the brain of the common sense cowboy yet! But to say, "I don't know a thing about computers, don't even know how to turn one on!" That is just a plain lie cowboy's! Consider this?

Every morning when you go out to check the cows you turn on, a computer to start that new truck. Not to mention it's probably the same brand of truck you have always bought too. But today we are exposed to computers in our everyday life with out even our knowledge. That bulk feeder you use has micro chips in it to guage pounds of feed fed and the display is digital. Your tractor has micro relays in it to tell it when to start or if it's getting too hot. Your digital scales for weighing cattle are full of computerized components. Our pocket calculator is a digital computer. Your cell phone is a walking computer these days and you can even take your favorite cow's picture with it! Your remote control sitting next to your old recliner has just a few computer chips in it too. So I love hearing these old die hard cowboys make the comment, "Don't even know how to turn one on." I just chuckle to myself and admit that some things will never change, but time will elude several!

The Computer is a "Tool" Just like our other tools we use to raise cattle! We use it to record data, advertise cattle for sale and communicate with a world too busy to travel long distances. To give you the mentality of today's consumer we had one lady ask why we didn't have a credit card form on our web site so she could just buy a certain cow and have it delivered like on e-bay!

Even though we are considered by many as a totally computerized ranch we still use a fence stretcher to fix our wire fences and wire pliers that pinch. A scoop shovel, a pitch fork to muck out the stalls, a wheel barrow with two wheels, and post hole diggers to plant posts. We still castrate bull calves with a band and if they get too big we do it the old fashioned way with a knife. By the way we dehorn with a hot iron not a laser gun!! The future for the cattle industry is going to include bar codes and micro chips attached to our cattle for identification, so get ready cowboys and cow-girls we haven't even seen anything yet.

God Bless and here's hoping you have more cow chips than micro chips on your cow paddy!!

Just an ole Cowgirl

Note: That old cowboy was Derry Brownfield pictured above. He was a good and honest friend to us. He was the host of his own radio talk show titled "The Common Sense Coalition" and a co-founder of the Brownfield Network, an agricultural news service for radio stations in several states. We salute you Derry for your many words of wisdom and your friendship. Derry passed away in March of 2011. "Happy trails old friend."