

It may be YOUR practice, but it's OUR business!

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Abstract

This presentation details the long-term, trusted relationship between a beef producer and the local veterinarian. The veterinarian is a source of new, innovative information to help keep the ranch successful and a model for modern ranching practices.

Key words: practice management, VCPR

Résumé

Cette présentation illustre la relation de confiance à long terme entre un producteur de bœuf et un vétérinaire de la région. Le vétérinaire est une source de nouvelle information innovante qui permet au ranch d'avoir du succès et de servir comme modèle pour les pratiques d'élevage modernes.

Introduction

Growing and sustaining a beef cattle operation is a complex equation that requires a vastly different approach to the conventional thinking a few decades ago. Gardiner Angus Ranch is a 4-generation, 48,000-acre ranching operation in Clark County, Kansas. GAR is a 100% AI and ET diversified Angus seedstock operation, meaning no clean-up bulls have been used to breed cows in more than 50 years.

In my youth, "growing up Gardiner" meant we did our work with limited outside labor. We were the heat detectors, AI technicians, ranch hands, farmers and yes, sometimes, we tried our best to be the veterinarian! Today, we recognize that increasing the size of a cow herd, acquiring more land, increasing the number of marketable cattle each year and incorporating the scientific tools available mean we either challenge our own conventional thinking or we find people that share our personal and professional goals.

My dad, Henry Gardiner, had many industry friends. Yet, when we had questions, we sought out those individuals we trusted to give us honest answers, help us understand new science and technology, and were willing to give us their time, energy and expert guidance. In fact, some of our success today is directly connected to those relationships forged by Henry a half century ago.

While I may not have fully understood the importance of Dad's willingness to reach out and ask questions, I've always somehow recognized that to grow and sustain our family's ranching enterprise, relationships were as important as the cattle we produce.

Someone once said, "necessity is the mother of invention." The Veterinary Feed Directive forced the conversation relative to a veterinary-client relationship. At Gardiner Angus Ranch, the importance of our veterinarian, Randall Spare, became evident 2 decades before VFD. We had an outbreak of salmonella in our calves and the death loss was mounting. Randall was determined to find a solution. His commitment to the problem, curiosity and concern for our losses ultimately led to a solution. His refusal to accept anything less than an answer that led to a plan of action left an indelible impression.

I had known Randall Spare since my first day at K-State during freshmen orientation. After graduating from vet school, our family encouraged Randall to move to Ashland and purchase the failing vet clinic. Since that first day at K-State, Randall and I forged a relationship built on a mutual trust, as well as personal and professional respect. After all, only your friends encourage you to move to Southwest Kansas and purchase a failing business!

The Ashland Veterinary Center (AVC) team recognizes the needs of our business. It's also their business to make sure we have the best information before problems occur. Whether it's PI testing, single-use syringes, vaccination protocols, semen testing, understanding regulatory issues that affect our business or catastrophic events such as a wildfire, relationships are our lifeline to progress and ultimately, success.

Today, AVC is one of several similar relationships that form the underlying foundation for Gardiner Angus Ranch. Relationships enable us to make better risk management decisions. Relationships enable us to prevent health crisis and better care for the animals under our stewardship. Relationships help us learn new science and gain the trust that implementing new technology into our operation enables us to produce a better product. Relationships have led to opportunities to develop new marketing systems benefitting our customers and the industry.

Through shared goals, our trusted team has invested their time and intellectual energies into understanding the needs of our business. Our common challenge to each other, sometimes on a daily basis, is how can we be better?