

When I was first hired to be an employee at Henderson Co. Vet in June 2008 at just 18 years old, I had no idea what was ahead of me. Working as a small and large animal technician during the summers while I was home from college allowed me to gain a vast amount of knowledge and experience in the vet world. Four years later and a recent graduate from Texas A&M with a degree in Animal Science, I found myself back at the clinic- this time as a technician for cattle only. For four and a half years I have had the privilege to work with and learn from many cattle producers in Henderson and the surrounding counties. Over the years, we grew to know each through passing time in the barn talking about everything from weather and cattle prices to swapping stories about working cattle and family life. I have been able to go on farm calls, assist with emergency surgeries, perform routine procedures on your cattle, and write many cattle related articles over the years. Though challenging and stressful at times, I have been very satisfied with the work I have done, and I have gained great pleasure from working with you and your cattle.

Now, at 26, I have decided that it is my time to move on from the clinic. On November 23rd I will hang up my hat as an employee at Henderson County Veterinary Hospital, and I will turn the page to begin a new chapter in my life. I currently do not have a set plan on where I will be or what I will do, but I am at peace with my decision, and I will continue to seek the Lord to gain direction on where my next steps should land.

I want to thank each of you for the impact you have had on my life these past years. It has been my most sincere pleasure to know you, work with you, and work on your cattle. As you continue on in the cattle industry I urge you to remain steadfast and keep the faith. After growing up on a cattle ranch, and working at the clinic, I, like many of you, have seen the highest of highs and lowest of lows that come with being a cattle producer. I know the defeat of having millions upon millions of army worms invade a pasture overnight, leaving nothing but stems. I have stayed out past dusk and been up before the sun to get work done. I have worked on fence in the heat of the summer, and been out feeding in the dead of winter while the rain pours down. I have stayed up all night by the living room fire warming a sick orphan calf, only to have it die just a few days later. I have missed meetings, family events, and hangouts with friends because "the cows don't know that today is a special day- they still need to be taken care of". But, I have also experienced the great joy that raising cattle brings. Seeing newborn babies running and playing in the crisp fall mornings. The smell of hay after it has been cut. Watching a cow instinctively lick her calf just after it is born. The satisfaction of building fence from the ground up. Working calves all day and finishing up just in time to take a minute to watch the sun set over the trees.

Although we each have different moments that we deem "special", it is moments like these that keep us going. No matter how many meetings we miss, calves we lose, or fences we have to fix, no matter how bad the "bad" is, we keep pushing on because we are passionate about this way of life. It is in our blood. Simply put, it's who we are. We have learned to appreciate every good moment, no matter how big or small, because the drought of 2011 still looms in the back of our minds and we know that we cannot take anything for granted. In the remaining time of your life that you will spend as a cattle producer- whether it be months or decades, I challenge you to find what it is that keeps you going and hold tight to those special moments. When the challenging days come, and I assure you, they will come, keep

pressing on. Keep your roots deeply planted and never lose sight of what got you into the cattle industry to begin with. Keep that passion burning. May we always be known as the cattle producers that make the most of the opportunities before us. And may we always be producers that respect the land and the cattle that we have been blessed with.

Though my bi-weekly articles will no longer be sent out, I encourage you to visit our website and read the many archived articles there. I treasure the relationships and opportunities I have been afforded these past years and I wish you all the very best.

“But blessed are those who trust in the Lord and have made the Lord their hope and confidence. They are like trees planted along a riverbank with roots that reach deep into the water. Such trees are not bothered by the heat or worried by long months of drought. Their leaves stay green, and they never stop producing fruit.” –Jeremiah 17:7-8

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