



YOU HEARD IT AT...

THE HIGHLINE



Hello Everyone! I hope all of you had a terrific week. It went pretty steady for us; feeding in the mornings and working on the calving shed for the rest of the day. The water in the creeks seems to be low lately so C.J.'s been knocking out chunks of ice at the water holes with the backhoe to better expose the water for the livestock. We warmed up some this week so maybe the water level will raise. Another 5 inches of snow came down too so everything looks clean and white again.

One bit of sad news, one of the cows aborted her calf, so close to calving too! It's possible she ate some pine needles which makes cows abort their calves, but doesn't have the look of having done so; poor and unhealthy. All the cattle look superb! We're watching the herd closely anyway, making sure they have enough hay to chew on throughout the day to keep them busy. Calving season will be here before we know it! Which leads me into what I want to talk about next. The next time you're sitting around chatting, and the subject of calving cattle comes up, I want you to be learned in this subject. I'll go over some terms with you:

1. "Jugs" – no they don't have anything to do with anatomy. Jugs are the stalls that are set up in a calving shed. When a calf is born healthy and strong and they have a dry place to sleep outside in the trees, also with the help of mom licking them dry, they often do just fine staying outside. However, if the weather is very cold and wet, or mom isn't paying much attention to junior right away and would rather eat, we'll put them in a jug with clean straw on the ground, a bucket of water and fresh hay. Jugs are about 12' X 12' in size with an equally wide gate for easy access in and out. Our calving shed has 7 jugs. This last week they just started installing the steel panels to make each jug.
2. "Pulling Room" – This is where we bring a cow that is having trouble calving. This "room" is set up so that one person can bring a cow in with ease and no stress on the cow. There must be a flow through your calving shed so that the cattle can easily see openings for them to go through. So your alleys and gates must all be set up with this thought in mind. In the "Pulling Room", Randy likes to set up a swinging gate that is attached to a Head Catch. The cow walks through the gate into the Pulling Room, and the cowhand gently swings the gate up alongside the cow until she is crowded toward the Head Catch.
3. "Head Catch" – You know the part of a chute that the cattle put their heads through when we want to doctor them? Well, a Head Catch is just the front part. The Head Catch is set up perpendicular to a sturdy wall so when the gate swings in toward the cow it creates a temporary chute. She puts her head through the Head Catch and we attach the gate with a chain usually right to the wall. These are metal gates just like the ones we use outside on fence lines.
4. "Calf Pullers" – Cows are pretty cool. If you treat them with respect and care, it seems they know you are trying to help and settle down enough for you to swing the gate wide open and let them lay down if they need to. Helping a cow calve is the neatest thing! Typically when we have to pull a calf, the calf has a "leg back". A normal delivery: two front hooves show first, and then the calf's nose and head. When only one hoof shows, this means the other leg is laid back along its body. Impossible for her to deliver a calf this way as it gets stuck in her pelvis. So...we get to push the calf back in to where we can reach the other foot and pull it forward. We set the calf up in the proper position for delivery. The cow at this point is pretty exhausted, so we help her push

the calf out by using “Calf Pullers”. This deal is shaped like]----, made out of steel, and that straight part is 6 foot long bar. The curved part fits against the hind end of the cow with a strap draped over her hips to hold it in place. The long bar has a ratchet attached with a hook on it. You start it close to the cow’s body. When you have the calf’s feet out or even close to out, you wrap a light sturdy chain around both feet and hook the other end to the hook on the ratchet. As the cow pushes, you gently start ratcheting, keeping a flow with her contractions. Sometimes the cow stands through this whole thing and once the rib cage comes out the calf literally just pops out onto the ground. It’s head may be a little swollen from being hung up inside and experiencing those contractions so we want to be sure it takes its first breath. We open the clear sack its in around its head and wiggle a piece of straw in its nose to make it sneeze. The sneeze clears out any fluids and the calf takes its first breath. Way cool. We’ve removed the calf pullers, and set the calf in a comfortable position, not wasting any time. We open the Head Catch so mom is free to move about, and we leave the two alone in the “Pulling Room”. We want the cow to bond with her new baby, if we stick around ogling we’ll make her nervous and she won’t tend to her calf. So we leave promptly for her to clean up junior. Within an hour the calf should be up and “sucking”.

5. “Sucking” – self explanatory. Randy will ask, “has the calf sucked?” and we’ll say, “Yep, he’s up and sucked!” Randy will answer, “Good deal!” It’s critical within the first few hours that the calf sucks and gets his belly full of mom’s milk. Her milk is rich with “colostrum”, the first milk that is loaded with antibodies. The calf has no immune system when it’s born, so it is extremely important for him to get these antibodies. The colostrum is strongest at the beginning and diminishes in 10 days. Each day we check the cow to see that she’s been sucked; the teats will be slick looking and the hair around the base wet looking. The calf’s belly will look full, not sunk in like a hound dog’s. The calf should be alert with perky ears. A calf that hasn’t sucked sleeps allot, has droopy ears, or stands in one place with his head down, and his back humped, or “humped up”. The cow’s “bag” (cowboy term for utter) will be tight and full looking. If this happens, we bring them into the pulling room, put her in the head catch and if she stands nicely, we’ll see if we can help the calf suck. Sometimes they don’t get it on their own, or mom won’t stand still long enough and the calf gives up, so with her in the head catch we can get the calf started and mom can’t go anywhere. Mom may be sore from being so full, and will want to kick, so we tie a leg back to a post to keep her from kicking.

Oh the fun begins! You want to encourage the calf to figure it out, so you set him up. You’ll stand him facing mom’s bag of course and stand directly behind him to keep him from backing out. If the calf has no inclination to “suck”, you can put the palm of your hand over his nose and put a finger or two in his mouth and work them in and out to help stimulate the calf to get started. Once he starts getting the idea, slip a teat in. When he starts getting milk he gets so excited! Their tails wag, and they butt their heads into the mom’s bag, which stimulates the bag to bring more milk down. Amazing how they all seem to know to do this. You can also stimulate the calf by scratching the calf’s back with your fingers right at the base of the tail.

After the calf gets a good belly full, we’ll put the two in a jug for a couple of days until they get the hang of things.



This cow had twins two years in a row. You can see her calves’ tails flapping around!

Okay, I imagine I've filled your heads with enough knowledge to keep you going this week. I'll continue with more next week. I never know what I'll write until I sit down and start, but I'll have pictures of everything I've talked about next week. I have to get you ready for the big days of calving!



Perfect presentation, two front feet and a nose showing!

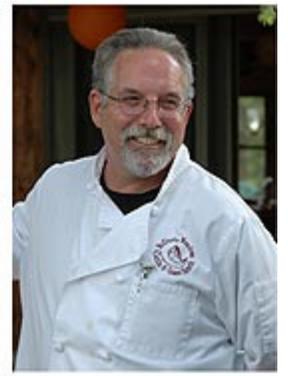
This calf plopped right out onto the ground and was up in minutes "sucking".



Here's Suzy, she lost her mom and Tanya bottle-fed her. She's alert and her ears are perky; a healthy calf. We still have her, she's a yearling now and doing great. We did find her a new mom.

Until next week!

Dori



Cookie's Corner

BAKED HALIBUT

Serve this with your favorite salsa, brown rice, and steamed veggies and both your heart and palate will be pleased. Once again, replacing the Halibut with another fish is up to you, even a chicken breast will work.

Season Mix

1 ¼ tsp. Garlic Powder
1 tsp. Salt
1 tsp. Onion Powder
1 tsp. Dried Basil
½ tsp. Paprika
½ tsp. Black Pepper
½ tsp. White Pepper
½ tsp. Dried Oregano
½ tsp. Ground Cumin
1/8 tsp. Cayenne

Combine above in a small bowl

4 6 oz. Fish Fillets
¾ cup Toasted breadcrumbs
2 tbs. Finely chopped fresh parsley
3 tbs. Finely sliced scallions
1 ½ tbs. Olive oil

Sprinkle fish on both sides with 4 tsp. of the Seasoning Mix.

Preheat oven to 450°.

Combine the crumbs, parsley, onions, and remaining seasoning in a bowl. Add the oil and mix until crumbs are coated. Pat the mixture onto both sides of the fish. Place the seasoned fillets on a non-stick baking pan, and bake for 5-6 minutes. Turn the fish over and cook for 5 more minutes. Turn the fish one more time and continue cooking for 3-4 minutes until done.

A nice cold Lager and some old Creedence go well with this.