



ROSS' THOUGHTS



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Friends Take Care of Friends

First, I would like to thank everyone who supported Nichols Farms and purchased bulls on our opening day. It was a very emotional day for the Nichols Crew as it was Nichols Farms First Opening Day Bull Sale without Dave Nichols.

This reminded me of a quote Dave had in the original farm video "Nichols Bulls" made sometime in the mid 1980s promoting Nichols Farms history as well as its current production of that time. Dave talks about hosting Nichols Farms First Customer Appreciation Day and wanting to thank Nichols Farms Customers.

In the video Dave said, "It was several years ago in the midst of what I could only call an agricultural economic holocaust. We were selling bulls for about twice the price of what our customers would pay anyone else, and it was shortly after Lee died, and Nichols Farms, like everyone else, was experiencing some hardship and we want to say 'thanks' to our customers. So we held our First Customer Appreciation Day. I guess I'll never

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John Rock

A Man With Three Jobs

John Rock lives in Northwest Iowa in the town called Peterson. He is one busy man with three jobs: a farmer, a commercial cow calf producer and an attorney. His farming enterprises are no backyard venture either, farming approximately 775 acres of corn and soybeans, calving about 200 cows, and working remotely as an attorney for a firm in the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

In addition to the crop land, they have about 1,300 acres for grazing and making some hay, which also includes about 350 acres of woodland. They also border a Nature Conservancy, which they now early graze to assist them in the control of the introduced cool season Bromegrass, so it won't compete with the native warm season grasses.

John says that one of the outcomes of Covid was he worked from home for his law practice, which taught him that with tools like Zoom meetings he could be an attorney at his current firm without living in Minnesota. This allowed him to fulfill his dream of moving back to his family's farm. His dad still does chores every day, which also gives John the flexibility needed to run his law practice. His nephew also works on the farm part time, which gives them the help they need during busy times of the year. Other than that, he oversees and does the work that is needed to run the farm.

To achieve what John does takes constant learning and innovation, and his goal is to learn something new every day. That is one of the places Nichols Farms comes in. He can count on them to always be innovating to produce better, more predictable bulls. John is very analytical in his approach to farming, and the depth and predictability of the Nichols performance data really attracts him to their program.

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Cows at John Rock's farm benefit from predictable Nichols genetics, crossbred maternal heterosis, moderate size and well managed Northern Iowa pastures.





ROSS' THOUGHTS

More THOUGHTS ...continued from page 1

forget how I started off because I didn't know what I was gonna say to them, and it was a very emotional thing for me looking out over all those faces of my customers and friends. I just simply said 'for years we've been telling you that Nichols Farms takes care of our customers, I want you to know that the last year the customers took care of Nichols Farms'."

Well folks, it's amazing how history tends to repeat itself. It was a very emotional thing for me as I looked out over the packed shop of our customers and friends, and I want you to know that again Nichols customers took care of Nichols Farms as we had the best opening day ever selling 220 bulls, the most ever on opening day.

During her welcome comments to attending customers in our shop and on the world-wide web with DVAuction, Lillian Nichols quoted a conversation she and Dave had: "Dave said to me, 'you know with loss comes change. It might not actually be the same, it could be just as good, or it could even be better'."

What won't be the same, is without Dave's unique personality, storytelling abilities and political views, it could become a tad boring around Nichols Farms at times. Phyllis was once asked if she got tired of hearing Dave telling his stories over and over and she said, "No, because the endings are always different."

What will be just as good, is Nichols Farms' commitment and reputation for leveling with the commercial cattlemen to help him or her stay profitable in the cattle business. As Dave always said, "If we don't help our customers stay profitable and stay in business, we won't be in business."

Dave always joked about being a benevolent leader, but when it came to the beef industry there was no one more benevolent than Dave.

His passion and vision for the Beef Industry is truly unmatched, and with his legacy instilled into the Nichols Crew we will continue to improve on fertility, feed efficiency, animal health, and continue to make our product better for the beef consumer.

IGENITY® BEEF



Nick Hammett
Neogen Beef Genomics

IGENITY®, EASIER THAN YOU THINK

Nichols Farms has partnered with NEOGEN to offer their customers Igenity Beef and Igenity Feeder genomic testing. When commercial beef producers first hear the words "genomics" or "DNA," they often think, "that's not for me, I'm too small, or I'm just a commercial producer." The fact is, Igenity products were designed specifically for commercial beef producers of all sizes. One of the greatest benefits is that commercial producers can receive genetic information with about 80% the value of a complete genomically enhanced EPD without the record-keeping, time and labor of maintaining pedigrees and collecting weights.

Nichols Farms' Igenity sales is growing as their customers realize the entire process is relatively simple and the results are immensely valuable. It all starts with a conversation with Ross at Nichols Farms. Ross can tell you how the information will help the Nichols' customers and allow Nichols Farms to be a more precise genetic consultant. First, Igenity Beef provides genomic scores on 17 traits that aid in replacement heifer selection decisions. Rather than just looking at heifers and attempting to decide which will be the most profitable cows, you have objective data in your hand on 17 traits plus three selection indexes to help you make the most profitable selection decisions. Second, Igenity Beef can help to characterize the strengths and weaknesses of your herd. This allows you, and Ross, to make better purchasing decisions so that the bulls you purchase truly complement your cowherd and lead to greater profitability.

Igenity Feeder works on a similar concept but is built specifically for feeder calves. It returns the Igenity Terminal Index, which is an estimate of overall feedlot and carcass performance, and a Days on Feed Index, which allows you to group calves into similar optimal outcome groups. This product can be used to make retained ownership decisions, management decisions, or to add value to calves by proving their genetic merit to potential buyers.

Both tests are conducted from a simple ear punch. With the Allflex Tissue Sample Unit (TSU), taking a sample is as easy as putting in an ear tag. In fact, many producers take a sample when they are putting in ear tags, and simply put the tag through the small hole made from taking the sample. Samples can be taken at any age and add virtually no time to processing any time the calves are worked through the chute.

You are already investing in great genetics at Nichols Farms, use these tools to help make genetic progress even faster by making the right selection decisions, purchasing the right bulls and proving the value of your calves.



**Nichols Farms is a NEOGEN Genomics
Distribution Partner for Igenity® Beef and Feeder.**

Contact Ross Havens for more information.

**See our full Bull Sale
Catalog on our website
Nicholsfarms.biz**



John Rock continued from page 1...

He needs cattle that will calve easy, breed back quickly and grow fast, while maintaining a moderate cow size of about 1,350 pounds. Of course, he also wants them to look the part in terms of soundness and eye appeal.

The cattle are wintered on stalks - which lowers the winter feed costs considerably - but they supplement as needed with a total mixed ration that can include ground stalks or hay, silage, distillers' grains, cracked corn and a supplement. In winter, cattle are fed on frozen ground, but brought onto hard surface for mud and calving season.

John's best heifers are sold to a professional at heifer development with an option to buy back the heifers he needs for replacements. This year he is going to incorporate the Neogen genomic test to further refine his selection process. One criterion he uses is only selecting heifers that calve in the first cycle, and shortening the calving season and improving fertility is a long-term priority. Nichols's genetics are part of this process, as no open cows are kept at Nichols and no cattle go to pasture without a calf at side. The maternal heterosis from the use of F1 Sim-Angus is also a boost to achieving his goal, as ultimately early calving cows wean heavier calves and have more opportunity to breed back early.

In terms of marketing, he weans the calves and markets them in January or early February. They have a complete health program, which includes vaccines for the full array of bovine respiratory disease, clostridial, and the addition of scour guard on the cows. He keeps in mind that his calves first immunity will reflect that of his cow herd as the total immunity of newborn calves are the antibodies received from clostridium of the cow herd.

Steers are marketed at the Dunlap sale barn in January or early February, usually weighing approximately 750 pounds. However, this year working with a profession nutritionist, a low-cost ration was developed that jumped pay weights up to 889 pounds without getting the calves too fleshy to be discounted for carrying too much condition.

John Rock feels blessed. He is able to make a living doing what he enjoys, from the farm to his law practice. He gets to spend time



John Rock's fourth job is Dad, and now new Grandpa. The Rock Family (minus the new one), left to right, son Caleb and daughter-in-law Morgan; son Lincoln and daughter-in-law Emily; wife Shelly; John; daughter-in-law Joselyn and son Joe.

with his dad, Jim Rock, and his cousin-in-law, Tyler Barnett, who works there part time. Most of all, he and his wife Shelly are living the rural lifestyle they desire. They are also close to their three sons and their daughters-in-law.

Having his overall priorities being faith, family, friends and farm, John and his family are living their dream; one that few get to experience. He emphasizes that "God provides what I have" for which he is truly grateful.

by Bob Hough

Students from the University of Guelph, Ontario, Canada, made their annual visit to Nichols Farms in September, touring the farm, looking at bulls, and learning about the C-Lock feed efficiency system.





**by Brian
Fieser Ph.D.**

Beef Field
Nutritionist,
ADM Animal
Nutrition™

As basic as nuts and bolts

If you are reading this there is a good chance you have cattle. And if you have cattle there is a good chance you have found yourself removing leaky tires from a trailer, if not trying to replace a blow out on the side of the road with a load of cattle on! I was recently in this situation, thankfully taking off a leaky tire from a hay trailer, not on the side of the road with a blow-out. As I was removing the lug nuts, one was stubborn and required extra persuasion to come off. Once I found a big enough cheater, I was able to get it off, along with the nub of the lug bolt! As I looked at this unforeseen situation I stepped back and thought this thing as simple as a nut and bolt is not only keeping this truck and trailer from doing its job, but also the tractor sitting idle waiting to load the trailer and the hay remaining stacked on the edge of the field a good 6 miles from home where the cows can eat it and turn it into beef to sell. I might have gone down a bit of a rabbit hole, but that's a whole lot of dollars in assets that are inactive due to a simple nut and bolt (and the tire wasn't leaking so bad it couldn't have been aired back up and used for the afternoon with a close eye on it, but I wanted to do the right thing and fix it). As I waited for the leaky tire to be patched I was thinking about how I could use this story as a cattle nutritionist. So here goes...

The 5 essential nutrients for our cattle are straight forward: water, protein, energy, vitamins and minerals. While all 5 of these nutrients are essential (meaning cannot live without), from a quantity standpoint they are not all on equal footing. Water is the most critical (in terms of the severity of a deficiency), but is often the most taken for granted – at least until your ponds have dried up and you have to haul water. Protein and energy go hand in hand, both in terms of keeping them in balance and being needed in large quantities. When we think of protein and energy, it's our forages, supplemented with corn or distillers grains, big quantity feedstuffs that we see a noticeable response from when fed. We all know that we give our cows plenty of available hay and a shot of DDG and corn (or cubes or a protein tub) to meet their protein and energy needs and they will be in good body condition and productive. It's the vitamins and minerals that provide a much more subtle response. Vitamin and mineral supplements often do their work at a level the naked eye cannot appreciate, but from the rumen microbes fermenting forage more efficiently, to the contraction and relaxation of muscle fibers allowing muscle function, to the production of milk, formation and maintenance of bone, immune system function, reproduction, and a whole host of other bodily functions, our vitamin and mineral supplements are playing a critical role in the production of pounds of beef. You could say that vitamin and mineral supplementation is as essential and as simple as the nuts and bolts on a trailer tire.

A few days after the hay trailer incident, I was hauling some yearlings to the sale and before I loaded them I checked the lug nuts and tire pressure to make sure that I would be able to safely haul those cattle. I stopped and thought to myself that I was glad the nuts and bolts were solidly in place, much like I'm glad my mineral supplementation is playing its small but essential role in helping me raise some big, healthy calves that brought a pretty penny at the sale, and welcome in the beginnings of the next crop, healthy and ready to go!



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LETTERS from you

...30 Years Ago

Sue Stamp, Fayette, Iowa

January 25, 1993

Dear Dave, It was a pleasure to work with Terry. (Jaschke) He certainly wrote a very nice article. We were very pleased with the newsletter and have made several copies to send to friends and relatives.

We will be shopping for another Simi bull for a year from now – for the summer of 94. Please keep your eye open for an extra special bull that can be used on Boomers, Black Mick and Irish's daughters (one you'd like to keep).

...Memories of Dave

Greg Henderson, Lenexa, Kansas

February 16, 2021

Dave: I am watching a webinar by the Angus Assn. about Angus Link. I was reminded of the first time I met you – now 40 years ago! Wow. Where has the time gone? I think our second meeting was right after Lee passed – in 1982 if I remember.

I know I have told you that first meeting (and other subsequent visits) had an influence on my career. I remember you telling me that "we found a lot of information on a bag of seed corn, but we didn't have that for our bulls. We need to change that." In those days we were talking about EBVs. Eventually we saw EPDs replace those. Now we are tracking the genetics of feeder cattle, through Angus Link and Top Dollar Angus.

Recent letters:

Sherry Olsen, ISU, Ames, Iowa

Ross, Thanks to you and your staff at Nichols Farms for taking time out of your very busy schedule on Monday morning to visit with the Iowa State University Beef Science students, faculty and extension personnel. It was a very informative and valuable session and we all are better informed on Nichols Farms. Hope to see you again!

Nichols Farms is saddened to hear of the death of Sherry Olsen in February 2024.

Lean Mindemann, Wisconsin

The new Nichols website looks great!

Glen Klippenstien, Maysville, Missouri

text to Ross after Opening Day Bull Sale

So proud and pleased for the successful effort of you and the Nichols team-Congrats-Glen Klip



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Cowboys You Can Count On



Roger Richter does a bit of everything at Nichols Farms.

“I guess I go wherever I’m needed,” says Rog. He helps Alex calve first-calf heifers; rounds up and sorts cattle; makes hay and mans the tender at planting. Sometimes he’s the farm gopher.

Rog also spends a good amount of time on the road delivering bulls across the Midwest and beyond. He’s been 12 miles from the Canadian border and was even able to make a stop to see the Incredible Dr. Pol, of television fame, in Weidman, Michigan. He left with a signed poster for his granddaughter, now in vet-tech school.

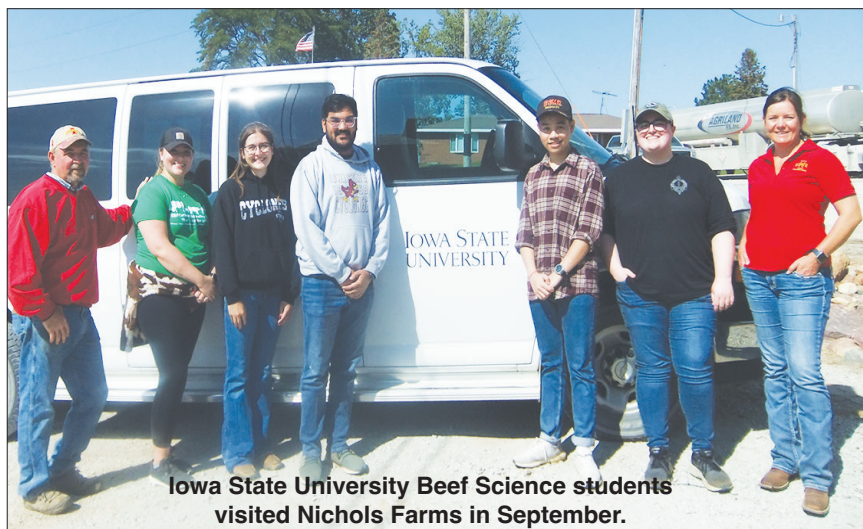
Rog and his wife, Vickie, live less than 5 miles from where Rog grew up near Adair, Iowa. They have a son, a daughter, and two granddaughters. The family spent several years traveling the show circuit when his granddaughters were showing Shorthorns.

Rog graduated from Adair-Casey High School and attended Southwestern Community College in Creston before serving a tour of duty in Vietnam. He is Post Commander for the Adair Veterans of Foreign Wars, providing military funeral rites for veterans and honoring them with an annual Memorial Day program.

He was on the Adair Volunteer Fire Department for many years and has served on the Guthrie County Fair Board for nearly 40 years, helping to oversee a period of growth and new building construction for the fair. The latest is a new show barn and arena. Rog started the West Central Iowa Farm Toy Show, now in its 34th year.

In whatever spare time he can manage, Rog says he is “pretty good with a remote if I can get myself into the right position.” He also likes to travel a bit and enjoys a good farm toy show or a cattle sale or show.

He just hit his 10-year anniversary at Nichols Farms and at age 74 sees no reason to retire: “I enjoy what I do. I like working with a great group of people. I intend to keep going if I can.”



Iowa State University Beef Science students visited Nichols Farms in September.

Nichols Farms

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Top Ten Reasons to Buy a Nichols Bull

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Maximize heterosis to take your calf crop and cows to next level.II. New adopter of Feed Efficiency testing and Prediction for Resistance to Bovine Respiratory Disease.III. Take advantage of our sight-unseen guarantee.IV. We will notify our network of feedlots when you sell your calves.V. Whether buyer or seller we will help you buy or sell Nichols sired bred heifers or heifer calves at no cost to either buyer or seller. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">VI. Buy sons from the same hard working cows that have had 40 AI sires the past 60 years.VII. Health, Loss of use and Death Warranty available.VIII. Volume discount and free delivery in continental United States.IX. \$100 discount if you pick up your bulls when you are ready for them.X. For 71 years we've been open every day except Sunday. |
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Bull Sale Catalog - www.nicholsfarms.biz

Bull Barn: 641-369-2829 Ross Havens cell: 641-745-5241

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