

# Agriculture, the driving force of civilization



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We live in an interesting era, to say the least. As I look at the history of our nation and our state and then look at the “issues” we face today, I always challenge myself to remember a well-known saying – “We are in pretty good shape, for the shape we’re in!”

Food, Water, Shelter. At times it is taken for granted that those 3 things are the basis of civilization. There is one industry that can provide all three of these elements to the citizens of the world, agriculture! Here is another conundrum that always rolls through my head. If we remove one of those 3 items from a civilization, the missing link would quickly rise to the top of the priority list of every individual. In spite of that, folks are worried about their data usage, their social media, what bathroom they should use and how to not offend anyone. These are the concepts at the top of the priority list for some citizens of today. Now I am sure that there are things of importance to each of us on an individual level, but the 3 basics are important to every being regardless of political, racial, or social status. Now, I beg the question: Which industry can provide the worlds population with the critical tools for survival? Find any answer other than agriculture. I challenge any inhabitant of this earth to contest this point.

However, with that being said why do those that provide

food and fiber for our citizens also endure the most criticism? Last month marked two years since I joined the ICA and as a high school ag teacher or rodeo cowboy you would have varying ideologies at times that would conflict with individuals, but the constant attacks on those operations that provide the basis of life sure has blurred my vision at times. I awake in the morning and wonder if some of these things are for real or if I am dreaming.

Efficiency, effective management, hard work, blood, sweat and tears goes into each and every hamburger, steak, leather jacket, etc. prior to it reaching the end consumer. An end consumer that has the privilege to be selective in their decisions while setting in a comfortable climate controlled environment, sheltered from the reality of mother nature by their clothing and the roof over their head. I am grateful for all individuals that help to provide the food and shelter that I consume daily and that the fiber industry has made materials available to shelter my body.

So why do I feel that I am the minority in this country and world? Is it a lack of education? The reality that many never faced the necessity to eat what is available rather than selecting from a menu? As I have traveled I often see folks that have fallen on hard times for various reasons and the reality of the necessity of the 3 things listed above sets in. When I have offered a

homeless individual a corndog there has never been much concern for anything other than a full belly, yet those that often have a full belly question the methodology behind the meal.

Let me give you my own personal experience. As a young man working on a wilderness trail crew my Cousin and I left with our boss headed out across the mountain. Now as most reading this will understand your stock needs food and water and your next camp area is a fixed distance away. You have to finish the job, regardless if the USFS says there is no money for overtime that day, or if you run in to a fallen tree that slows your daily progress. At then end of the day your mules and horses must reach camp that evening – to obtain that food and water. As the evening approached, and we had planned on being to the cabin where there was supplies at around 1:00, my stomach reminded me that I had not eaten since prior to 6 AM and I had been out for many hours. I was not to the point that I was going to wither away, but tire and hunger where both on my mind. We sat in the dark and held our horses as they grazed and drank before we were able to get in for the evening. Due to our lack of time before the following morning was upon us. We opened a can of Dinty Moore Stew, a hardy meal cold from a can. As a weary cowboy coming off the trail I remembered how good it tasted. I did not check the nutrition facts, the expiration date, or anything related to the wrapper. I just ate it and it was great.

Now fast forward a few months I am in my college living quarters and head to the local grocery market to get some items for dinner. Now in college I had a budget and you had to make your meal selections wisely. Low and behold beef Dinty Moore Stew sounded like a good substitute for Pancake and Bologna Sandwiches. As I slowly warmed my stew on the oven I remembered how good it tasted when I was setting in the dark holding my horses on a moon lit night in the Wilderness and could not wait for that experience once again. It had to taste even better warmed on the oven! Well, much to my disappointment the taste and texture was not quite the same this go around. As a matter of fact, I wasn’t sure I had made the correct decision to put the bologna and pancake batter back on the shelf.

Needless to say. I have had a lot of education in my life and the informal education at times confuses my formal education. A full belly and shelter for humanity is the greatest gift agriculture has given to the world, and yet we are criticized and regulated daily by those that enjoy the comfort of not having any want for either. I would welcome a conversation with the person that in a state of hunger or in need of shelter could explain the necessity of regulating the industry that provides for civili-

zation! I do not think you can find that person in society today or at any point in history. Why do other citizens look at anything that would limit our ability to have access to a safe and constant food supply? I will not wrap my head around that concept. The poor, hungry, homeless Vegan is not in the world today, mark my words! Animal Agriculture is the basis of civilization and our country must not forget that.

All that being said. Our legislature is in session and we have great representation in the state house in Boise. With the work of the Idaho Cattle Association and the other entities that work on behalf of the agriculture industries we strive to Preserve, Promote, and Protect.

Tell your neighbors, tell your friends, tell the stranger setting next to you on an airplane. Agriculture drives civilization and those that question our abilities and importance had better take a long look in the mirror.

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