

SEPTEMBER 11, 1980

Business appointments to see Shortgrass operators are becoming easier to make every day that the dry weather grips the country. (This was written last week, before much of the Shortgrass Country got rain-Ed.) Hombres that were mighty busy last year tallying dollar steer calves and six-bit mutton lambs have scads of time to talk to anyone from a club lamb buyer to a person that just might like a calf for his freezer.

I've made so many desperate sales pitches in the past few weeks that I feel more like I had a job with Chrysler Motor Co. than running a bitterweed sheep outfit. Late yesterday afternoon I found my prospect list so short that I talked a couple of my old friends into looking at the heifer calves at the top end of the ranch.

They knew, and I knew, that they needed more four stomached animals for their dry ranges about as much as Mr. Reagan needs another birthday. But I suppose that we all felt that any activity at all would beat sitting out in the backyard looking at the cloudless skies.

I sure wasn't going to allow the deal to become too serious. One of the boys joins our north side. Once you've been guilty of pulling off a little dose of bovine hocus pocus on one of your neighbors, the thought of having that fence line reminder to last from the date of a heifer calf to the advanced age of a cow weakens those schemes.

Hombres so low life they'd rob a blood bank operate outside of their neighborhood. I've been told that the safest place to live in New York City is in the Sicilian districts that thrive on crime, yet forbid such crass commercialism on their home grounds.

Also, in our case, the three of us use the same bank. Were we to make a trade, other than the paper shift, the economic impact would amount to nothing. I doubt if the market reporters would even acknowledge the sale.

I believe jugkeepers ought to forbid their customers from selling to each other. Paperwork is expensive enough without a bunch of grown men acting like kids playing a game of stock market or monopoly.

Without realizing it, we might be threatened by an acute case of economic inbreeding. The ranks are becoming thinner and thinner, especially in the sheep line. Where we may need diversification is in the field of financing. I'm real concerned about the matter. It's hard to have much enthusiasm for your chances of making a sale when you know where the money is coming from and how hard it was to get in the first place.

A check I took the other day stated plainly above the signatory line that the money was coming from the sale of sheep and goats. I felt so guilty after I read that line that I waited until after dark to drop it in the night depository slot. We had a good visit riding around the ranch, talking over old times. They were real nice in their refusal. These are the first calves I ever owned that were too black to fit any herd.

I'm back on the job this morning more determined to sell. I am glad I have such a strong code of ethics. I'll know more on that subject as frost grows closer.