

Shortgrassers Need Only Get Up Early To Experience Thrill

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MERTZON — The pre-dawn hour is the best time of day to see the Shortgrass County. When the morning thrush clears the dust from her throat, that is the perfect moment to be stationed up on a ridge, watching the magnificence of the sun's rays spreading across the farthest horizon.

Outlanders rarely have the chance to see the break of our day. They rush down the road as if all the frustrations of many were after them. Most city folk fail to see the spectacle too; they lie up in their nests as if the whole world were not in worse disarray than a pillow-stuffer's dreams.

Sunrise is most thrilling during rain periods. Small wisps of fog lie in the valleys; rain crows hoot their optimistic calls; and the sourest-faced rancher who ever put his corns inside a run-over boot can't help feeling rejuvenated by the freshness of the morning.

However, people in this country love their homeland all day and all night. Drouths and market wrecks followed by dry spells and depressions have choused them continuously. Yet the natives still cry on a love affair with the land that would make the famous romance of Anthony and Cleopatra look like a cool hand-holding episode at a game of drop the handkerchief.

Once in awhile, of course, some hombre will pull out for a purported Utopia, sometimes the drudgery of feeding 44 months in a row, or the daily facing of two score distinct different varieties of grief will prompt a citizen to move to another part of ranchdom. But in nearly every case he soon learns that stock raising is about the same old story all over the world.

The yak herders in the snowy pinnacle of Tibet have to contend with milk buyers with froth in their beards if they find one single strand of hair in the cream.

Sleigh dog raisers up north are forever plagued by having a litter ready for market just as some idiot dog dealer decides the price spread between females and males should be further widened.

Camel ranchers develop ulcers worrying over inherent soft-hump problems. And I've been told that kangaroo farmers nearly lose their minds attempting to cull out animals bearing a tendency toward saggy pouches.

So it generally turns out that the wandering Shortgrasser wishes he had stayed home. Even those who wander and prosper tend to develop lung trouble from breathing dust-free air, or come down with a serious psychosis from not having a drouth to worry about.

It's a shame that more people don't have the opportunity to see this dry old land in the splendor of the early morning. With everybody in the cities seemingly dead bent on fighting and elbowing themselves into an early grave, it's a shame that our experience can't be shared. But I guess if we were to advertise the phenomenon there would be such an influx of hombres that it would ruin the whole show.