

Fellow Red Angus Members,

We are writing this letter today, not only as Red Angus Association Members but as fellow ranchers and stewards of the land.

As ranchers we take the good with the bad and none of us are really heard to complain that much. We don't wait for the State or Federal Government to save us. We just continue on the best we can. One of the hallmarks of the ranching communities of the West is stepping in to help a neighbor, a friend, or sometimes a complete stranger, in a time of need. Well, that time of need is now.

As you all know, the Ash Creek Fire in Eastern Montana was incredibly devastating to the ranchers in the area. Many producers lost grass, fences, hay, buildings, and livestock, and many of them are Red Angus customers. One rancher in particular was hit extremely hard, losing at least half of his commercial Red Angus herd.

One of our members suggested that our association try and do something to help. A committee was formed and a proposal has been submitted to encourage members, their commercial customers and any others who would like to make a difference, to donate a cow or bred heifer to help ease the losses incurred by this rancher. We want to do this in such a way as to not add any additional stress in our effort to help. As you would suspect, he has limited grass and hay for the remainder of his herd. He is extremely humbled that we are offering to help and would graciously accept any donations, but it would be best if they were delivered just prior to calving so as to not increase his hay needs. This producer calves his heifers the 10th of March and his cows the 1st of April. We would like to put together a group of cows and heifers that would fit his calving interval or deliver pairs to him in the spring.

We have appointed three coordinators from different areas of the state whom you may call with your questions or your donations. Bob Morton (West) 406-580-0348, Jim Goggins (Central) 406-694-2063, and Bruce Ketchum (East) 406-778-3819. Once we receive commitments for donations we will begin to coordinate transportation and timing of delivery. We have stressed the main priority of getting cattle back in this man's herd, but we would also like to know if anyone has hay or pasture available, as well. If you do have hay for sale or pasture for lease, we would like to create a network to put you in contact with any people in need. As resources become available we would be able to coordinate with any ranchers that suffered losses.

We know it has been one of the hardest years in recent memory. We are all struggling to make things work – trying to find enough pasture, hay, and water for our own cowherds. Now, take that and combine those worries with a devastating prairie fire that has consumed significant amounts of your property, along with over half of your cow herd. Can you imagine? Most of us can't, nor do we want to. Let's take a minute to reflect on the true blessings in our lives – our lifestyle, our families, and the people in our communities that make the difference.

We are informing our membership of this great opportunity to help a fellow rancher in need, in the hopes that you can make a donation and encourage others, including your commercial customers, to do so as well. We will be putting news articles out in the near future that will reach a widespread audience. We are getting this information in your hands first in the hopes that you will be able to answer some questions if called upon.

We know we are asking for a lot, but we're going to be able help someone who has lost so much more.

Thank You,
Bruce Ketchum
President, MTRAA

Jim Goggins
Committee Member

Bob Morton
Committee Member