

# President's Message

Randy Schmitt, President  
Rugby



Happy New Year from the Schmitt Ranch! It's mid-December as I write this, and I'm a little cautious about commenting on the weather. Last month, I mentioned how fortunate we were to still be grazing, and it seems Mother Nature quickly reminded us who's in charge. Freezing rain and snow followed soon after, pushing many producers into full winter feeding.

The start of the new year tends to bring a slight change in pace. Chores still need to be done, cattle still need to be fed and winter doesn't offer much of a break, but it's a good time to reflect on where we've been and where we're headed.

Like many of you, my thoughts turn to the decisions in front of us. Some are immediate — managing winter conditions, stretching feed supplies and keeping an eye on the weather forecast — while others revolve around today's strong cattle market. High prices offer welcome opportunities and some well-earned optimism, but they don't erase the challenges we continue to face. Machinery, repairs, fuel, feed and labor remain at or near all-time highs, and every decision still needs to pencil out.

That's where balance becomes critical. Strong markets can reward disciplined management, but they can also test it. I'm reminded of something my dad used to say: "When others are running, you walk. When others are walking, you run." That advice feels especially relevant right now. It's easy to feel pressure to chase opportunity when prices are strong, yet those moments often call for patience and care-



ful thought. At the same time, there are opportunities worth acting on when others hesitate. Knowing the difference is what helps protect operations today while positioning them for the future.

Many of our most important decisions don't have quick answers. Investments in equipment, land, herd genetics, labor and succession planning are shaped over years, not months.

The way we manage risk during good times often determines how resilient we are when conditions turn. Taking care of our cattle and land now, while keeping a close eye on costs, is what allows our operations to remain viable for the long haul.

In early December, the North Dakota Stockmen's Foundation (NDSF) held another very successful Stockmen's Ball. A huge thank-you to the office staff, Foundation board and all the volunteers who helped prepare for this wonderful event. I would like to extend sincere gratitude to our generous sponsors and donors, whose support made the event possible, and to all the attendees for making it a tremendous success.

One of the most rewarding moments this season was being part of the NDSF's Cowboys for Kids event. Volunteers visited children hospitalized over the holidays at Sanford Children's Hospital in Fargo to share a message of hope. Seeing the joy and smiles it brought to those children was humbling. While the intention was to lift their spirits during a difficult time, many of us came away feeling just as uplifted. Thank you to the NDSF volunteers who made it possible and to the caregivers who care for these kids.

## PAST PRESIDENTS

**1988-90:**  
Roger Stuber • Bowman • (701) 523-5371

**1992-94:**  
Dean Meyer • Dickinson • (701) 225-2736

**1998-2000:**  
Richard C. Tokach • St. Anthony  
(701) 445-7390

**2000-02:**  
Gene Harris • Killdeer • (701) 863-6695

**2002-04:**  
Jeff Dahl • Gackle • (701) 485-3762

**2004-06:**  
Melvin Leland • Sidney, Mont.  
(701) 565-2347

**2006-08:**  
Mark Huseth • McLeod • (701) 439-2385

**2012-14:**  
Jason Zahn • Towner • (701) 720-7247

**2014-16:**  
Steve Brooks • Bowman • (701) 523-6732

**2016-18:**  
Warren Zenker • Gackle • (701) 320-2585

**2018-20:**  
Dan Rorvig • McVille • (701) 797-7338

**2020-22:**  
Jeff Schafer • New Rockford • (701) 947-2568

**2022-24:**  
Jason Leiseth • Arnegard • (701) 770-1129

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