



Monthly Safety Blast

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Texas Cattle Feeders Association Best Safety Practices

This article was provided by the Texas Cattle Feeders Association.

TCFA encourages member feedyards to continuously look for innovative ways of keeping their employees safe on the job. Each year, TCFA hosts the Best Safety Practices Awards for feedyards across Cattle Feeding Country to compete with the purpose of promoting safety through sharing their creative ideas with fellow TCFA member feedyards.

The 2012 TCFA Best Safety Practices Award winner went to Mike Weber at King Ranch Feedyard for his creation of the "Rehydration Station," which is a designated spot in the middle of the feedyard where employees can ride up to a refrigerator that is high enough to reach on horseback. The station allows employees to get a fresh drink of water and continue with their routine.

"The South Texas heat can really be dangerous to your health," said Weber. "During a busy day at a feedyard, there may not be time to run to the office or processing room to get fresh water to drink."

A bracket was welded to the fence at a height where the cowboys would not have to get off of their horses. They used an old small refrigerator and secured it to the bracket then painted it to weather proof the outside. A small, three-gallon igloo is filled with water daily along with ice to keep it cool. A drinking container is stored inside the refrigerator for each employee.

Brenda Frantz of Palo Duro Feeders came in second, touting the importance of education and training at the management level and then passing the knowledge to other employees.

"I have been in this business for some 30 years and can tell you that education is the best weapon against danger in a feedyard," said Frantz. "Safety put into action by trained management becomes a very effective tool. Train your management on safety – managers, foreman and supervisors – then make them responsible for passing that

training on to the employees that are under them, not only by instruction, but by example.”

Third place went to Truett Schlabs of Wheeler Land & Livestock for his idea of coating a slick catwalk with a roll-on bed liner made for a pickup in order to reduce accidents in all types of weather.

Other feedyard safety entries included an observation truck that allows cowboys to see the yard on an elevated platform to easily identify sick cattle or problem pens; reflective cowboy safety vests; slam latches on alley gates; and many more.

“As always, we had lots of innovative ideas submitted that our member feedyards have implemented to create a work environment that is safe for employees and animals,” said Brady Miller, TCFA regulatory manager. “We challenge all feedyard employees to strive for continuous safety improvements.”

TCFA is an agricultural trade association representing 200 beef cattle feedyards in Texas, Oklahoma and New Mexico and approximately 5,000 cattle feeders across the United States. TCFA members feed and market around 6.5 million head of cattle annually, which equates to about 30% of the nation’s fed beef. For more information about TCFA go to www.tcfa.org.

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