

Cattle Business in Mississippi – November/December 2017
“Beef Production Strategies” article
Top Ten Christmas Gifts for Your Cattle Enthusiast

Cobie Rutherford – Extension Beef Cattle Instructor, Mississippi State University

It is hard to believe that the holiday season is here! In our household, we're busy trying to child-proof everything for Reason, who is becoming more mobile by the day. As his first Christmas approaches, we have been bombarded with emails and commercials for the latest and greatest toys for one year olds. It will be very easy to find him something that is age appropriate, fun, and safe. Since there are several lists of gift suggestions for children and spouses I thought for this “Production Strategies” column, I would write about my top ten gifts for the cattle person in your life.

1. Live animals: Live animals are a gift that keeps on giving. Between all the fall production sales, the NAILE sales, and the Mississippi Beef Expo – there are plenty of places to pick up a good one between now and Christmas. Even though it has been unsuccessful, I try to drop a few hints this time a year about cattle I would like for Christmas gifts by leaving catalogs lying around with pages marked and lots starred.
2. Embryos and Semen: Frozen genetics are another good idea for someone who doesn't need live animals. I especially like the idea of buying rare genetics or semen from bulls with limited availability.
3. Vacations: There are a lot of places on my bucket list to visit. There are several big time ranches I would like to tour, sales I would like to attend, and stock show I would love to watch. Planning a quick getaway could be the perfect gift for your cattle enthusiast.
4. Equipment: During the fair, I stared at the Q-Catch 86 Series Chute so much that I still dream about that thing. A new chute would be an amazing gift – expensive, but amazing. I think gifting a few vouchers from the MJCA raffle would be great gift that would support a fantastic organization. If their ticket is drawn – you'll get the credit for the best gift of the year!
5. Logo: Having a custom farm logo designed is another useful idea. Meghan and I got her parents one designed a few years ago and it has been incredibly useful. It has really helped with the branding of their operation.
6. Farm propaganda: Shirts, caps, and trinkets are some things that are easy and relatively inexpensive to purchase.
7. Education Opportunities: Investing in education is invaluable. Some ideas include: registration for Cattlemen's College at the upcoming NCBA Convention, tuition to the spring A.I. School at Mississippi State University, or a trip to the Beef Improvement Federation meeting next summer.
8. Home/office décor: We like pictures of cows. In fact, we have them all through the house. Some artwork that we enjoy are products of: C. J. Brown Studios, Steel Cow, and

Michelle Weber Studio. There are countless others, but these seem to have readily available inventory.

9. Record keeping books: Another easy, inexpensive, thoughtful gift is a record keeping book. NCBA has their famous redbooks available now. Last year, we picked up a few hard cover, spiral-bound books from C.J. Brown Studios that were a big hit.
10. Labor: Labor basically equals time. It's something handy, useful, and doesn't require a lot of overhead costs.

I hope these ideas help you out as you prepare for the holiday season. I wish you and your family a Happy Thanksgiving and a Merry Christmas! I hope to see you at the Mississippi Beef Expo the first weekend of December.

If you would like to contact me, my email address is cobie.rutherford@msstate.edu and phone is [662-325-4344](tel:662-325-4344).

For more information about beef cattle production, contact an office of the Mississippi State University Extension Service or visit extension.msstate.edu.