

YOU CAN MAKE AN IMPACT

By Judy Langley

We continually hear about the poor economy. Personally, I am tired of all the negative news reports ... but I believe we producers can turn it around—well, not totally turn the economy around, but by listening to those that are positive and being positive about reporting progress ... it has to start somewhere. You know, progress does not have to be measured in dollars ... education, knowledge, progress, growth, better genetics, and fun events, etc., are all enveloped in progress.

Implementing sustainable methods and practices is a good start to positive results. Take for instance, by implementing bio-hazard practices on ones farm, one could prevent medical theft. Simply locking a medicine cabinet or medical supply room is a good way to safeguard medicine from misuse or abuse. When you learn practical applications, share them with your farm neighbor or mentor. Do not reinvent the wheel ... be a self promoter. If you do not “toot your own horn” do not expect anyone else to. If you have a product that hails from your farm,

market it yourself. Talk about it at any opportunity you get ... if your product is already on a table or shelf at a market or store, take that extra step and do a personal demo—a taste test—offer a recipe exchange, etc., - do whatever you can to keep your product fresh and in front of your consumer. Do not tell them anything negative about your operation; they do not need to know that the first ten batches you ever made were flops or the packaging has a flaw, etc., just give the positive. One idea is to share a recipe that includes your product (whether its meat, eggs, milk, cheese, etc., you get the idea) with the newspaper or a local TV chef. If you produce hay (and do not already have a steady list of customers) place a small ad in a local publication and compile an email list of area livestock farms. Keep that email list current and send out mass mailings just prior to the time you are cutting and when supplies are plentiful. All livestock needs hay, so do not just key in on cattle farms ... Look around your farm for other commodities you might have, but have overlooked ... it might surprise you what is there ... hides, mulch, compost, eggs or a service you

could provide or barter. All of the above are positive sustainable ideals that can be incorporated and/or talked about to consumers, media, and interested persons.

There are tons of positive ideas that can be promoted to help economic recovery. Moving ahead economically in baby steps is positive and if broadcast from the roof tops, even in a small way, it's positive-not negative ... don't look back, except to learn from your mistakes. So, try to push good economically sound ideas and methods, do not always believe the nightly news ... report your positive ideas to other producers, farm agencies or farm coops and look at the bright side of things. The best part, and to me the most positive side of owning land and livestock, is knowing one could conceivably live off one's land if one had too!