

## Never Underestimate the Power of the People Around You

By: **Kraig Peel, PhD.**

We all have people that intersect our lives at work and socially as well. I know I am guilty of occasionally overlooking the knowledge and support these people provide. Do we take the time to allow these folks to share their knowledge and support with us regularly? Or are we so busy that we only call on them if we have a problem or when we need something. We need to spend more time showing appreciation and listening to these people in our lives. In a world of smartphones and tablets, do we simply default to Google? Often, the answer to your current problem may be with the person riding with you in the truck.

Recently I was looking at heifers for a client when the herdsman told me about a heifer that had symptoms that they had not encountered before. She had swollen legs but no lameness. I went to the pen and observed the heifer and took some pictures. I am well acquainted with a land grant university that has a veterinary school as well as a state of the art veterinary diagnostic lab. I was able to capture some pictures as well as video of the heifer moving in the pen.

I sent the pictures and video along with a written description to some veterinarians as well as the diagnostic lab. The veterinarians are some of the best minds in the country for diagnosing animal illness. The pictures were circulated around the country to colleagues at other universities. I soon started getting texts and emails regarding the potential cause of the condition of this heifer.

Some of the potential diagnoses suggested were severe in nature and would require significant cost for treatment. Others suggested to leave her for a week and observe the progression of the condition. I was concerned that the swelling could be caused by a zoonotic organism that could be contagious. Though there were some replies that were similar, most of the answers varied widely and some wanted me to bring the heifer somewhere for in-depth testing. By the end of the day, I did not have an answer that I was confident in to solve the issue with the heifer.

I was visiting another dairy the next day that has a herdsman with 30 plus years of experience with dairy cows and dairy management. We were discussing some issues with his farm when I remembered my heifer dilemma. I showed him the picture and he was able to immediately diagnose the problem and even knew how to treat the animal. I sent his suggested diagnosis and treatment to my veterinary contacts and they agreed with the course of treatment.

We followed the herdsman's suggestion and the heifer was fine in one week. I have to stress that none of the veterinarians were able to see the animal in person so I grant it was a very difficult request for them to make a positive diagnosis from a picture and video without a thorough examination.

The purpose of the story though, is to illustrate the amazing human capital that is around us routinely. I encourage us all to take the time to talk to people and utilize the knowledge that they have to help us be better at all that we do.