

T&E Cattle Company

Family Business Spans Three Generations

At T&E Cattle Company located on the outskirts of Grand Island, Nebraska, third-generation owner and operator, Greg Baxter, draws a sharp contrast between his grandfather's feedlot operation from the early 1930s and the family's current multifaceted business.

"When my father was young, he and my grandfather fed cattle with a team of horses that pulled the wagon while they hand-scooped feed into the bunks," Baxter recalled. "In 1969, when my grandfather passed away, there was a total of four employees, including my grandfather and my dad, and our capacity was 3,500 head of cattle."

Today, T&E Cattle Company is the largest commercial feedlot in Hall County with 30 full-time employees and a 20,000 head capacity. Multiple rations prepared by a consulting nutritionist are mixed and weighed in a fully computerized feed mill that automatically measures and sorts

feed ingredients according to individual pens of cattle.

"At any given time, we will have seven to nine different nutritionally balanced rations we will feed to cattle, depending on how much they weigh, how long they've been on feed, and the customer's ultimate goals," Baxter shared. "Our fully computerized feed mill facility automatically measures and weighs the feed ingredients for each ration, which is then loaded onto feed trucks equipped with iPads that direct the driver to the appropriate pen. Everything is communicated through radio frequencies directly into the office billing system for accuracy."

The company has evolved over the years to include a cow-calf operation, risk management and marketing services, residential, commercial and industrial land development, and a 3,000-acre farm enterprise specializing in corn production. The feedlot, however, remains at the heart of the family's business.

"Our commitment to the feedlot has made the company a success," Baxter acknowledged. "I've always viewed the cattle feedlot as our home plate. Other business opportunities will come and go, but this is definitely the core business that we're focused on. It's near and dear to our hearts."

Baxter is also proud of the company's ongoing involvement with the Grand Island community, which spans more than 80 years. His grandfather, Ray, was the first president of Fonner Park, a non-profit organization that is host to numerous events, including live thoroughbred racing, a 4-H Horse Exposition, the Nebraska State Fair, and Hall County Fair. His father, Tom, also served as president of the organization and Greg currently serves on its executive board.



Greg Baxter represents the third-generation family member to own and operate the T&E Cattle Company in Grand Island.

"With the City of Grand Island 'next door,' I look at it like we have 50,000 neighbors who we need to manage a relationship with," explained Baxter. "Managing the facility to keep the pens visually presentable and cleaned up is part of being a responsible neighbor. From an operations standpoint, by keeping those pens in better condition, we are going to get improved performance out of the cattle because it definitely enhances their health."

The Baxter family has also been active in numerous professional organizations, including the National Cattlemen's Beef Association, the Nebraska Cattlemen Association, and the Sandhills Cattle Association, to name a few.

While attending a meeting of the Sandhills Cattlemen's Association in the early 1990s, Baxter was impressed with a presentation by a speaker representing the AgriBusiness Division of First National Bank of Omaha. Years later, that occasion led to a business relationship with First National that has lasted more than two decades.

"Our relationship has always been open and transparent with First National Bank, and I'm very comfortable sitting down with them to analyze where the opportunities are and where the pitfalls are," Baxter acknowledged. "First National Bank has been a very strong supporter of our business, as well as the beef cattle industry in Nebraska in general."



With its 20,000-head capacity, the T&E Cattle Company is strategically located given its proximity to three major packing companies, as well as smaller regional packers.

Photos courtesy of Mike Markoff



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