

Raising Lowlines Are Lowlines a good investment in a slow economy?

I had promised the next Raising Lowlines article would cover a sales agreement. But I felt compelled instead to address some other issues being asked from Lowline breeders and potential Lowline breeders about investing in Lowlines during our current economic times. According to economists the USA is in a recession and we are experiencing unprecedented financial turmoil. Many of you may be asking yourselves whether this is really a good time to be investing in a new Lowline business or expanding your existing Lowline business? Obviously, each person has to answer this question for him or herself, but I can share our perspective from Sharidon Farms.

- At this time more than ever it is important to us at Sharidon Farms to position ourselves so that our small farm contributes to our financial success rather than being just a lifestyle expense to us. Small farms generally can not be profitable selling volumes of cheaper cattle due to their size and the limits many of us have on our time. Therefore it is important to have a good farm business plan and invest in those things that will provide a reasonable return on your investment, both your time and your money. Lowline cattle are easy to manage, finish on forage alone and with their moderate size are attractive to many markets. You can read more about this in my e-book Raising Lowlines for Fun and Profit but suffice it to say that Lowlines fulfill needs of both the small farm producer with just a few head of Lowlines as well as commercial producers looking to moderate the size of their herds. I also find that those who are interested in having a few head of cattle to enhance their lifestyle are also very interested in full blood Lowline cattle.
- In general we believe one of the best ways to manage our farm most profitably is to invest primarily in producing assets; our Lowline cattle. Secondary investments are made in those things that allow us to better utilize our existing assets. The price of Lowlines has remained steady for years while we have seen erratic ups and downs in traditional cattle prices. Even if Lowline prices were to eventually decline from what we have seen in the last 7 years we would still be making significantly more per animal sold than we could with commercial cattle. Demand for breeding stock continues to grow as more and more people learn about Lowlines and if prices should moderate over time our potential customer base then expands exponentially. We also maximize our income when selling our Lowline beef by marketing directly to the buyer. We always have buyers waiting for us to have beef available. We just don't see a downside with an investment in Lowlines regardless of the general economic conditions.
- Look for and invest in the best quality breeding stock that you can to meet your goals. The best quality stock will always command the better prices. Your customers will pay more for higher quality stock and hence your ability to sell Lowline cattle or Lowline beef will be maximized. Quality does not necessarily mean show ribbons. A show animal may not have the body type we are looking for in our Lowlines. The winning show animal that has been grain fed to compete, does not ensure us a hardy beef breeding animal that will have a long, consistent, natural production life on forage alone. Define the markets you are trying to reach and be sure you carefully select the type of animal that fits your objectives. The trend for producers small and large is turning from a "bigger is better" mentality to a "right sizing" of cattle to maximize their potential return from existing or decreasing production resources.
- Lowlines as a smaller breed of cattle that are easy fleshing on grass alone help achieve these goals whether raising Lowlines for beef or crossing these with larger breeds you increase your efficiency with these genetics. Now is the time to look for opportunities to buy quality stock. You will then be positioned to have Lowlines available to sell. Remember it takes 273 days to get a Lowline calf on the ground so time is on your side to invest now and plan for your future.

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