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Takin' it to the Yards

with this custom-built Safety Training Trailer

BY GORDON MOORE

It was just about time to take a break and get a well-deserved cup of coffee. Two pen riders rode by a third, a young man who was hurrying to catch up with his friends. But first, he had one more pull to get down the alley before he could fill a cup. He called to them that he would join them in about 10 minutes. After several minutes of the young man not showing, the two riders remounted and began looking for him. They found him at the end of the alley where they had last seen him. He was lying on the ground... seriously injured.

This account was given by Trent Tyson as an opening to a training session at Hitch Feeders 1 near Hooker, Oklahoma. Trent was on-site with the freshly-assembled safety training trailer made available by Texas Cattle Feeders Association. Trent and TCFA regulatory manager Brady Miller were in the Panhandle to deliver a newly-developed training session for cowboys. They offered safety instruc-



This is a great idea; a fully-equipped Safety Training Trailer that you can take direct to the feedyard crew.

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tion to the pen riders by helping them review the importance of using and maintaining good gear.

The training trailer had become a reality only after members on TCFA's safety committee acted on a vision they had. The original thinking was to find a *mobile* means of providing safety training in the major areas of the multi-faceted feedlot industry. While safety is just as important in feedyards as any other industry, the whole concept of safety training is relatively new in some yards. Generally speaking, feedyard attitudes lean toward reactionary responses rather than toward preventative actions. The committee felt a mobile training unit would encourage a proactive approach to safety as well as offer a service that many yards could not, or would not, make possible on their own.

The training trailer proved to be the encouragement needed to move many of the member yards of TCFA toward acceptance to the safety training. Being able to have the trailer come to their yard rather than their employees having to leave the yard for training was a bonus for many supervisors. Training can be accomplished by using practical hands-on methods or videos, depending on the particular need or area of safety. Some of the safety training modules developed for use on the trailer are lockout/tagout, confined space, electrical safety, cattle handling, fire training, and fall protection.

The trailer is equipped with a tripod and winch system for confined space entry training. The training can be set up on a roof over an entry trap door where those not involved in the actual entry process can view the training taking place in the confined space. Other equipment on the trailer includes a simulation board for the often misunderstood lockout/tagout procedure, and a Bullex system for training in portable fire extinguisher use. A saddle and examples of necessary horse gear are provided for visual aids for the cowboys along with audio and video equipment available for training purposes.

In addition to the listed equipment, there are many more items packaged on the 20-foot gooseneck trailer to provide a wide range of on-site safety training. The equipment is significant in the

presentation of the safety training; however, it is without a doubt the person who presents the training that is the most important component of the trailer. TCFA's goal is to provide a trainer who is capable, dedicated, up-to-date with OSHA's standards, well-prepared in all areas of the training, and has an eagerness to share that information with the feedyard employees.

In 2009 and 2010, over 1600 employees were trained on-site through the variety of safety training curriculum. Training time for each group lasted anywhere from 1 ½ to 2 ½ hours. The diversity and mobility of the trailer creates a more efficient workday with no down time for travel. The efficient unit and programs make it possible to train an entire facility of 50 people with "hands on" practical experience in a matter of a few hours. The initial cost of the trailer was \$17,000 with approximately \$18,000 added for the equipment – the cost of training in 2009 and 2010 was less than \$25 dollars per employee. Each year will bring additional training opportunities while keeping overall training costs down.

He was lying on the ground, seriously injured. Life-altering choices had been made earlier in the day. By the evidence at the scene, several factors – including insufficient headgear to control his horse – played a part in the accident at the end of the alley. The horse ran into the fence, throwing the young man over the top rail. A day that started just like many days previous to it eventually ended in a life being lost.

The training that day included a video provided through the Kansas Livestock Association about this young man from Kansas who lost his life when he made a mistake which could have been corrected. His family chose to share his story in order to help open the eyes of others within the feedyard industry. Trent used the saddle and headgear from the training trailer along with the video to show the importance of using and maintaining your gear.

The true success of this program is not in the number of people *trained* by means of the trailer, but in the prevention of possible catastrophes, near-misses and incidental mistakes that allow a cowboy one more day in the saddle. **WR**

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