



Family, Friends, Faith, and Farming: the good "F" words. *by Roddy Dull*

Following. Here's an "F" word that we have really put down over the years. I am as guilty as other parents sometimes when I over preach on being a leader and forget to emphasize the importance of being a follower. The evidence is clear on the farm in many ways. The work of getting a first calf heifer into the barn is made easier when she can follow the rest of the cows in and out of the barn. We know how hard it is to get one to go somewhere on her own with no leadership. The cow paths that we see in the pasture are significant evidence of successful following. Once and a while, a heifer will stray, find a wire down on the fence, and before long a few others have been lead down the wrong path, too. Isn't it nice to know that even if a few get out, there isn't a deep path leading them astray every day?

I look back to when my own children were little and trying to help dad with a project, always under foot. Watching every step, every movement, and repeating everything that was said. What great followers. The things they learned as followers would clearly influence the way they would lead. It would be a great comfort to all parents who tried hard to be perfect examples, to know that their little followers would lead perfect lives as a result of outstanding leadership. Well, we all know that this just isn't the case. Some will follow other paths that may be dark and some may follow paths that are just different. Whatever paths they follow, however, will still be influenced by the leadership that they received as children.

Preaching just doesn't do it a lot of the time. I've caught myself preaching until I was blue in the face and still the point didn't seem to soak in. I was having a conversation once with one of my son's coaches about going to church on Sunday Morning. I would see his daughter there every Sunday while she was in confirmation class, but she always came with her grandma. I asked him one day about coming to see a special event the church was having and he explained why he doesn't attend. He said, "you know, when I was little, my dad would holler and scream on Sunday morning about us kids getting to church, but as we left he would return to his chair to watch football or something else on TV and I just got tired of being told I had to go." With a little positive leadership here, things may have turned out differently, maybe not. But, at least the reason for him not going now would have had to have been different. The hands-on experiences that we get in life are a testament to the importance of successful following.

I challenge all of my readers this month to be better followers. Follow the paths you know to be right, good, and just. If those paths are not obvious, then follow your heart. Know full well that the whole time you are following the right path, you will simultaneously be leading down the right path, too.

Roddy Dull