

THE HORMONAL MAIL

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF
CLASSIC LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT
SERVICES.

NUMBER 55

JANUARY 2020



MANAGEMENT
SERVICES

ACN 092435571

P.O. BOX 1181,
MARYBOROUGH, QLD. 4650.

PHONE: 0741297029/0411201879.

Email: gewyatt@bigpond.com

Website: www.classiclivestock.com

EDITORIAL

Welcome to another new year and our summer (or winter in the northern hemisphere) newsletter. I don't want to reinforce the negativity of the dry seasonal conditions many of us are currently experiencing. Also, I don't wish to bore our northern hemisphere readers with what is happening in Australia at present, though I sense that most countries experience similar situations from time to time and can understand what is currently happening here. We are seeing and hearing all we need to from that angle through all the media outlets. We are hearing what the government is or isn't doing about supporting those in need and why or why not.

The first outstanding factor about the whole drought scenario is the lack of leadership. We have traditionally, in a democratic society, relied on our elected officials to provide that leadership because they have the backing of the country's constitution to do so. They take advice and guidance from the leaders and policy makers in each particular field before making decisions/legislation. However, in the case of, not only the present drought situation, but all past droughts, they have failed to do so. We have heard continual promises about what government is going to do. However, the problem is that they are always going to do and rarely doing. Many of these recent promises are a revamp of things promised in the past, but never brought to fruition. True leaders would not be talking about what they are going to do. In the case of water conservation, they would be in the field watching the bull dozers, excavators and scrapers putting their words into action. Whilst water conservation has been the main topic of debate where change needs to be implemented, we must not forget the need to greatly improve our ability to store fodder, especially on an individual producer basis.

WHAT'S (BEEN) HAPPENING

*The last 3 months have been very quiet for us as is to be expected given the current seasonal conditions. We have done a couple of smaller evaluation jobs, but our position is nowhere as dire as many of our clients and our thoughts are with them as they struggle to make decisions on what, if any, stock to keep, or continually face the day to day routine of having to feed their animals just for survival.

*I have added some more thoughts to expand on the comments in the editorial section after the end of the newsletter. I realise that many are thoughts I have expressed previously and may not sit well with everyone, but I think they need to be debated in this context and it is a major topic that anyone who has been involved in the livestock industry should contribute to. At the very least, if you have trouble sleeping, these additional comments should do it for you.

*The plan at present is to travel to New South Wales in February/March to visit clients. However, if seasonal conditions don't improve quickly, that may not be a possibility.

* Annual Meeting – We held our annual meeting on October the 5th. by teleconference link. We are making a change to our company structure mainly to rationalise our taxation responsibilities. It will not affect the way we carry out our day to day business.

*We recently spent some time with a sheep (Merino) breeder near Harden in central NSW where we compared some of the traits that we select cattle for with similar traits in sheep. Many are very similar and seeing the comparison's again first hand was very rewarding e.g. We were feeling the bone shape on the inside of the jaw on the sheep and further back compared to cattle where we feel on the outside and near the front. We also linear measured a couple of sheep and the correlations were similar though these sheep had nearly 2 inches of wool so probably the best time to grade sheep for most traits would be straight off shears.

* We are still very keen to hold more field days in localised areas over the next few months, so if you would like one in your area, please let myself, Albert Hancock (0267334666) or other company directors know and we will get it under way. We would like to be as flexible as possible in our future planning and would welcome and appreciate any input that you can provide for us in this regard.

*We now have linear measuring callipers available for sale for \$100.00 plus freight so if you are interested, please let me know.

*We remain keen to get some marketing of graded cattle going and are happy to advertise for any of our clients here in the newsletter or on our website.

*We remain happy to promote the sales of other breeders and would like to put them in the newsletter, so please let me know the details.

MENTAL CATTLE

One of the first characteristics that most cattlemen consider when selecting future breeding animals for their herd is temperament. Quiet, docile and tractable cattle are easier to handle and lead to efficient operating in the yards.

However, cattle, like all animals and humans to, for that matter, have a wide range of behavioural traits. Most of their behaviours can be traced through their genetic history. In some cases, they are inherent intellectual disabilities and others it is a result of emotional self-control or lack thereof.

One of the things that I have observed over the years is that some cattle are naturally very spirited while others are just plain mad and I believe there is a difference. The latter are probably what we would identify as having an intellectual disability of some level.

Those with an ID are always going to be the difficult ones to manage in a herd, regardless of how they are treated and they are the ones that you never turn your back on.

On the other hand, the spirited ones are the ones that are always alert and watching, but not fractious and nervous, jumping or charging at the very slightest movement. They are often the leaders in a herd. In dairy herds, they will be the ones that lead the herd into the dairy. Most dairymen and women will tell you they are the most valuable members of the herd. When we had our herd in a controlled grazing program, the same 5 – 6 cows were always the first ones through into the new paddock.

One of the things I have noticed often happens when we are grading a herd is that they will often be in the first 10% or so of the herd. I have also noticed over the years that, whilst it is not something that I have kept statistics on, there is often the highest percentage of the top scorers on our grading system in this first group.

There are a number of management strategies that can be used to assist with quietening a herd and the extra effort early in an animal's life to do this usually pays off in the longer term. Of course, the size of operation and property and the grazing management practices being used will dictate as to the methods that work best on each individual property.

On larger properties where the cattle are only mustered once or maybe twice a year, probably the best time to get cattle used to being handled is at weaning. Keep them close to the yards for a week or two where they can be yarded regularly and worked around the yards and through the race and crush.

Probably the most tried way of quietening animals is to hand feed them for a period, even if there is other feed available. Work this into your feed budgeting program.

The following are some other points to keep in mind when selecting for temperament:

- * Temperament will influence both production performance and management techniques.

- * From a production perspective, it can affect feed efficiency. An animal that is nervous and excitable is easily distracted from the prime purpose of feeding and

therefore growing. They can also be less likely to get into calf.

- * From a management perspective, they are disruptive during handling and yarding, usually more dangerous to handle and certainly more susceptible to injury and bruising, a factor that can cause considerable losses during processing.

- * Practices such as regular contact with the animals, supplementary feeding and controlled grazing management as suggested, are some practical physical activities that can add to the animal's tractability.

BREED OF THE QUARTER **NORTH DEVON**

The original Devon breed is a very old English breed of cattle from the south western England county of Devon and parts of Somerset, Cornwall and Dorset.

There are several accounts on the origin of the breed and these add weight to the fact that it has probably existed over many centuries.

Some authorities consider the Devon's origin to be prehistoric and that the breed descended directly from *Bos longifrons*, the smaller type of aboriginal cattle in Britain.

Other variations of their origin recall that for centuries, herds of red cattle grazed the grass covered hills of this cool, moist region. History records that the Romans were very interested in the red cattle when they occupied this area in 55 B.C. There is also some evidence that the seagoing Phoenicians may have brought some ancestral red stock from northern Africa or the Middle East to South-western England during their visitations for searching for tin. Some breeders speculate that this might account for the Devon's ability to adapt to hot climates in spite of its centuries of exposure to the damp, chilly hills of England's Atlantic coast.

The modern Devon is one of several modern breeds derived from the traditional red cattle of southern England, together

with the Hereford, Sussex, Lincoln Red and Red Poll.



Photo courtesy of Wallaton Devon Stud,

The original old Devon breed may have, in fact, contributed to the Hereford and some of these other British breeds.

They are now referred to as the North Devon to avoid confusion with the more recently developed South Devon cattle breed which is a yellowish brown colour compared with the original dark or ruby red colour of the Devon.

More specific details of the history of the breed can be traced back to at least the 1700's through the work of the Quartly family, who over several generations from that time selected what they considered to be the best specimens of the breed. The Davy family were also early pioneers in the development of the breed and John Tanner Davy, founded the Devon herd book in 1850. In 1884, the Devon Cattle Breeders' Society was formed and took over the herd book.

Devons were one of the more popular breeds for use in bullock teams pre mechanical power.

They were among the earliest breeds in Australia and Devons were noted for their docility, early maturing, hardiness and strength which were important attributes to have in a bullock team.

Mature bulls in good working condition weigh from 1,700 lb (770 kg) to about 2,200 lb (1,000 kg). Mature cows range in weight from about 950 lb (430 kg) to about 1,300 lb (590 kg). Thus, Devons have enough size to be practical and profitable

without the handicap of excessive maintenance cost.

The Devon was previously classified as a dual-purpose breed. Over the past half century, however, the breed has, through selection, evolved as a beef-type breed which is registered and promoted by the Devon Cattle Association, Inc. A Milking Devon strain (unique to America) has been maintained and is represented by the American Milking Devon Cattle Association.

Only 131 years after Columbus discovered North America, the first Devon cattle reached what is now the United States. The year was 1623. These red cattle of Devonshire, brought in by the Pilgrims, were probably the first purebred cattle to reach North America.

Characteristics:

- * Early maturity
- * Excellent performance on natural grass-based systems.
- * High daily weight gain.
- * Docility
- * Outstanding mothering and milking ability
- * Great beef flavour and tenderness
- * Tolerant of hot or bleak climates
- * Natural resistance to disease
- * The breed has long been noted for its fertility, ease of calving, docility, hardiness and ability to adapt to temperature extremes.



Photo courtesy of Roffey Cattle Company,

Devon cattle are red in colour, varying in shade from a rich deep red to a light red or chestnut colour. The switch of the tail is creamy white.

A bright ruby red colour is preferred and accounts for their nickname, the "Red Rubies." The hair is of medium thickness and is often long and curly during the winter; however, coats are short and sleek in summer. The Devon was originally horned, but polling has been introduced over the years, and now 50% of registrations are of polled Devons. They are generally a well-muscled breed, that don't possess the extreme muscling of many of the European draught breed animals. The well-developed heat-regulating mechanism of the scrotum of Devon bulls give them an unusual ability to remain fertile despite extremely high environmental temperatures. Calving problems are seldom encountered although a growing stress on using larger bulls has increased the incidence of difficult births.

Devons have the thickest hides of any cattle in the world and this adds to their ability to resist external parasites. They produce high quality meat in a wide range of production systems, from intensive feedlot or grass finishing to the extensive pastoral run.

THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

We consider the hormonal activity of an animal to be one of the most important, if not the most important trait, in our grading system. It is an indicator of the internal health of an animal and is controlled by the hormones that the animal produces. The endocrine is the collection of glands that produce these hormones and so I thought I would discuss this again now to remind us of the importance of this in our cattle's overall health. I won't go into the metabolic detail of how exactly the system works, but give a general idea of how it controls the productivity and health of our animals.

The word endocrine comes from the base "endo", which means "within" and "kreinin" which means "to secrete". The word "hormone" comes from the Greek root word, "hormon" which means "to excite". Endocrine glands secrete hormones whose role it is to maintain the body's function in a well-defined way. They are not haphazard secretions with undefined roles to play.

The endocrine system is the collection of glands that produce hormones that regulate metabolism, growth and development, tissue function, sexual function, reproduction, sleep, and mood, among other things

They can be affected by internal conditions such as overall balance and the physical, chemical and psychic situation prevailing at the time or external conditions such as light, temperature and magnetic fields as well as the food they are eating. Again, we see the importance of balance in maintaining a healthy system.

There are several endocrine glands in the body and the most important of these include:

- a) The pineal gland is shaped like a very small pine cone and weighs as little as 0.2 grams in humans. Its role is to assist in the regeneration of the body both physically and psychologically. The role of the pineal is still very much the subject of research to help in the understanding of its role. In humans, it is sometimes referred to as the "third eye" and is thought to influence a lot of the psychological side of the human body. It also assists with regeneration and sleep. As such, it is considered the most important gland in humans, but this probably is not the case in cattle.
- b) The pituitary gland is more likely to be the most important gland in cattle. It is the conductor of all the body's organic functions and cellular growth as well as its reproductive activities and controls vital

functions in the body by acting on other glands by either stimulating or inhibiting them. The pituitary gland sits just below the hypothalamus in the brain, which is made up of a cluster of nerves called the sympathetic nerves, and to which it is connected.

In fact, the hypothalamus controls the pituitary gland and the flow of water and food in and out of the body as well as its blood pressure, temperature and circulation of vital energies. It has an important role in the rebuilding of body tissue and procreation, a major factor in the selection of productive cattle.

c) The thyroid gland has as one of its main functions in cattle to act like a thermostat in controlling the inner metabolic body heat. It is responsible for controlling the energy required by the body to adapt itself to the particular situation it is in at that time. It also distributes the trace element iodine throughout the body which provides the energy needed for organs to function.

d) The thymus protects the body by controlling its immune system. It has the role of recognising and eliminating substances that are foreign to the body including microbes. Fortunately, the thymus goes at least some way to offering us protection against things that may damage our bodies. What we need to be aware of is whether the changes to the biological and chemical structure of our food may well affect the performance of our thymus as well as other glands.

e) The heart is not only a very powerful muscular mass that pumps blood around the body continually to sustain life, but also an endocrine gland. The gland itself is situated in the right auricle and is connected to a network of nerves in the heart. It is thus directly linked to the sympathetic nervous system and part of its role is to slow down

the heart rate to save on oxygen consumption. It also secretes a hormone whose role it is to generally relax the body and assist in the elimination of sodium or salt from the kidneys which can cause otherwise cause high blood pressure.

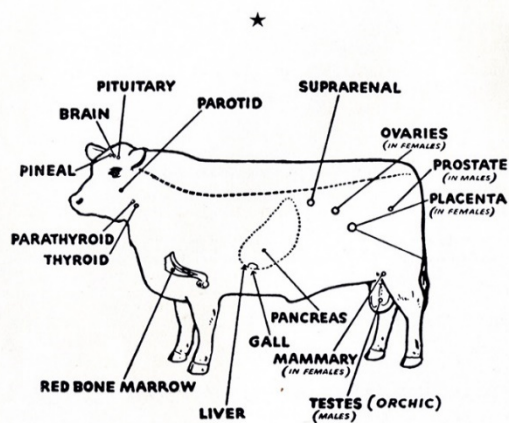
f) The suprarenal glands are situated on top of the kidneys and control the release of hormones to mobilise reserves of energy and for fighting diseases. The main hormone they produce is adrenaline which accelerates the rate of blood circulation from the heart and in the respiratory rate.

g) The solar plexus is a meeting point for glands and the interior and exterior of the body and controls, commands and coordinates their functions. In some regards it may not be regarded as a true gland although it does secrete hormones and works in conjunction with the suprarenal gland.

h) The group of glands known as the abdominal and pelvic glands and include the liver, digestive tract, spleen, kidneys and gonads secrete hormones that support the reproductive processes in cattle.

Note that several of the swirls that we use as indicators are named after the relevant parts above.

We purposely place a large amount of importance on the hormonal activity in cattle to indicate their overall health, the taste of their meat and the quality of their milk in our evaluation system. The level of hormonal activity in an individual animal can be measured to a large extent, as we have done in our evaluation system because the end result of that hormonal activity is reflected externally in a number of ways by the animal. It is our aim to bring those indicators to public knowledge so that all cattle breeders can use them as part of their own herd selection process.



★

THE STEER

A diagram showing the approximate location of a few of the glandular parts used in Armour pharmaceutical products.



SPECIFY ARMOUR'S FOR STANDARDIZED GLANDULAR PREPARATIONS

6

Thank you for your continued interest in our newsletters, our website and our book. Please feel free to order one of our books and become familiar with the CLMS system and the directions we are taking in the overall scheme of animal and food production for human consumption

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US ABOUT ANY ITEMS IN THIS NEWSLETTER, ON OUR WEBSITE OR IN OUR BOOK. WE WELCOME PRODUCER INPUT AND INTEREST AND WANT TO INVOLVE YOU IN WHAT WE ARE DOING.

Disclaimer: - Information contained in this newsletter is believed to be true and accurate at the time of publication. Classic Livestock Management Services is not liable to any person or organisation, whether in negligence or otherwise for anything published in, or omitted from this publication.

DROUGHT

INTRODUCTION - Whilst I have the utmost sympathy for what producers in drought areas are currently experiencing and know some personally who have had to sell all their breeding herd, I hope that we learn from this experience that we can't keep doing what we have always been doing that is not working and at present our drought policies aren't working. Change needs to occur at all levels of the agricultural production chain.

As I mentioned, the most innovative producers have changed, usually at their own expense, despite the bureaucracy and politicians. Now we need to encourage all producers to follow suit. We are motivated to change either by getting away from pain or going towards reward or pleasure. In the past, I believe that government and public support has reduced the pain just enough for a lot of producers not to make change.

Whether this drought is going to inflict enough pain on its own to motivate more change only time will tell. However, by introducing a reward or incentive scheme to encourage producers to change might finally be enough to get the majority to do something about their situation. We are, generally speaking, creatures of habit so change doesn't come easily to us. Therefore, it needs to be nurtured and encouraged in the current climate so that the greater good will eventually prevail so that we will all benefit.

DISCUSSION

It is not the aim of this discussion to reinforce the negativity of the dry seasonal conditions many of us are experiencing currently.

In the case of individual industries, and in this case, the primary industry, we look to our industry leaders to show the way. In many cases they are frustrated by the delays from bureaucracy and red tape that many times fails the common sense test. They are worn down by this constant wall of indifference and in most cases, they are experiencing first-hand the conditions that

they are fighting to have changed or improved themselves. In the case of the grass roots people in each industry, and in this case, primary producers, they are battling against all odds to just survive and don't have the resilience, resources or personal strength left to add the necessary weight to the cause that their industry leaders are struggling to fight for.

I wonder what the outcome would be from a political and public sense if primary producers had the energy to protest their cause publicly in our cities the way that the climate change protesters etc. currently are. Well, at least publicly promote their plight, but in a much more responsible way than we are currently seeing from the climate change protesters. I don't think that anyone argues that the climate is changing, but it has been doing so since the beginning of life on earth. These two situations are poles apart in terms of what they mean to the future of our country. Where one group is protesting a need to address a cause that, at best, is more emotional than factual and is filled with conflicting evidence, whilst the other is a stark, current, realistic experience that is destroying people's lives and happening right now.

One of the interesting facts about the climate change debate, as I digress slightly, is that there is very rarely mentioned anything about the impact that the sun and moon have on the earth's climate. We learnt at school that the behavior of sunspots on the sun's surface had a major bearing on the earth's climate and I have also had a couple of our learned clients make this point.

We are also hearing some talk of how we can be better prepared in the future, but that seems to be more talk than action. I would like to focus here on what can be done in the future if the decision makers in this country have the courage to do so. So far, they haven't and I'm wondering what would cause them to finally change and be able to implement what seems like, to a

simpleton like me, to be a common sense and ultimately very cost-effective solution. There appears to me to be two main areas where a significantly different and better approach is needed.

The first is in regard to water conservation. The apathy by those making decisions towards building more water conservation infra-structure is beyond comprehension. Even given that they are being influenced by a minority of the population, who believe that dams are an environmental hazard and should not be constructed at any cost, their lack of leadership in this area means that they must be replaced. There are at least 20 river systems on the east coast of this country running into the Pacific Ocean that have the potential to have water storage facilities built, at least, in their upper reaches where the environmental damage would also be minimal. They would provide a significant capacity for the whole east coast as well as being able to be pumped and piped over the Great Dividing Range to inland areas. As well as this, there are several significant rivers flowing inland from the Great Divide that could add huge quantities to the storage total.

Certainly, there is a large capital investment needed to build such infrastructure and it won't happen overnight though it really should. Remember, that if the major influence of droughts could be greatly lessened by a major water storage program, the government and the general community, who make such generous donations at such times, would ultimately save many millions of dollars each drought that they are currently giving to support those in need. It would be a long-term investment, and, in the end, it will be one that provides a high return on investment because it will greatly reduce the need for the regular cost that we are seeing now and have done so regularly in the past.

The second is in regard to fodder conservation.

This is a far less discussed topic in terms of drought preparation. However, it is second only to water conservation and then mainly because water is needed to grow grass. Despite what must be popular belief, I believe that we grow enough fodder/grass in this country to be able to take the seasonal effects on production out of the equation, I have driven over much of Eastern Australia over many years and have seen the amount of grass that is left to rot or burn when there is a good season. It is bordering on criminal that this grass is not utilized when it is available. I was taking some visitors from Europe, who were involved in the fodder conservation industry, around a certain area in Australia that is now drought declared some years ago and they were amazed at the amount of dry grass just left to basically rot in the paddocks. It does not happen in Europe. They know the value of their fodder through generations of working out how to work with Mother Nature.

Certainly, a lot of the grass is growing in areas that are not suitable to use fodder conservation machinery on. However, that doesn't mean that it couldn't be made suitable. There are millions of hectares of treed and scrub country where the growth has been knocked down, but then just left lying there. It is a job half done. If that country was cleared fully or responsibly in a managed way with shelter belts and cover strips left, then it would be able to be cut for hay or silage in good years and conserved for future dry years. Again, like dams, this option will take decision makers with courage to commit funding to a long-term project. If producers are encouraged, with government incentives and support, to clear all their suitable land to an arable, harvestable state, they will take care of their own needs in the tough times. For those producers who don't or can't invest in the machinery to drought proof their properties in this way, then government support should be made available to assist

contractors to be able to carry out the work for them. Ultimately, the government should not need to support producers in the longer term. I don't know how long it would take for producers to make themselves self-sufficient, but I would like someone with the financial information to work it out. I do know that it would not take that much time when the amount of money that has been given as drought relief over say, the last 30 years even, is calculated and then calculated as an infrastructure investment in the future.

I see the other major hurdle that needs to be addressed in this situation is how to change producers/people's outlook or mindset when it comes to change. I don't wish to criticize people who have spent their lifetime working hard doing things to the best of their ability. However, surely, we can see that in terms of drought relief in this country, nothing has changed, ever, to really address this challenge. We keep doing the same things and therefore, we get the same outcomes. Surely, we can work out that we need to do something different to get a better outcome. In one sense, for most of us, it is difficult to accept change and, in a way, we are psychologically "wired" to be very risk averse.

Research on this topic has indicated that less than 10% of the population will readily adopt change or lead the way with new innovations. About 30% of the population will make changes after a period of time when they have seen that something is working for that first 5 – 10% and the remaining 60%+ will rarely, if ever change unless they are forced to, kicking and screaming. This means that there also needs to be an education type program to explain the reasons that change is necessary and how to go about it that outlines the overall benefits. If it needs incentives (carrots) to be dangled in front of the slow movers, in particular, then so be it. Once one generation starts doing something different, then it will be easier for future generations.

It is a psychological state of thinking that is stopping many producers from changing their methods of operation in their enterprise. I realise that what I am proposing here is somewhat foreign and a polar opposite to the way many producers have operated in the past. I appreciate that I was brought up in Tasmania where we had to conserve fodder or sell most of our stock at the start of each winter and buy at the start of each spring and apart from being financially very risky to do this, it didn't lend itself to developing a breed plan for a cow herd or sheep flock.

Many parts of Europe and North America face far greater challenges to manage their stock during the winter than we did. The positive from our perspective though was that usually we were guaranteed a spring where we could replenish our conserved fodder reserves for the next winter. We had a fairly regular time frame to work to. Whilst this is not the case with droughts, many of the principals are the same. The consequences just last longer and are less predictable. However, that doesn't mean that the principals can't be adapted to work for hot and dry in a similar way to that which they work for cold and wet or frozen. It is pretty much all about mind set and being prepared to step outside the square and accept that at present, in drought areas, we are just not committed enough to being self-sufficient. I know that sounds a harsh thing to say, but what other realistic explanations are there and to say that it is too hard doesn't count.

Being a product of the land, I know how fiercely independent farmers are. In many ways, that is part of their survival strategy. However, sometimes we need to look for outside ideas and even sometimes support and I am only proposing the above because I believe that many producers can maintain much or all of their independence by biting the bullet and starting to do something different.

I know it is possible to drought proof this country. We need people prepared to see the bigger, long-term picture and bite the bullet and commit the investment now. Now is the ideal time to start building dams whilst machinery can work in dry areas where they may not be able to operate when it does rain. It is also the time to clean up that semi cleared land when there is no undergrowth and grasses to slow down dozers and stick rakes etc. Producers need leadership and whole of country support right now to start building the required infrastructure. Nothing will be achieved, ever, by putting things off until it eventually does rain and then sweeping the past under the carpet again. Out of sight, out of mind will not solve the long term, repeating challenges that we have now.

I have given examples of the difference it will make if this approach is taken in earlier newsletters and shown the financial benefits. Whilst the exact figures may have changed, the bottom line in terms of gross margins hasn't.

I don't intend these comments in any way to be critical, but to encourage people to take their future in their own hands and make the changes that they see necessary to move ahead with confidence to plan for the unknown. I hope it may add some thoughts to a bigger picture that will benefit all.

If you have managed to get this far into this discussion, thank you for your patience and understanding at this difficult and sensitive time.

