

I am a person that appreciates the peace and solitude of living on a ranch in a rural area and in my opinion, there are not many events in life more enjoyable than walking in a hayfield on a July evening as the gold and brilliant magenta rays of the sunset are slowly disappearing over the Cascade Mountains. The sweet aroma of the just-baled hay is lightly floating in the air. I glance slightly upward and see two large red-tailed hawks in flight searching for their evening food source. I walk about 20 yards and hear the sound of coyotes down by the river. As the tempo and volume of their yelps increases, it indicates to me they are now a pack and probably running a rabbit or small deer. I continue walking for a few minutes. The light of the sun is now gone and the dark overhead canopy of the evening sky is filling with millions of brilliant stars, some appear as if they are white dazzling diamonds in the sky, and they are so bright and seem so close. To the east, the moon is ever so slowly beginning to appear above the horizon. Tonight there will be a full moon. I am thinking about the millions of people that live in large cities that will never understand what I have just described, or see the spectacular natural beauty and grandeur of the West with the sounds and activities of nature surrounding me in that hayfield on that warm July evening in Oregon. I turn around and walk toward my tractor, time to get back to work. With luck and no mechanical breakdowns, I should finish baling this hayfield by 4:00 A.M. and then begin another day.