

MERCHANDISING



Nothing's free- But publicity comes close

Nothing is free, but good publicity comes as close as anything you will find in the world of Angus advertising and promotion.

Often a single telephone call can produce many dollars worth of publicity about your cattle operation in your local newspaper or on radio or television.

At times, you may have to work an hour or so to produce free publicity worth a hundred or even hundreds of dollars. Not much else will yield as good a return on your time, unless your pay scale equals that of a million-dollar baseball pitcher. Someone once figured that those guys make about \$250 for each pitch delivered to the plate during a game.

But like a baseball pitcher, you too have to deliver the right pitch to the right person, at the right time, in order to produce the desired results.

To interest a reporter in doing a story about you or your herd, you need to provide him with one of two kinds of information—news or human interest. It's news if you will be the host of a field day or tour at your place—or if you will have a foreign or a noted visitor. It is news if you, or a member of your family, have been elected to an office or have won some award. You can be assured of a news story if you just telephone the newspaper or broadcast station with the facts.

A human interest story could be built around something as simple as the birth of twin calves. Or maybe one of your good old cows has given birth to her 12th or 15th consecutive calf. Most radio and TV stations don't have any experience with farming or livestock raising. As a result, they won't know when it's calving season unless you tell them. And they might want to do a story on calving at your place. You can make it easy by having a bunch of new-born calves available in a clean, dry lot or a gentle, clean cow with her cute, clean calf ready for the photographer.



If mother nature or the flow of events won't provide you with a news or human interest situation, you can manufacture one. For instance, you can invite the local FFA chapter out to your place when you wean and weigh calves or weigh yearlings off-test. All those fresh-faced youngsters gathered around your corrals learning, on-the-job, how to be better cattle producers makes good news or feature material. What's more, some of those youngsters and maybe even their parents may come back later to buy cattle.

One Angus breeder I know runs cattle on a pasture next to the city limits. When a cow got through the fence and wandered down the streets helping herself to lawns, flowers and garden, the breeder wrote a letter to the newspaper, as if it were the cow writing, thanking the home owners for being so kind and telling how much she enjoyed her outing. Needless to say, it appeared in the newspaper.

The same man, each year, moves his cow herd about five miles to rented summer pasture. Two people could do the job in little time. Instead, he invites local cowboys to help with the "trail drive," along with the newspaper editor. What editor or reporter could resist the offer of a sunny, spring afternoon ride in the country on a

very tame horse, to photograph and report on all the action? It would be great for TV, too, if you have one in your area.

An auction sale, a judging contest, even the arrival of a new bull at your place can be newsworthy events for local media. You just have to look at everything that goes on to see if it has publicity value.

Moreover, you need to know the media people in your area. It is much easier to get them interested if you are on a first-name basis. And always treat them with respect and give them lots of attention when they arrive at your place. Moreover, a little special treatment such as a couple of steaks at Christmas, can pay big dividends. On second thought, if you give the right pitch to the news editors, you might be able to earn in a very short time as much or more as does your favorite tobacco-chewing, fireballer for serving up his patented fast ball in a game.


Director of Communications
and Public Relations