

Merchandising

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications and Public Relations

A 1994 Wish for Advertisers

If I could grant you one advertising wish in 1994 it would be that all of your print ads be illustrated with a creative, professional-quality photograph. I would wish for pictures so compelling that they grab the attention of readers and not release them until they have read your entire ad.

Although I have rubbed my share of bottles over the years, I have yet to find one with a resident genie anxious to grant wishes. Absent a genie and knowing that probably 90 percent of the people who read this magazine have never paid a trained photographer to make photographs for their advertising, I offer my alternate solution:

Get a good camera and learn how to use it.

The first is fairly simple. There are many good cameras and some are not expensive. You can buy a point and shoot camera with a reasonably sharp zoom lens starting at about \$200 at your local discount store. These cameras read and automatically set the film speed as you drop the film in the camera back. They do most everything else you need but plan the shot and push the shutter. The built-in lens allows you to zoom in or out to frame the shot properly.

Their one fault is they don't give you any say in the matter. When photographing Angus cattle it's sometimes necessary to over-expose in order to get more detail in the animals, particularly in a closeup. Some point and shoot cameras have a back-lighting adjustment that allows you to double the exposure of a photo. This is oftensufficient, but to get more control you have three other choices.

The most expensive choice starts at about triple the price of a point and shoot camera. It's a nifty 35mm reflex camera with automatic focus and automatic everything else, but with the provisions to override some or all automatic features. These cameras are electronic marvels with ultra-sharp, interchangeable lenses. They make wonderful pictures under most conditions on automatic setting, but allow you to manually set the shutter or film speed when you need to. There is a new one by Canon that will focus on whatever area of the picture your eye focuses on. I don't know how, but it does. The list price for this gem is a mere \$1,200.

Less expensive is a manual focus with automatic exposure control, but with the means to override these controls and make it essentially into a manual camera. Most major manufacturers of 35mm reflex cameras have them. This is old technology, so you can buy one of these cameras for \$400 or so. A good zoom or telephoto will add \$250 to the price tag.

What most of us at the American Angus Association still use for cattle photos is the old-fashioned type of manual 35mm camera with a built-in light meter. You read the light meter in the view finder and set the camera by hand. You also focus by hand and advance the film yourself. But you have complete control over the camera settings. Problem is, this kind of camera

is a dying breed. The Pentax K-1000 is one brand that's generally available in most camera stores, and you will like the price of around \$250 with a 35mm or 50mm lens.

For another \$100 or so you can buy a 100mm telephoto; a little more, a pretty good 80-200mm zoom.

Whichever model you decide upon I suggest you get a zoom lens. If you get the point and shoot you will have a choice of 28mm up to 90 or 100. This will be a nice wide angle lens at the low end and a moderate telephoto at the other. You will find that any zoom of less than 100mm is not quite enough telephoto in some cattle situations.

If you select a camera with interchangeable lenses, then get a 70-210 zoom for most of your cattle pictures plus a 28 or 35mm wide angle lens for scenic shots or tight places.

You will need a good camera bag to protect your camera and lenses from jolts and dust. The bag also carries film, lens cleaning paper or other accessories. Most people get a bag that is too small rather than one that is too large.

If possible, start with black and white film. It is less expensive to buy, process and print. Most of your ads will be in black and white anyway, and it's difficult for most publications to make a good black and white reproduction of a color print. The big drawback with black and white film is that many places no longer process and print it. But you can probably find one if you look around.

What about film? For black and white film nothing beats the tried and true Kodak TRI-X. Its 400 speed gives you lots of flexibility, with great contrast and very little grain on standard enlargements. If you use color film select 200 or 400 speed color print film for telephoto lenses and 100 for wide angle.

Next month we will talk about some basics of photography. In the meantime, line up your equipment and prepare to embark on a project that can prove to be fun, exciting, challenging and even profitable.



KARLA NIÑO ILLUSTRATION

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