

Start Out on the Right Foot

You are new to the registered Angus business. Maybe you bought a few good bred cows or heifers last fall that will calve this spring. A year from now you may have something to sell. It is time to develop your initial marketing program - if you haven't already.

You may be one of some 2,600 people at the beginning of your registered Angus career. That's how many people joined the American Angus Association during the 1994 fiscal year. Their success, like that of most Association members, will depend as much upon their ability to market as upon their ability to understand genetics and make intelligent breeding decisions.

Where do you start?

Since you are starting a new business that will be advertised and promoted, you need a business name. Jones Angus Farm would do, but a more memorable name will be much better. Maybe you could use a local geographical feature to produce a name like Bear Canyon Angus or Eagle Boost Angus Ranch. Some people have successfully used local historical names. I've known people who combined the first letters of the first names of children or the husband and wife.

Some produced catchy, memorable herd names; some are silly and difficult to pronounce and remember. Choose the name carefully. If you don't it could haunt you the rest of your business life.

Next, have someone design a herd logo that incorporates your name. Since the logo will be an important part of all your advertising and promotion, it should be well planned and designed. Look through livestock magazines to get ideas.

Check the logos or trademarks of large commercial firms for ideas. Cut out the ones you like best and take them with you to show the person who will do the logo artwork and design. The logo is your trademark. It should be simple and recognizable at a glance. And, it should reproduce well in one-color or black and white. Much of what you print will be in black and white, so don't get carried away with complicated colors.

A local artist, or someone who does computer graphics might do you a fine job. Most publications today have at least some access to an artist and computer graphics, and they should do the design work for you at a reasonable price. Whatever you pay, insist you get good work and a design you like and feel comfortable with.

The next step is to get business cards, a letterhead and envelopes. Let the person who designs your logo produce a simple,

attractive letterhead and business envelope design. Of course, your business name and logo should be on both.

A simple, attractive letterhead and envelope make a favorable impression on everyone who sees them. They set you apart as a serious business person, particularly if each letter is typed or from a word processor. This sure beats a handwritten note on a piece of lined notebook paper, with scrawled return address on a plain envelope, particularly if your hand writing is as bad as mine.

Once you finish this preliminary work start making cattle producers and influencers in your part of the country aware that you are in the registered Angus business. Write all business letters on your letterhead, even pay your bills using the business envelopes.

When you meet potential customers, give them your business card. You will meet plenty of these customers at your local cattlemen's association meeting. If you are not a member, become one at once.

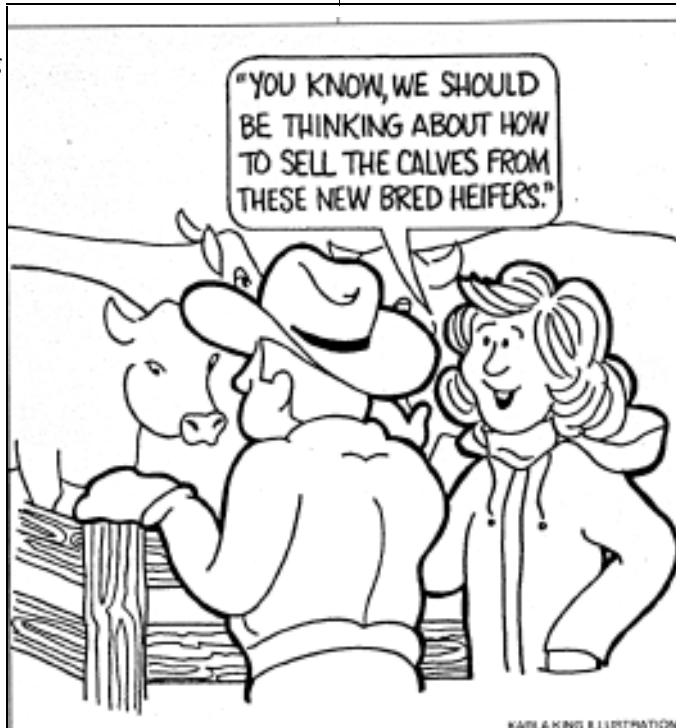
Paint your logo on your truck and stock trailer, and put up a sign in front of your place that features your name and logo. If you are not on a main road, you may want to erect road signs pointing the direction to your place.

Study the basics of marketing. Write to the Association for a copy of "How to Sell Angus Cattle." It is free to Association members. In fact, you have a copy if you are a new member. It was sent to you in the new-member packet of information. The booklet contains sections on advertising, public relations and sales. It will give you plenty of ideas.

Pay particular attention to planning, budgeting and establishing a market area. If you understand the basics of marketing, it is a lot easier to develop an effective program.

The most important thing is to lay the groundwork early for your marketing program. Developing awareness of your business, within even a small market area, takes time and planning.

A year's worth of work and planning go into producing a calf crop. At least that much time and planning must be devoted to marketing a group of registered Angus cattle.



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