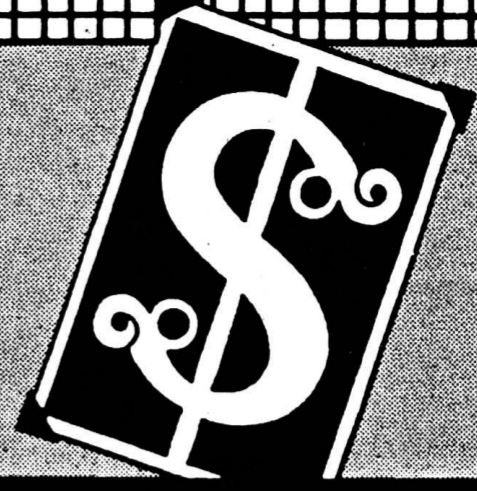


MERCHANDISING



You can write a news release

Red Smith, one of the greatest sports writers who ever lived, said once, "Writing is easy. All you do is sit down at the typewriter and open a vein."

Having to "write something" can frighten most anyone, but it's essential to an effective cattle merchandising program. And contrary to what you might believe, you can learn to write effective, simple news releases.

A properly written news release is the best way to get news about you and your Angus herd into a newspaper or on the radio. Editors and reporters are just as busy and lazy as you and I. So, if the information they receive about an event is written down in a logical order, with names, times and locations spelled out accurately, the story stands a much better chance of being published or aired.

News writing begins with assembling all the facts important to a story. When you put together your news release, answer most if not all of the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How?

Next, begin the story with the most important or most interesting fact. Don't beat around the bush. Tell the reader in the first paragraph (the first two or three sentences) what they need to know.

The second paragraph tells less important facts. Follow this pattern to the end of the story. Write your paragraphs so each can end the story. Thus, if the editor has space in his newspaper for only one paragraph, that first paragraph will make sense and get your point across.

Finally, keep your news release simple and to the point. Use simple words, write the way you talk, and include all the necessary information but nothing more.

Here's an example. The three-paragraph news story announcing a country Angus association field day at Jones Angus Farm includes most of the above principles. You can even adapt it for any announcement-news release you may need to write.

"Sam and Sally Jones, owners of Jones Angus Farm, Lone Pine, Ala., will be hosts for the Clinton County Angus Assn. Field Day at their farm on Monday, July 10. Sponsored by the Clinton County Angus Assn., the field day will begin at 10:30 a.m., and all interested in beef cattle are welcome.

"Guest speaker J.H. Smith, state beef cattle extension specialist, will explain how to use performance records to select and breed more profitable beef cattle. Lunch will be available at the farm, and the program will conclude at 3:30 p.m., with a tour of the Jones' performance-tested Angus herd.

"The Jones farm is located two miles east of Lone Pine on county highway 241, then two miles north on the gravel road. Signs at each intersection will mark the way. For more details telephone the Jones' at 555-5959."

Note that the first paragraph tells **who** (the Jones') is the host for **what** (a field day), and **when** and **where** the field day will be. It also tells **who** is sponsoring the event and **who** is invited.

The second paragraph expands on the first. It partially explains **why** the event is being held (to learn more about performance records), **who** the speaker is and even a little of **why** he is qualified to speak (he's a beef extension specialist).

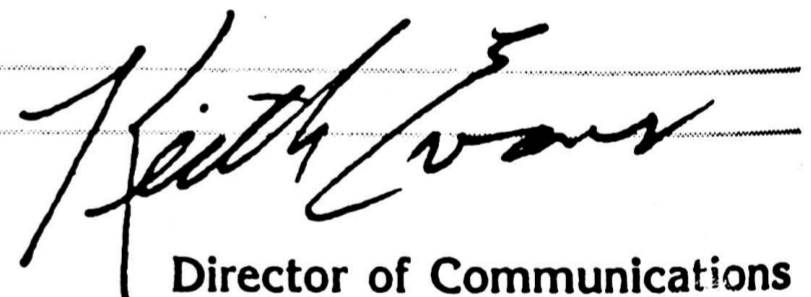
The third paragraph tells **how** to get to the ranch, **where** it's located, and even **how** to get more information. Note that the story could be cut at

the end of each paragraph.

The news release certainly isn't "creative," but it's informative, simple and easy to read, without being boring or confusing. It starts with the most important facts then keeps answering the Who? What? When? Where? Why? and How? questions until most all the facts of interest to the average reader are provided.

If possible, a release should be typed, double spaced, with a simple headline like "Jones Angus Ranch to Host Clinton County Angus Field Day," at the top, and your name and telephone number at the bottom. Neatness and accuracy also help. And if you don't type, a neat, handwritten story will do fine.

Writing a news release is a learned skill just like tattooing or record keeping. And, regardless of what Red Smith said, you don't have to bleed in order to write a story that will help publicize your Angus operation. AJ


Director of Communications
and Public Relations

