

LEAD IN

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While not as dramatic as the elephant ads, the Association's new ad series seems to have really struck at the heart of the cattle business in the opinion of many cow-calf producers.

From throughout the country we have received comments that lead us to believe the ad campaign is right on track and addressing important industry concerns.

For example, one South Dakota rancher who runs cattle of another breed, went to the trouble to write and praise the American Angus Assn. for taking a stand on a real problem in the industry, the mongrelization of much of the nation's cow herd. "This crossbreeding era has about ruined us all," he said.

The ad which features Bob Hillier displaying a calf that contains four known breeds and one unknown one, and saying "I can't afford to pay for your mistakes," does not downgrade

the importance of crossbreeding. The point is that, a cattleman can't improve the performance and predictability of his cow herd and calf crop by infusing from five to 10 breeds into his program. We want the ad to make people think about what they are doing, to crossbreed with a set plan and, of course, to use Angus heavily in their program.

Across the country it is apparent that cattle of unknown background and unknown breeding fail the test for consistency, predictability, and quality. This lack of predictability in today's commercial cow herd should be of concern to all of us, registered and commercial producers alike. That's the message coming through in the ad featuring Milton Litvak of Litvak Packing of Denver.

We are rapidly approaching the era of specification buying, whether it is registered seed stock, feeder cattle, or the retail beef industry. And, as the ad featuring Bob's IGA meat manager Marty White says, "The market is harsh on those who ignore its realities." Today's business-type rancher has already figured out that selling his product is as important as producing

it. And premiums, if they are paid, will be for reputation cattle whose reputation is built upon predictable performance, on the range, in the feedlot, on the rail, and on the dinner table. Taste and quality are vitally important. As Debbie Mertz emphasizes in the ad featuring her and her children, "Good beef just isn't good enough for us."

The Bob Hillier and Milton Litvak ads have created probably the most attention. Bruce Weeter, Regional Manager for Montana, North Dakota, and Wyoming says cattlemen from his area have had a lot of favorable comments about these two ads, and the ad program in general. He thinks they will be even more effective in his country than the elephant ads.

Despite a reduced advertising budget for the 1987 fiscal year, the advertising program is designed to reach 86 percent of all commercial cow-calf producers in the United States with a message 6.5 times during the advertising campaign. We are interested in your reaction to ads, but even more we would like to know what feedback you have received from your commercial customers.