

MERCHANDISING



AD DELIVERY ROOM

Will you be there on time?

It was to be a really big Angus sale. The herd owners had made special and costly sale arrangements. To promote the event, an unusual 4-color advertisement was planned for the appropriate **Angus Journal** issue.

Everything was ready, or so it seemed.

But the ad copy deadline crept closer and still the Journal advertising production department had no photograph to use. The day before the final deadline it became apparent that the advertiser had never even seen, let alone had possession of, the planned ad photograph. What's more, a quick long-distance telephone search revealed that a suitable color photograph was not available, and time had run out for taking one. In the end the ad was produced with a poor photo substitute that rendered the breeders advertising investment less effective and thus less valuable than it should have been.

This scenario, in one way or another, is played out all too often in beef cattle advertising. It is blindingly apparent to any cattle breeder that semen must be on hand at least nine months ahead of when calves are to be born, and 10 to 12 months in advance is much better. Yet, not so apparent is a similar gestation period in the production of an advertisement.

The post office can't deliver magazines to potential customers until they receive the magazines from the binder



who puts the whole thing together. Binders can't do their job until they have every last page.

from the printer. Printers can't deliver until they obtain every camera-ready page from the production department. A page of advertising can't be made camera ready until every photograph, logo, and line of type is supplied to the makeup artists who get their copy from typesetting who rely upon information from the advertising coordinators or regional managers who get their ideas and material from the advertiser.

At every step in this process, from conception of the idea to delivery of the publication to the subscriber, there are deadlines. A final deadline means literally the very last day that something can be done and still get the publication printed and delivered on time. And final deadlines can't be beat. Being a day late for the final deadline is much the same as being a day late in catching your best cow in heat. You wait until next month. But in the case of a production sale or some similar set event, next month can be too late.

Though final deadlines can't be beat, some people make a game of seeing how close they can come without being "too late." It may be a fun game to play, but it almost assures less effective advertising than if the material is provided to the publication two weeks or a month before deadline.

The reason is obvious. Early in the month, after last month's publication is out and three weeks or so before next month's final deadline, writers, artists, typesetters, proofreaders, and pasteup people usually have some time on their hands. If an ad is ready to go into production, then these people have sufficient time and mental energy to lavish tender loving care upon it. On the other hand, an ad that is one of several that must be produced on the Friday afternoon of deadline will not receive the same care and attention.

Being early doesn't assure perfection. Nor does being late always spell disaster. In fact, I know at the **Angus Journal** that every possible effort is made to provide advertisers with the best possible service and advertising. And other publications do the same. But if an advertiser plays the deadline game long enough, he or she will eventually lose, and chances are someone with the publication will be blamed.

Good advertising begins with good planning. And, an essential part of a good advertising plan is to know the deadlines of all the media you advertise with. Then do all you can to meet the deadlines--the earlier the better.

Remember, the birth of a healthy, productive advertisement or advertising program--like the birth of a calf--almost always comes at the end of normal gestation period. **AJ**

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