

Advertising is Like Getting in Shape

I am overweight and not in shape. The doctor says, "exercise and don't eat so much." So, if I fast all day tomorrow and do sit ups and pushups that evening until I drop, will I be in shape?

Of course not, all I'll be is hungry, exhausted and sore.

To lose weight and get in condition I need a program. To maintain my hoped for new weight and physical condition I'll need a regular maintenance program. Should I want to compete in a very active sport I will need a very different, more intensive program. The same is true with advertising and promotion.

A registered breeder called the other day. He wanted to know how to sell his bull crop. Commercial breeders in his state aren't buying as many of them as he thinks they should. And the prices he gets are too low. The problem was that there was little he could do this week or this month that would influence more buyers to come to his place and pay his asking price. His program hadn't been geared to sell bulls to a large number of commercial cattle producers.

He had forgotten, in fact he had ever known, that advertising you do today doesn't sell cattle tomorrow. The people who will buy bulls tomorrow already have their minds made up today who they will purchase them from.

The breeder couldn't fully accept the fact that there was no immediate, satisfactory solution to his problem. Yet he would never go to his doctor and expect a prescription that would get him in shape to run a mile race next week.

The principles of physical conditioning and building top-of-the-mind awareness in potential cattle customers is very much the same. Success in both begins with developing a program that will accomplish the desired results, and then sticking with it, month after month and year after year.

personal contact. Another might choose to advertise in local newspapers and on local radio. Done properly, either one will achieve the desired level of top-of-the-mind awareness.

Suppose these breeders decided to expand beyond their local market area. To build and maintain the desired level of awareness would require a change in program. A new, more intensive program would be called for.

The tricky thing about advertising and promotion or physical conditioning is that they don't start to work immediately. Both take time to produce results. On the other side of the coin, their effects wear off slowly. Stop exercising today and your heart will still be in good shape next week or next month. Stop advertising today, and it may be next fall before you start to feel the effects. Start advertising just today and the same is true, it will be months before it begins to pay off. Because of this delayed reaction it is easy to convince ourselves that we are wasting time, energy or money, as the case may be.

The thing to always keep in mind is that we can't beat the system. Without a physical conditioning program the body remains a couch potato. Without an effective advertising and promotion program a herd that was meant to be a value-added, registered seedstock operation remains basically a commercial operation selling cattle by the pound.

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The kind of program you develop depends upon many circumstances. If you have bad joints you might take up swimming as opposed to jogging or lifting weights. One is not better than the other. Properly applied, either will work.

In cattle marketing one breeder might develop a local advertising and promotion program based upon direct mail and