

MERCHANDISING



Selling yourself builds your customer base

When you sell a registered Angus bull or heifer you sell more than flesh and blood and superior genetics. The customer has bought a part of you as well. More often than not a buying decision is based as much upon you as upon your cattle.

Because of this you should make personal followup calls, as soon after the sale as possible. The best way is to get in your car or truck and visit the buyer's place after your cattle arrive. If you can't do that, then a telephone call is the next best thing. But you do need to demonstrate your interest and your concern and find out early if there are any problems.

It doesn't end there. After the first calves from your bulls are born a second followup is called for. If the customer likes the calves from your bulls he is going to love to show them to you and appreciate your visit. If, heaven forbid, there is a problem, the buyer will still appreciate your concern and you can set the problem straight before it goes any further.

At every followup visit find out as much as you can about the cattle producer and the family, including their goals, hopes and dreams for their cattle business. This kind of information, on all your customers, puts you in a unique position to provide commercial producers with seedstock that will help them accomplish the goals they have set.

I know an Angus breeder who delivers

nearly every bull he sells. Free delivery is just one of the benefits he offers and he does it efficiently and on time, year after year. This breeder knows exactly what his customers need and want, how his bulls perform and under what conditions. He also knows the buyer and his or her family.

More important the breeder bases his breeding decisions upon the information he gathers. The fact that frame score 8 and 9 bulls were the rage for the Angus industry did not influence him. From first hand knowledge he knew that bulls this large were not what his customers wanted or needed. So he stuck with cattle that performed best under his customers range

conditions. He continues to breed the kind of bulls his customers both need and want.

At his last production sale several hundred bulls sold, mostly to commercial cattle producers, at an average that was just a couple of hundred or so dollars short of \$3,000. And not a single bull was larger than frame score 6 according to the regional manager who attended the sale.

Now before anyone lets their blood pressure elevate, I am not saying that everyone should merchandise only bulls with frame score 6 or less. You might not get the first bid on these kind of bulls from your customers. The same goes with milk

EPD that some have found to be so controversial. A plus 10 pounds EPD on milk might be a hindrance to sales in some areas, and just what the customer wants in others.

The point is, we don't know what our customers want until we ask them—until we get out in their pastures and see for ourselves.

Every time you make a sale the buyer leaves, your place happy. He has put his or her trust in your cattle, your breeding program, and you. The quickest and easiest route to the next sale is to help the buyer succeed with the cattle you have sold him. Regular sales followup can help you do this, and keep you in business for decades to come.

AJ



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and Public Relations**