

# MERCHANDISING

To avoid the hassle of producing another ad, some Angus breeders will take an ad out of the *Angus Journal* and run it unchanged in a publication that serves the commercial cattle industry.

It's easy to ask the *Angus Journal* to simply send a duplicate negative to another publication. The publication likes it too, because it doesn't have the expense of producing another ad in its shop. Sounds like a good deal all around. Too bad things don't usually work out that way.

The catch is, it's not enough for an ad to be attention getting, readable, and able to deliver a powerful sales message. The ad and its message must also match the people who will hear or read it.

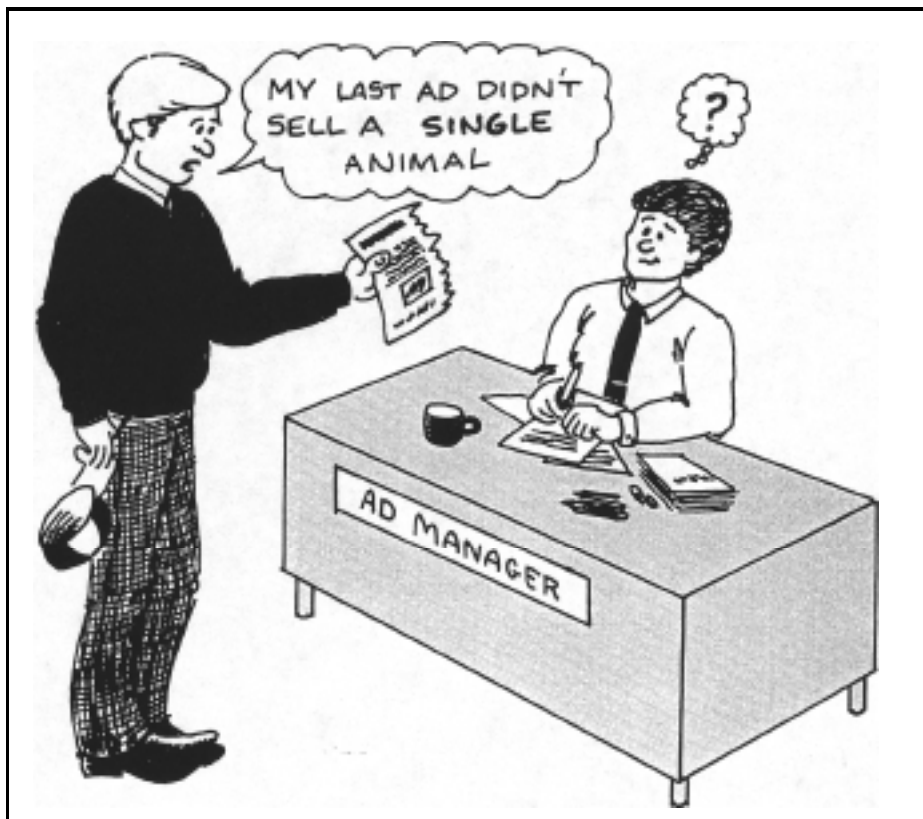
For example, feedlot operators and commercial cow-calf producers are both vitally interested in beef cattle. Still the manufacturer of a calf scours remedy would no more advertise in a feedlot publication than the producer of a heat suppressant drug for feedlot heifers would advertise in a cow-calf publication. By the same token, some of the registered Angus you have for sale appeal to registered cattle breeders and some interest only commercial cow-calf producers.

Many Angus breeders are well aware of this. An Oklahoma Angus breeder told me the other day that he never advertises bulls in the *Angus Journal* or heifers in the *Oklahoma Cowman*. Why? Because few of his potential bull customers, the commercial cattlemen within a 100-mile radius of his ranch, read the *Angus Journal*. However, he has good success selling registered females to other registered Angus breeders, and their children through the *Angus Journal*. So it's money wasted for him to run his *Angus Journal* heifer ad in the *Oklahoma Cowman*.

How do you know what to advertise and where? Well, it comes from experience, common sense, information that you collect and from any ad testing you are able to do.

If you know your customers and have a file on all of them, then you probably can tell what percent of your females are sold to registered breeders, or to people just starting in registered Angus business, or for youth projects, etc. You also know what kind of people buy your bulls, and what percent go to the commercial market.

## It's like trying to sell Iceboxes to Eskimos



With this kind of information, common sense can tell you which publications should reach the highest percentage of potential customers at the lowest cost. Then you design a good ad for the product you will sell to a particular group of potential customers and run the ad in the right publication at the proper time as often as your budget allows.

It is also a good idea to ask the radio station, the magazine, or the newspaper in question for information about their readers. If they are professional, they should be able to provide sound "demographic" information. That's advertising jargon for the kind of farmers or ranchers who read their publication or listen to their farm broadcasts, where they live, etc.

Finally, try to confirm your advertising decisions by testing. This can be as simple as asking every new customer where

they got your name, telephone number, or address. Over a period of time a pattern will emerge, to indicate the best places to advertise for new customers.

So if you are ever tempted to pull a good ad out of one kind of publication and run it, unchanged, in a very different one-stop and think. For the sake of a little convenience, you might be paying to deliver a costly message to a group of people who have little or no interest in what you have to say.

Director of Communications  
and Public Relations