

Who in the World Would Buy Your Cattle?

Who in the world would want to buy the registered Angus bulls and females you produce — and why?

Your ability to answer this question holds the key to your success in planning a marketing program for your registered Angus. Before you can convince someone they should buy your cattle you have to know what benefits your cattle can provide to the prospective customer. Not everyone can use the cattle you breed. Therefore you need to know who might be attracted to the benefits afforded by your cattle, your breeding program and you.

To begin with, it's vital to understand the difference between features and benefits; most people get them confused. Features are what most people discuss in their ads even though it is benefits that sell cattle, or any product. You usually describe your cattle by talking about features. Words you might use to describe features of your cattle are: Angus, polled, black, high carcass quality, weaning weight, hip height, calving ease or yearling EPD.

Benefits, however, don't refer to your cattle, they refer to satisfactions and rewards a buyer will enjoy if he or she uses your cattle. For example, the polled trait is a feature. The benefit of buying a polled bull are freedom from the work, worry and mess of dehorning calves.

Another benefit is the extra value received for polled cattle, particularly for replacement heifers. Polled is an almost universal benefit. Few cattle producers

would prefer to have a polled animal unless they are selling horns or supplying rodeo stock.

On the other hand, not every feature that you or I like translates into a benefit for every potential customer. Suppose you have a bull with a milk EPD of plus 2.5 pounds. The benefits of owning and using

cow to the point that she wouldn't recycle and breed back on time. Instead of producing more income this trait could reduce income for some cattle producers.

You can probably think of instances where a plus 50 pounds yearling weight EPD would be a big benefit, and some where it would not. The point is a breeder

must know potential customers well in order to know what benefits they could derive from purchasing their cattle.

We are all customers and we respond to advertising and promotion that promises to help us make more money, cut our costs, save us time, make life easier or make us feel good. A restaurant may have the most modern, efficient kitchen in the business, but as consumers, we don't care. We go to restaurants to enjoy the satisfaction of eating delicious food in attractive, comfortable surroundings. The great kitchen may contribute to the restaurant's success, but as customers we care only about what comes out of it.

As you plan your herd marketing program keep in mind that customers buy only benefits. That's why you need to know who in the world would want to buy the bulls and females you produce — and why.

Editor's Note: Next month we will discuss where your customers are and how you locate them.



HARLA KING ILLUSTRATION

such a bull for some breeders would be the production of cows with more milk. These cows would wean heavier calves that bring more money. The buyer could also plan on getting more money for the better milking replacement heifers.

However, there are areas of the country and possibly some operations in nearly every area of the country, where a plus 25 pounds milk EPD would be no benefit. Where feed is limited, the increased milk production could stress a