

doing a better job

MERCHANDISING

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications and Public Relations

The sun beats down from straight overhead and the hollow in your stomach tells you it's noon. You're ready to put aside for a while the corral fence you are rebuilding and head to the house for dinner.

Spurred by thoughts of cold iced-tea, swiss steak with mashed potatoes, and sliced fresh tomatoes, you quickly stow your tools in the back of the pickup.

The livestock market report is just beginning on the radio as you start the engine. Fat cattle prices are up 50 cents again today at most markets. Maybe this business really is turning around after so long a dry spell. The farm director brings you up to date on the farm news as you relax and drive to the house.

After a meal that was even better than you anticipated, you move over to the easy chair and chat with Mary as she clears the table and you sort through the mail. Routinely you switch on the radio at your elbow for the 12:50 grain market report—it tells you there is no good reason to sell grain today.

Later, as you drive back to begin the afternoon's work, you hear the weather report again. You remind yourself to finish the corral work before the cold front moves in tomorrow afternoon with its predicted rain.

Radio is so much a part of our day that we forget how important it is to our daily life and our business. The sound of the radio farm director often wakes

us up, keeps us company as we shave or have that first cup of coffee. We depend upon radio news, weather reports and markets to plan our day, to remind us to go to a meeting or a sale, and to plan cattle and grain sales. And because of this, farm radio should be a well used implement in your Angus herd advertising and merchandising tool box.

Radio advertising is unique. It provides benefits that are not available from other media.

- First, radio is almost everywhere. The average farm has almost 10 radios and they are listened to in the tractor, the combine, the barn, the kitchen, the car, the bathroom and the shop. We can work and still listen.
- Second, the number of radios and their locations allows farmers to listen all day, every day. In a national survey, nearly 52 percent of farmers said they listened to the markets on radio **every day**, and another 25 percent said they listen nearly every day.
- Third, radio provides efficient coverage of your market area. A single station with a broadcasting tower near you will cover just about all of your primary market area of 50 miles or so. And radio will usually cover a market like this more economically than any other media.
- Fourth, you can pinpoint your radio spots to a specific time of day or a specific program that you know your potential customers are most likely to listen to—weather, livestock markets, grain market, etc.
- Fifth, radio is flexible. You can change the copy in your radio spot every day if you wish, sometimes on an hour's notice. This makes radio an excellent last minute reminder of your sale next week or tomorrow, or to announce a change in a sale or meeting.
- Sixth, radio allows you to advertise every day during your primary sales season.

You can use radio for more than advertising. It should be a big part of your promotion and public relations program. Radio stations need news every day, especially radio farm directors who often find there are not enough hours in their day to get everything done. You can help them and yourself by making sure that they get news about you and your Angus herd. Call the farm director if you, someone in your family, or even your cattle win an award.

If you are the host for a field day, the radio station will not only help you publicize it and help bring in a big crowd, they may also come out to cover the event itself, and provide you and your herd with added publicity. There are lots of news possibilities.

How do you pick the best station or stations to use? That's easy. Select the stations that you like best. If you listen regularly to a station or a particular program, then other cattle producers are likely to do the same. If you have questions, call me. We have complete information on many farm radio stations. But even if you are in an area that doesn't have a regular farm broadcaster on the air, you can use radio by running your spots at times when farmers are most likely to listen. Again, you know what you listen to and that is a good gauge.

Remember, however, that different people have different listening habits. Some listen mostly in the morning before and during breakfast, or in the truck when they are feeding cattle. Others listen at noon. During planting and harvest time, in many areas of the country, the radio is running all the time in the tractor or combine. This just means that when you advertise on radio, don't do it all at one time of the day. Spread your spots around for maximum exposure.

If you are not advertising on radio, take a look at the advantages and put together a program that suits your operation. I know people who swear by the results they obtain from radio. They can trace cattle sales directly to their radio spots. And selling is what Angus advertising is all about. **AJ**

