

MERCHANDISING



They can't buy your cattle if they can't find your place

"Let me tell you, they can't buy your cattle if they can't find your place," a veteran Angus breeder said some years back. It's a lesson that at least a few seedstock producers have yet to learn.

A year or so ago an Association employee had an important meeting with a successful Angus breeder. He had called ahead to confirm the appointment and get directions to the farm. But to no avail. A wrong turn, and he was on a mud road, barely avoiding the ditch before finding the ranch headquarters. The problem was, there were no direction signs or farm signs anywhere along the route.

A few years back we did some filming at the farm of an Association member who many consider to be one of the best advertisers and promoters in the business. But we missed his small farm sign tacked to a fence post and partially obscured by brush. We arrived an hour late with a film crew that charged something like \$300 an hour.


Director of Communications
and Public Relations

In both cases it was the breeder who was doing the Association a favor. So we have no reason to complain. We should have gotten our directions straight before we left. But had we been buyers, there is a chance we would never have arrived at either place. And even if we had, would likely have been in no mood to spend money.

McDonalds is the best franchise operation in the world, and they have restaurant site selection down to a science. But good as they are and as much advertising as they do, they know that if more people see their signs, more people will stop and buy.

You can't move your farm or ranch headquarters to a busy corner, but maybe you can put your sign there for hundreds or thousands of people to see each year. If the law allows, and your neighbors will cooperate, have farm direction signs clearly marking the way to your place on any logical route that prospective buyers might take, starting with the most-traveled road. Assume that every prospective buyer is like me and will get lost or take the wrong turn if there is any possible way of doing so. Nothing is more welcome, when you are confused as to

whether the next crossroads is the turn or not, than a sign that points the way.

Signs are not cheap and they have to be maintained. More than likely someone will decide to use one or more for target practice at some time during the year. But they are an excellent investment.

Signs constantly remind cattlemen who pass by that you are in the Angus business—just down the road. What's more, over time most people in your area will come to know your name and where your business headquarters are located just from seeing your sign day after day, including people like the waitress at the cafe. Don't think that can't be useful when prospective buyers hit town.

Road signs should be simple, attractive, and easy to read, with the printing as large and legible as possible, and with few words. Notice that most large billboards have no more than six or eight words. "Jones Angus Farm-3 Miles West!" with an arrow is all you need to say. If you have space, add an attention getting silhouette of an Angus or your logo.

Well designed and placed road signs will guide prospective buyers to your place quicker, with less hassle, and in a much more positive buying mood.