

# MERCHANDISING

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications and Public Relations

## You Must Know The Difference

What separates your registered Angus bulls from other black, polled cattle? It's a question every Angus breeder must answer in order to develop the most effective herd marketing program.

Each year more continental breed producers seek to turn their cattle black and polled. These two genetically dominant traits are fairly easy to spread in another breed once they have been introduced, usually from Angus. But being black and polled doesn't mean these cattle perform like Angus; in fact, quite the opposite. When cattle have been selected primarily to be black and polled, success comes by neglecting other economically important traits.

When you advertise to commercial cow-calf producers keep in mind that they have a wide range of bulls to select from, many of which resemble Angus. That's why your advertising should stress information which separates your cattle from other black-polled beasts. The same is true when dealing personally with customers. Make sure customers understand the benefits they will receive from your registered, performance evaluated Angus cattle.

### let's explore some of these Angus sales points:

First, you can explain that you don't worry about selecting cattle that are black and polled. This is a given in the Angus breed. Instead you devote your time to improving traits that put more money into the buyer's pocket. Traits like calving ease, weaning weight, yearling weight and carcass quality.

Second, you can explain expected progeny differences (EPDs) and what they mean to the buyer. There is a lot of misleading information being spread around about EPDs. When a buyer comes to your place you have the perfect opportunity to give him or her a copy of the Association booklet, "Your Key to Accurate Bull Selection," and explain how to use Angus EPDs to their advantage. If you can't explain EPDs and how a commercial producer should use them, read the "Your Key.." booklet yourself.

Third, keep on top of the Certified Angus Beef Program and be able to explain how it will benefit your bull customers. There are 27 packing plants licensed to produce Certified Angus Beef™ product, including three of the largest beef packing organizations in the country — IBP, EXCEL and National. These packers are in the market every day for top quality Angus-sired cattle.

At the other end of the chain are 1,343 licensed retailers and 930 licensed restaurants. Total sales of Certified Angus Beef product should hit 150 million pounds in the 1994 fiscal year.

"Yes," you can tell your customers if you are asked, "there is a Certified Hereford Beef program. At present it involves one small California packing plant, and one retail outlet — a Nevada

gambling organization."

On the other hand more than 4 million head of Angus-type cattle will be identified visually for the CAB Program in 1994.

Fourth, get the facts about carcass EPDs and be able to explain what they are, and what they mean to your customers. What's the difference in a bull with a .0 marbling EPD and one with +.30? If you don't know, read pages 40 and 41 in the March 1994 *Angus Journal*. Marbling EPDs are virtually a monopoly of Angus. There probably aren't a dozen bulls in

all other breeds with any kind of carcass EPDs. There are hundreds of Angus bulls with carcass EPDs listed in the most recent Angus Sire Evaluation Report, and thousands of bulls available with carcass EPDs.

The American Angus Association has a strong national advertising program. During the first six months of the 1994 fiscal year the national Angus advertising generated 7,633 requests for the booklets, "Your Key to Accurate Bull Selection" and "Angus Advantages." That's 1,250 more than last year. In the past three years some 27,000 requests were generated and filled through the American Angus Association's national advertising program.

Despite all this information some customers will still need your help. Sales are often won or lost in the one-on-one exchange between Angus breeder and potential customer. A salesperson must educate, answer questions, and assure the buyer he or she is doing the right thing.

Even knowledgeable customers expect you to know at least as much if not more than they do, and be able to discuss the fine points of EPDs, Certified Angus Beef Program and carcass quality with them. Bull buying is a big decision for most commercial cattle producers. They want your help and advice. And that should also include your explanation of the benefits offered by registered Angus cattle and how they stack up in relationship to black polled cattle of other breeds.



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