

doing a better job

MERCHANDISING

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications and Public Relations

OK! You read last month's column and have decided to advertise on radio. How do you get started?

The easiest way is to pick up the telephone, call the local radio station, and tell them you have 10 yearling bulls for sale. Give them your address and telephone number and they will take it

from there. By tomorrow morning you can be on radio with basically a verbal classified advertisement.

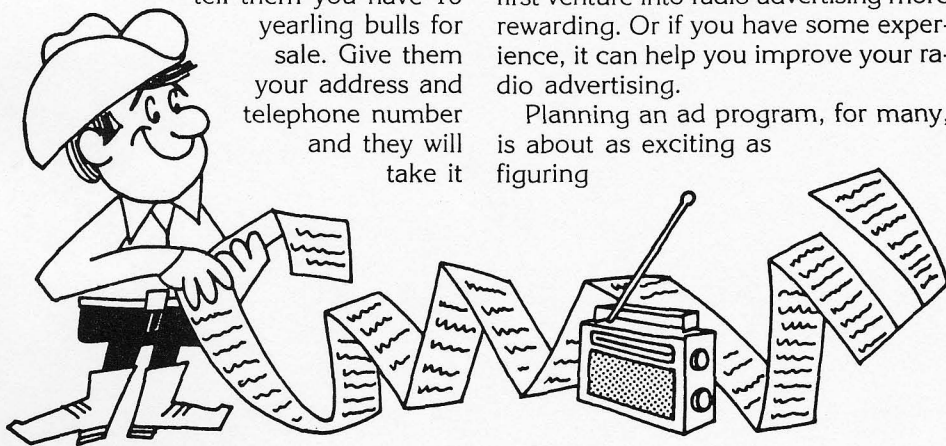
But that probably isn't the best way to go. A bit of planning can make your first venture into radio advertising more rewarding. Or if you have some experience, it can help you improve your radio advertising.

Planning an ad program, for many, is about as exciting as figuring

income tax. But it can be fun and rewarding. If you keep an Angus Journal file, go back to the October 1984 issue and review the Merchandising column. It deals with the fundamentals of planning an ad program. This will help you decide some basic questions like when and where you want to advertise, what your budget will be, and what media you can afford.

Next make a fact list of the following items:

1. The animals you want to sell in your radio spots (Example—10 yearling bulls).
2. The exact time you want to sell them (Example—first three weeks in May). Be sure you pick a time when you or someone who knows all about the cattle will be around



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all day to answer calls, to talk about your cattle and to make the sales. Radio can bring immediate results.

3. Those features that make your sale cattle valuable to a potential customer (Example—average birth weights of 79 lb., weaning weights of 575 lb. and yearling weights of 1,125 lb.).
4. The benefits that a buyer will receive from these features (Example—easy calving, earlier rebreeding which means heavier calves

next year, and heavy pay weights all around).

This kind of information is what the radio station will need and be extremely grateful for when they prepare your radio advertisements.

When you complete the fact list, set up an appointment with the advertising manager or the farm director at the radio station or stations you will use. Make it at least two weeks in advance of the date you will start advertising. With this much lead time, the advertising department will have time to write good spots that you can check for accuracy. You are in a specialized busi-

ness and checking the spots before they are aired is important.

When you get to the station provide them with a copy of your fact list along with any other necessary information. Don't ask them to include your telephone number in the ads. Hardly anyone writes down telephone numbers from the radio—there's never a pencil and paper handy. But you might want to give directions to your place, if they are simple—like 2 miles north of Smithburg on Hwy. K. And make it clear that customers are invited to stop by any time without an appointment.

Don't be intimidated. You are paying the bills, so make sure that the people understand that you want them to create radio spots that really work. Explain that you are not a writer, so the creative input must come from them. Stress that it should not be a classified ad read over the air—that you want listeners to remember your ad and respond. Emphasize that you want to sell benefits to the customer, not just the features of your cattle. The advertising people will know what you mean.

As you plan your program, make sure you run enough spots during a week's time to ensure that a high percentage of listeners will hear them—a minimum of two or three spots a day for five days in a row. If you have to cut back because of cost, then cut back from 60-second spots to 30-second spots and run for only two weeks rather than three weeks. In broadcast advertising, repetition is important so keep your daily and weekly ad frequency as high as possible.

Also make sure that you are advertising when people will be listening. You will want to be adjacent to markets, weather or other programs that beef cattle producers listen to regularly.

The great thing about this kind of radio advertising is that you will know within a week or two just how successful the program has been. You can tell by the number of people who respond to the ad by calling you, talking to you at the coffee shop or at other community events, or by coming by your place to look at cattle.

You will also total up the number of bulls sold during and immediately following the time that the ads were aired. But this is not a true measure of effective advertising. Sales are the result of a combination of factors, including your advertising, the quality of your cattle and your own sales ability. But no question about it, good radio advertising can help boost your sales. **AJ**