

“MERCHANT



"I like to think of buying cattle, particularly bulls, as an investment and not an expense. They can either increase or decrease the profitability of my herd."

—Lynn Ballagh
Burwell, Neb.

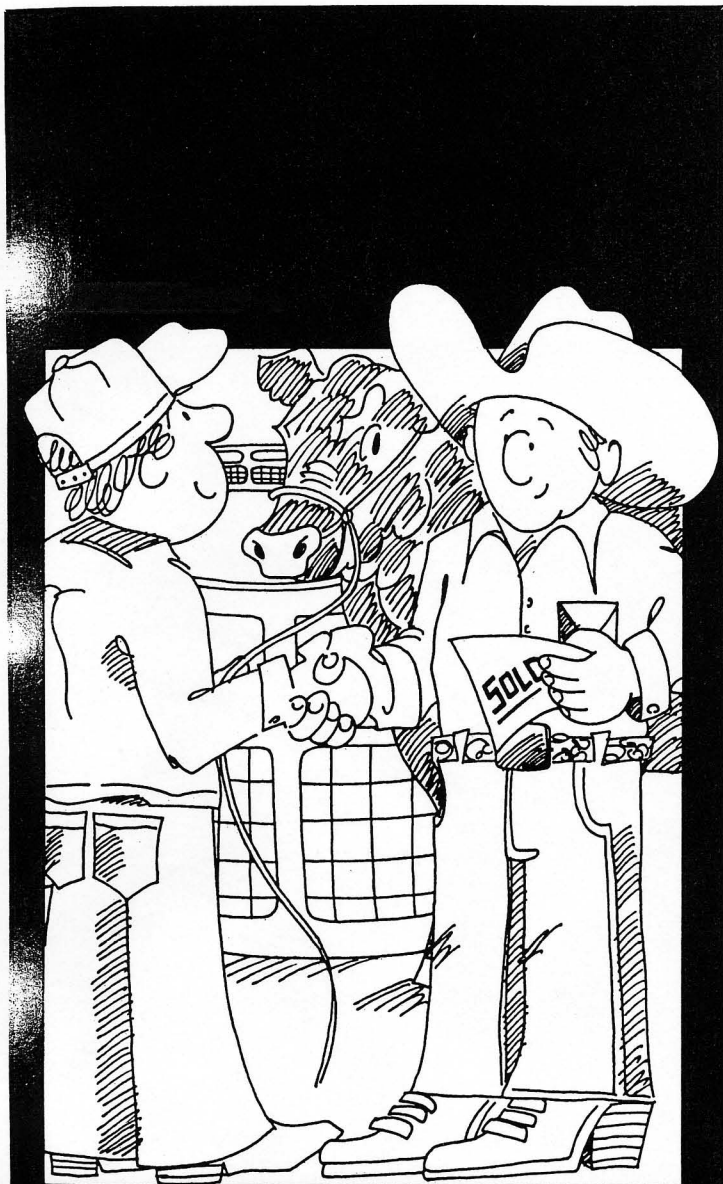


"I try to emphasize the positive things about my cattle . . . if I am not excited about my cattle, then I certainly can't expect anyone else to be."

—George A. Williams II
Jonesboro, Tenn.

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IDEAS THAT WORK FOR ANGUS BREEDERS



“Successful merchandising is like a good golf swing: It’s the follow through that helps improve the distance.”

*—Bill Roche
Galt, Calif.*

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nquestionably, there are superior Angus genetics available today—superior in whatever terms a breeder chooses. Angus breeders in this country have made boastful advances in production and management . . .

But have we sold our expertise effectively?

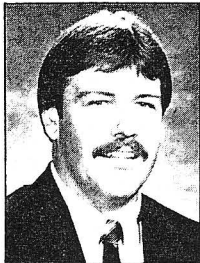
Too often, merchandising is a neglected area of the cattleman’s business. And the effects are hard to measure.

With this in mind, we zero in on merchandising—in its broadest sense—for our annual breeders’ symposium. We invited Angus breeders to share their thoughts on this important topic, and our questions went out to cattlemen with three distinctly different perspectives: 1) Purebred Angus breeders who successfully merchandise their product. They are labeled **SELLERS** in the following section. 2) Purchasers of Angus cattle—both registered and commercial—who have done their homework well. They are identified as **BUYERS**. 3) Angus enthusiasts who have had the opportunity to analyze the efforts of many Angus breeders and recognize characteristics of the successors. We refer to them as **OBSERVERS**.

We asked these folks to share with Angus Journal readers the points they deem most important in effective marketing of Angus cattle—our product. The responses vary widely, as do the people behind them. But there are several common threads . . . Know your market. Understand your customers’ needs. Be honest and straightforward. Believe in your product. Let others know about your product. Provide performance figures and facts. Advertise. Guard your reputation. Work at merchandising year-round . . . These messages come through loud and clear. They are of great import to buyers and sellers alike, and should be important to you.

We hope you pick up a few ideas from the following pages—and we invite your response, as always.

OBSERVER



Mike Darnell

Executive Vice President
Georgia Cattlemen's Assn.

"... with all the tools available to breeders today to assist them with their breeding programs, a superior merchandiser with minimal breeding ability will be able to survive the financial realities of the business better than a superior breeder with minimal merchandising ability."

The people in this business who consistently sell their cattle for a premium are the breeders who enjoy selling!

These folks are confident in their breeding program (product) and truly enjoy the merchandising aspect of the purebred business. They relish the challenge of using their talents, skills and resources to generate "added value." Too many breeders tend to forget that registered cattle are only worth what they'll bring at the sale barn unless we add value to them. That's what a sound breeding program, superior management, advertising, popular pedigrees, performance records, show ring and test station participation, etc., all translate into on payday—added value.

A breeder who believes all he has to do is breed a genetically superior herd of cattle and the world will beat a path to his door, is kidding himself. The few instances where this has happened make up some of the great folklore of the breed, but the truth is, these instances are rare indeed.

The fact is, with all the tools available to breeders today to assist them with their breeding programs (AHIR, sire summaries, etc.), a superior merchandiser with minimal breeding ability will be able to survive the financial realities of the business better than a superior breeder with minimal merchandising ability.

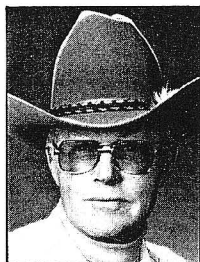
The breeders we all envy for their continued ability to sell their cattle for a premium year after year are the ones who combine sound breeding, management and merchandising programs. They devote comparable time and resources to all three areas. They aggres-

sively pursue the elusive creature referred to as "added value."

In the highly competitive environment of the purebred cattle business today, if a breeder doesn't enjoy merchandising his product, then the chances for the success of his overall program are slim.

Never forget, your cattle aren't worth what you think they are—they're worth only what other people think they are. As a result, a breeder must gear his entire program to influence the potential buyer's perception of the value of his cattle.

SELLER



Bob Adams

Leadore Angus Ranch
Leadore, Idaho

"Any success that we have had stems from the fact that we try to breed and select cattle that fit our marketing area. Then we try to feed and handle them in a really practical program so that the production and performance records are meaningful."

We are not great marketers, but we have been able to sell our cattle and stay in business for a long time. Most of our success has been due to our cattle. We know how we expect cattle to perform and we cull them if they don't perform. We try to stay away from the fads and gimmicks in the breed. So few show cattle ever turn out to offer any economic benefit to commercial ranchers that they aren't even worth talking about. Secondly, we try to handle our cattle under conditions typical of commercial cattle outfits in our area. That way, folks know that our cattle can be expected to breed and perform for them about the way they have for us.

Our most effective promotion and marketing tool is our reputation. We sell over 90 percent of our sale cattle to repeat buyers. When a new buyer comes to the ranch, he is usually with a repeat buyer or came on that fellow's recommendation. The other tool that

we use is our sale catalog. We try to let folks know our philosophy of breeding cattle and tell them everything that we know about our herd sires and A.I. sires in the catalog. We buy enough catalogs that we can use them as handouts during the year. About the only good we get out of our advertising is that people know our sale dates and we get the services of some good ringmen. I can't think of a customer who came to the sale because he read an ad.

We try to be absolutely honest in representing our cattle. Our customers are commercial cattlemen who are interested in results; we don't cater to that segment of the industry interested in promotion and puffery. We cull the bulls down to about 55 percent of those born. A breeding soundness examination is performed on those remaining. Any that don't pass don't sell. If a man has any problem with our cattle we try to make the deal right for him.

Any success that we have had stems from the fact that we try to breed and select cattle that fit our marketing area. Then we try to feed and handle them in a really practical program so that the production and performance records are meaningful. Our customers seem to be more interested in the cattle than in promotion.

SELLER



Patricia Alexander

Goshen Hole Ranch
Junction City, Ore.

"We are beginning to sell cow-calf pairs to business and professional people who own small acreages... In addition to the cattle, we provide 20 hours of free management time, plus written information..."

Merchandising cattle is certainly the most difficult part of our purebred business. I have found selling our product to be the most time-consuming part of my job. Of course, where one lives and produces cattle plays an important part in how one operates one's business. Our merchandising would be different

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if, for example, we produced cattle in that part of our state where large inventories of commercial cattle are available to support a hefty annual bull sale, as well as selling the bottom end of one's heifer crop every year.

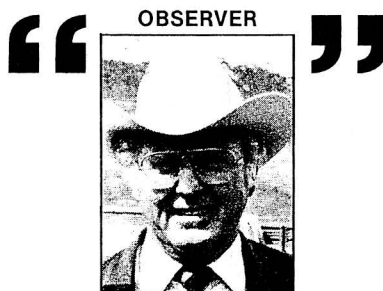
In our part of western Oregon where commercial cow numbers are small or almost nonexistent, I have found that we cannot keep large inventories in cows or calves. There's just not enough commercial cattle operations around needing registered bulls. Since this is the case, I have had to find ways to merchandise cattle other than the usual cow-calf pair routine.

Thanks to a suggestion from Bill Rishel, we may have found one solution to our problem. We are beginning to sell cow-calf pairs to business and professional people who own small acreages, say from five to 25 acres. We have sent brochures to tax accountants and real estate brokers who specialize in rural properties, inviting them to inspect our ranch and look at our product. We suggest to the property owner that we will supply a cow-calf unit or units plus a bull (if a bull is desired). In addition to the cattle, we provide 20 hours of free management time, plus written information which includes suggestions for our area concerning a medical program, feeding and proper nutrition. For any management time over 20 hours, we charge an hourly fee. We inspect the cattle and advise the new breeder as to the progress of their purchase. If the progeny fit in with our cattle, and if the new breeder wishes, we will put the progeny in our yearly production sale.

Possibly one of the most neglected areas in our business is that we do not help new breeders with their problems when they start off. It is all too easy to

say thank you and walk away after a sale is made. The problem lies in selling inexperienced breeders a product, and then new breeders find their enthusiasm quickly drains away when they don't know how to handle routine problems. To combat this, we give a buyer free management time, and then charge for extra time. The new breeder will feel supported in his or her new endeavor.

Since our business as well as our product is always changing, I find it imperative to invent new ways to merchandise our product. We must look farther than the wonderfully simple way of, "Here it is folks—take your pick."



Ken Troutt
Emmett, Idaho

“A good, honest relationship with your Association representative and other publication fieldmen in your area is a good idea.”

First, let me qualify my statements by saying a breeder must be in a state of mind to want only the best for his customer and himself.

Are you producing for the purebred seed stock market, the commercial cattleman or both? Some breeders can have the best of both worlds—work on the one that fits your program. Make sure your cattle fit the need, then start a good merchandising program. Don't

keep your program a secret.

There are many ways to promote registered Angus cattle—shows, sales, field days, exhibits at the National Western, etc. Regardless of the way you promote your cattle, always keep one thing in mind: You're still producing for the man that uses your product.

Fieldmen are a resource: If I were selling cattle with popular pedigrees and type, and were planning my own auction sale, I would first contact my regional Angus Association representative. Assisting breeders is his job. Make him feel good about a herd visit. Call him and set the day in advance so he can set aside time for your herd visit. Try to put the cattle in a place where he can see them easily. (If the cattle are to be in a wet or dusty field, hard to open-and-close-the-gate area, rough field or pasture, tell him so he may prepare accordingly.) Don't try to impress him with pedigrees or how good you think they are. Let him make up his own mind; he must like them to promote them.

A good, honest relationship with your Association representative and other publication fieldmen in your area is a good idea. Don't be hesitant about using their services and their publications to sell and promote your cattle. They are an important tool and work every day for you and other livestock breeders around the area. Don't worry about the cost. It doesn't cost. It pays. Most livestock publication fieldmen will work very closely with your area Angus representative. They sometimes travel together, talking about cattle—many times, yours. Help them say good things about you and your cattle.

Your own auction sale: Before and after your sale, treat small buyers and volume buyers equally. Don't neglect small breeders. They bid against volume buyers on sale day.

Use your delivery program as a way to get onto the customer's ranch or farm. What better invitation could you have? Share his program problems with him; let your breeding program help him.

Let your Association man, your publication—the Angus Journal—and other fieldmen promote your cattle. On sale day they can be an important tool for a successful sale.

Have a practical get-together before and after the sale. Make it the kind of gathering that makes people feel comfortable.

On sale day, let your auctioneer run a speedy, snappy sale. Use an auction-

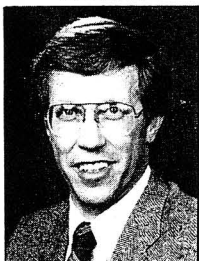
MERCHANDISING . . .

eer that can work closely with you and your situation; one who can work with the buyers that you and the publications are responsible for getting to the sale.

Sale managers are very important to a good sale and are used in most cases. Like an auctioneer, they are a tool to use on your behalf; make them work for you. When you pay the bill, they should be working for you, not themselves. Most will work for your best interest because they want your sale next year.

One final comment: Angus cattle are here to stay. Be a breeder and merchandiser worthy of this great breed.

“ SELLER ”



Gary Kendall
Kendall Angus Ranch
Pottlatch, Idaho

“In short, good merchandising takes continued adjustments and the ability to take advantage of every means of marketing your cattle, based on their merit.”

First, we try to raise an acceptable product to merchandise—one that is acceptable to us in performance, pedigree and type. It is very hard to convince someone else that your product is good if you are not first satisfied. Therefore, we try to find a market for our particular type of cattle.

Even within an operation such as ours, promotion and advertising must fit the animals being offered for sale. If it's a “big time” animal, hit the national and regional advertising. If, instead, an animal is of range-bull caliber, advertise in the local and area classified sections.

We have been successful in merchandising a limited number of bulls late in the “buying season.” I don't believe this approach would work for a volume of bulls in our area, but it has been a viable alternative for us. As our yearling bulls are younger, we tend to

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advertise them in the local classified ads around May, which is turnout time. Most ads for bulls and sales run in February, March and April, and since we seem to be the only ones advertising in May, we have a captive audience. Buyers include commercial cattlemen that either have had a bull go bad, or simply haven't picked one up until the last minute.

A few basics in paperwork are important to us, too. I always write thank-you's to our cattle buyers. We have a card file on buyers which includes a record of all purchases, the dates and amounts. This information on past purchases helps us to better tell what a customer will want. The same file also serves as a mailing list which we use to acquaint customers with our consignments to association sales.

Being active in area breed organizations also pays off. This puts you in contact with a great number of people that have a common interest—Angus cattle.

In short, good merchandising takes continued adjustments and the ability to take advantage of every means of

marketing your cattle, based on their merit.

“**SELLER**”

Don Currie
Glen Islay Farms
Nottawa, Ont.

“We set our goals high, but our business depends on selling a lot of cattle between \$1,000 and \$3,000 . . . The local market has always been our top priority . . .”

Our approach to merchandising is primarily to identify our market and the clientele that we can service and satisfy regularly. Our next concern is to identify ourselves within that market, through regular advertising in our national breed publication, special local advertising and attendance at as many Angus-related activities as possible. We set our goals high, and are ready to sell cattle for five- or six-digit figures at any time, but our business depends on selling a lot of cattle between \$1,000 and \$3,000.

Our part of the country does not

have a particularly strong commercial market for bulls and we are only able to sell about 30 percent of our bull crop. To attract this market, we have one of only two privately owned official bull performance-testing stations in Ontario. We advertise these bulls locally in weekly papers in the spring months. Over half of our bulls are sold to repeat customers.

We have had the most success merchandising our females. We have selected for, and established a reputation for functional, problem-free cattle that respond to the needs of the commercial industry consistently. Except for one or two calves, we have not exhibited our cattle at major shows for 10 years; however, we are fortunate that cattle we have sold have won numerous major championships during this time, and we have used these wins to our advantage in our print advertising. When cattle we have sold have been resold for many times their original purchase price, we have used the results of these examples in promotion.

The local market has always been our top priority, and while we have sold Angus to eight provinces, six states and two other countries, the most dependable market is our home province. In

MERCHANDISING . . .

the first production sale in 1982, bidders were from three states and four provinces, but all 70 head were purchased by Ontario buyers.

Follow-up and making sure the cattle meet our customers' expectations is most important to us because our program depends on repeat customers, not a new crop of buyers every year. Traveling as much as possible to gather knowledge about what is happening in the breed and with our own herd, and to enjoy the friendship of established and new breeders alike is important to us.

In summary, we have tried to develop a viable local market and expand from it. We have worked hard at understanding and evaluating the resources of the breed, and using the genetics and selection criteria available that best suits the needs of our customers. We have capitalized on and promoted the success of our customers in the show ring and their resultant sales. We have promoted and offered a reputable product, and ensured that it lives up to its name. We have learned that there are several markets and clientele within the breed, and merchandising is a natural and necessary part of any successful operation.



Sumner Mapes
4-M Angus
Pella, Iowa

“Nothing disappoints me more than to get a catalog from a good production outfit and find that the only numbers included are lot numbers, sires, dams, and the fact that great Aunt Judy brought \$4,000 in another breeder’s sale three years ago!”

Time and financial pressures prevent me from attending sales on a regular basis. When I buy, I need to have all possible information to be sure of get-

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ting the most for my dollar. The Angus Journal is my major source of information.

Since I'm very production-oriented, the first factor that catches my eye in an ad is whether the breeder is involved in production testing, and whether he's not afraid to publish his cattle's breeding values. I also like to see what he is using and has used for herd sires. If his ad checks out in these areas, I order his sale catalog.

The breeder's catalog is the true test. Is he willing to publish **all** the numbers on his sale cattle, or are certain ratios conveniently left out? Maybe there are no ratios at all. Nothing disappoints me more than to get a catalog from a good production outfit and find that the only numbers included are lot numbers, sires, dams, and the fact that great Aunt Judy brought \$4,000 in another breeder's sale three years ago! This, to me, causes the credibility of the offering to go down. If the breeding behind the offering looks good, I will go to the effort of contacting the breeder or the American Angus Assn. office for more information.

Since I don't get to many sales, I depend on the Association staff in St. Joseph and the regional managers for help in clarifying production records and for actual visual appraisal of the animals. I would highly recommend getting personally acquainted with John Crouch, director of performance programs. Get personally acquainted with your regional manager and as many other regional managers as you can. They are good people, and they are there to help **you**. Don't be afraid to spend a little money with Ma Bell. I spent \$63.38 on calls concerning a sale offering; no numbers were listed in the catalog. This sale netted for me three fine production cows with calves at side at a fair price. The round-trip air fare to the sale would have cost \$720.

It is important to talk to a breeder about his cattle. Pin him down if there are gray areas in his catalog. Remember, sometimes it's the sale manager and not the breeder who is withholding the information you need.

In summary, I will not buy without satisfactory breeding value ratios; no numbers, no sale. The Association staff is highly qualified and in my experience are very willing to help you. Use them.

The phone can be your most economical tool. To quote Jim Gosey, "there are no free lunches in the cattle business." But the phone comes as close as anything I've found.

“ “ BUYER ” ”



Clayton Adair
Girard, Kan.

“And if you have three generations of cattle that have produced good numbers, you really should be advertising because the cattle industry is looking for you.”

Words do not have meaning. People have meaning. When I read an ad filled with words like “superior, super, tremendous, extreme and great,” I realize that anyone can make these words just

MERCHANDISING . . .

by holding their mouths in a certain way, putting their tongue in the right place and blowing just a little bit. Such words have different meaning to different people and are subject to interpretation. **Numbers** make me stop, read, think and compare. Give me an ad filled with numbers that I consider reliable if you want my attention. This is the only thing that I can relate to my own cattle.

I probably should not personalize these comments, but I must tell you that a recent ad really caught my attention and captivated my thoughts for days. The advertiser reported 71 steers from 2- and 3-year-old heifers going to market. He gave their age, grade, cost of gain and their profit. He further compared these statistics with other pens of crossbred cattle. This was the most meaningful ad I have seen. I immediately wanted to see his cattle. I want to talk with him. I will visit him on the very first opportunity. I often reread this ad.

Anyone wanting to sell me cattle must first enroll on AHIR, breed some cattle that can put some good numbers on the board, and then put these numbers in their ad. The ad won't need a

good position in the Journal, I will find it. When I find it, I will spend some time with it. And if you have three generations of cattle that have produced good numbers, you really should be advertising because the cattle industry is looking for you.

“ SELLER ”



Doug Hoff
Scotch Cap Angus
Bison, S.D.

“No amount of good will or service can keep a consumer coming back or get him to advertise for you if the product is faulty.”

Our advertising budget is a modest one, so we can't rely on bringing in new customers for our cattle each year.

Therefore, we must depend on repeat customers and our neighbors to buy the bulk of our cattle and to do our advertising for us. We try to accomplish this with the following three-part program:

Part one consists of a quality product developed with the needs of our commercial buyers as our priority. No amount of good will or service can keep a consumer coming back or get him to advertise for you if the product is faulty.

The second ingredient in our merchandising program is good will. Each of our customers is treated like what they are to us, a special friend. Our greatest satisfaction in raising cattle isn't the amount of money generated, but the number of new friends and satisfied customers created. Part of our good will program involves loaning bulls to ranchers who are financially stressed. With today's economy the way it is, there are all too many cattlemen who could use a "helping hand."

The third part of our program, service, is closely related to the second. If a customer is considered a good friend, the service you provide will naturally be better. We like to contact our customers and ask how our cattle are perform-

ing for them. If one of our bulls dies or is injured during the first year of service, we loan the buyer a bull to use for the remainder of that breeding season. We also assist our customers with marketing when possible; give advice on breeding programs and genetics; help with sales; have 4-H field days; and generally do whatever we can to let them know that they're appreciated and that we'd like to be of assistance in any way possible.

The second phase of marketing is people. Angus buyers do business with Angus breeders they like and trust. A successful Angus transaction is one that works for both the buyer and the seller. Too many Angus breeders have adopted a "buyer beware" philosophy that just doesn't work. Service after a sale is just as important as making the sale. Call and visit your customers and see how your Angus product works for them. This level of Angus service will pay significant dividends.

Often times Angus breeders expect a promotional program to compensate for a poor product or for inadequate

preparation. It rarely works. Without a quality product and a high level of service, the sales you make are apt to be one-time customers. Building a satisfied and loyal customer base should be the ultimate goal of all marketing programs.

Promotion requires several important steps. First identify the positive things that can be said about your Angus product. Then plan a program to convey these facts to your potential customers. Advertising, sale catalogs, personal contacts, and direct mailings are all effective segments of a total promotion program. Pages could be writ-



Tom Burke

American Angus Hall of Fame
Smithville, Mo.

"All too often in the Angus business, breeders forget the most important first step—market research . . . they design and produce a product and then begin searching for someone to buy it."

There are no easy answers to difficult questions. Human nature forces Angus breeders to continually search for a "quick fix" to the marketing problems, but there really is none!

Effective marketing programs have several important things in common. They always combine a quality product, service-oriented people, and a first-class promotion program. Those three things sound simple enough, but each involves careful planning and skillful execution.

Producing a quality product is the goal of any business, Angus or otherwise. All too often in the Angus business, breeders forget the most important first step—market research. Rather than evaluating their potential market area and designing a product to meet the needs of their potential customers, they design and produce a product and then begin searching for someone to buy it. We at the American Angus Hall of Fame are always happy to help Angus breeders in this type of distress, but we and they could both be more effective if they had done the proper planning before they produced the product.

ten about the pros and cons and the do's and don'ts of each. Our firm is totally dedicated to assisting Angus breeders with planning and executing this segment of their total marketing program, but our effectiveness is limited by the product that has been produced, and the preparation that has been done before we are contacted.

SELLER



James Bush
Bush Angus
Britton, S.D.

"We try to inform in a straightforward manner, including as much performance information as possible, so the reader may begin to form a factual view of our herd."

Our merchandising program is based upon the concept that product promotion should be accurate and complete. This idea is represented in our advertising, sale catalog, and personal visits. Combined, these three areas should never mislead a potential customer into expecting more than you really have to sell. This general approach to selling cattle instills, in the customer, a feeling of confidence in our program.

Since advertising is space purchased to inform the reader, we use it exactly for that purpose. We try to inform in a straightforward manner, including as much performance information as possible, so the reader may begin to form a factual view of our herd. We don't rely on the common and often used "cowboy phrases" that are characterized by a lack of essential information.

Our annual sale catalog carries the major load of conveying our thoughts, goals and accomplishments to our customers. We attempt, by means of words and numbers, to illustrate the progress made in the previous year. We include all the performance information available, along with complete dam records for each sale lot. This is done in a way that can be read quickly and is easy to understand. We also include a chart depicting how each sire

MERCHANDISING . . .

group ranked within our herd. Feedback from our customers indicate that they do appreciate this type of catalog, full of complete information to aid them in the selection process.

Personal contacts are a vital link in our merchandising scheme. Seventy-five percent of the bulls we sell are purchased by repeat customers. From them, we derive a sense of direction, good or bad! Their complete satisfaction with our product is conveyed to them as a necessary part of our program. This is accomplished by means of a good guarantee, free delivery, and a healthy, sound product.

The easiest way to sell cattle is to sell them the way you would like to buy them. In our case, it is producing a good product, and promoting it accurately and completely.

“ “ BUYER ” ”



Keith Vander Velde
American Breeders Service
DeForest, Wis.

“Don't underestimate the value of a letter or phone call. Remember, no one has ever bought a bull they didn't know existed.”

In finding and buying Angus bulls for ABS, it is important that Angus breeders realize the needs of companies like ABS. As the world's largest supplier of semen, our needs are varied and we need a variety of bulls. To get this variety we do not go to the same herds consistently. Individual herds often have different objectives and we try to identify the herds that excel in primary objectives.

The best way to establish communication with ABS is by notifying the representative in the area. Our representative then notifies me of any bulls that look exciting that we should consider. On all Angus I always have three requests: a performance pedigree; a copy of AHIR working sheet for weaning and yearling weight; and pictures of the bull and his dam. If the herd is not on AHIR

and cannot produce the worksheets, I'm not interested. There are so many herds that are on AHIR, and I can better wait for a bull from a herd that believes in breed improvement and is willing to record the differences they find in individuals. The strength of the Angus breed today rests with Sire Evaluation Reports and the improvements made in the Angus breed through their use. I want to work with the herds that have these same objectives in mind. A performance pedigree today takes the place of hours of travel looking at relatives of a bull and gives me the production, usage and superiority of the sire and the dam.

Many breeders today fail to realize that they all play a large part in the selection process. Herds of less than 25 cows will always be a valuable source of bulls for ABS and the Angus industry. There are two reasons for this happening: 1) There are large numbers of small breeders (over 60 percent of all Angus breeders have less than 25 cows). 2) Small herds don't have "herd bull syndrome" and will use the best bulls they can get through A.I.

I like looking at good bulls regardless of herd size. It is important that small herds get the information to ABS representatives so we can evaluate the bulls they have to offer. Often small herds rely on central tests to gain exposure, but fail to recognize the importance of calling attention to their cattle. Don't underestimate the value of a letter or phone call. Remember, no one has ever bought a bull they didn't know existed.

Herds that have been using good bulls in their herds and have a cow herd out of bulls that excel in growth rate (sire EPD for yearling weight above 50 lb.) will find ABS more interested in their bull. But remember the sire's EPD must be above 65 lb. to get our attention today. When we are looking at a sire to specialize in calving ease or maternal value, we want progeny data to confirm it. This is why most high maternal sires are usually 7 or 8 years old before they are discovered.

I do wish more Angus breeders would respond when they receive the bull-owner's copy of the new Sire Evaluation Report information. This usually precedes the publishing of the report in the Angus Journal by several weeks. Knowing how bulls have performed in this report allows ABS to add some of these outstanding new sires to our sire lineup. These proven bulls add more depth to our program and make ABS

a better source for Angus semen.

“ “ SELLER ” ”



Brett Smith
Triple B Farm
Farmington, Ark.

“Word of mouth and previous buyers have been our best methods of marketing . . . the Angus business is a 'people business' . . .”

At Triple B Farm, the marketing of our product is the success of our business. Although we have a fairly small herd of cows, I have always insisted on QUALITY, and most people in Arkansas, as well as our local area, know that this is our standard and expect nothing less. Word of mouth and previous buyers have been our best methods of marketing.

I feel that an important aspect of our own personal marketing is to attend as many Angus shows, meetings and sales as possible. This is where we come into contact with potential customers, as well as making new friends. In showing other farms and ranches that you are interested in their programs and willing to attend their sales, you are promoting your own herd as well. I sincerely believe that the Angus business is a "people business" and the contacts that you make at these events may bring dividends on down the line. We also support our local, state and national junior programs. I feel these juniors must be kept encouraged, excited and involved in Angus cattle, as they are the future of the Angus business.

We promote our cattle at county, district and state shows. In advertising our cattle in this fashion, we are visible to our prospective customers, whether it be a commercial breeder looking for a bull, a family looking for a show heifer for their child, or another Angus breeder interested in making a purchase of seed stock. Our cattle have always been well accepted at these events, and we do our utmost to present them at their best. Our cattle are kept in top physical condition and we market those that are

uniform and consisting of excellent health, proper fleshing, and eye appeal. In producing a predictable, marketable offspring, the dam must have an outstanding mothering ability, abundant milk, and consistently breed back on schedule. Our criteria are strict, but necessary for success.

We advertise in our local and state cattle publications, as well as in the Angus Journal. Another very important marketing tool—and one that is often overlooked by breeders—includes local county agents and the agricultural departments at state colleges or universities. Get to know them and show them your program. When thoroughly informed of what type cattle you have, and how your program is run, they can certainly aid in being an effective “salesman” by talking up your product and sending customers your way.

Of course, we have had the good fortune to join forces with Belle Point Ranch in their annual spring sale. Through their promotion of quality cattle and their sterling reputation in the Angus business, we have been fortunate in sharing in sale success. When our cattle are sold, we back them with a guarantee. It is simply the same as the one used by Wal-Mart Stores Inc.: “Your satisfaction guaranteed, or your money back.” This indeed lets our buyers know that we are sincere in our desire to please them.

I feel then, that Triple B Farms’ success lies in being consistent with a product that is of quality and has a popular pedigree, and a customer that is totally satisfied.

cows, cows and calves, heifers or bulls. Then I separate these from the rest of the herd. I clean them up and put in a new ear tag. This makes the cows pleasing to the eye and gives them a newness look—and this will give me a slight psychological advantage.

Now my cattle are ready to be sold, but to whom do I sell them? I find several effective places that allow me to locate prospective buyers. First, I use the Angus Journal. Obviously, the Journal goes to every Angus breeder in the country. It is important for image building and makes people think of me or Williams Angus when they

want to buy cattle. Most of the high priced cattle I have sold are either directly or indirectly influenced by the Angus Journal ads.

The second means I use for advertising are the local newspapers and local trade magazines. This is especially important in my area for commercial bull buyers. In this area, there are many part-time farmers. The local papers are about the only means these people use when they are looking for cattle to buy, especially when they are looking for young registered bulls. On occasion I have used personal letters and fliers to hand out or place on cars at other auc-



George A. Williams II
George A. Williams Angus Farm
Jonesboro, Tenn.

“I try to emphasize the positive things about my cattle . . . if I am not excited about my cattle, then I certainly can’t expect anyone else to be.”

In selling Angus cattle, I first decide on what I want to sell, that is, bred

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tions, especially when I have held a production sale. However, I do not use this method on a regular basis, primarily because I have had no real means to measure feedback.

Another important tool I use for merchandising cattle is our state bull test station. This is as close to an unbiased test as we have at the present time. I realize that unless I have one of the top bulls in the sale, it is hard to make money here. However, there are many intangibles here that pay dividends later on. For instance, my cattle and

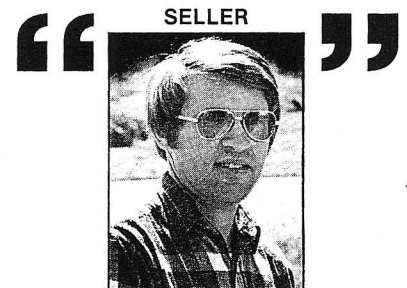
my farm get a lot of exposure and name recognition. You can bet I refer to our bulls' records at the test station when I am trying to sell commercial bulls at home. I will often show a prospective buyer the sale catalog which includes my bulls' weights, and also tell them the average price these bulls bring. I often use this as a starting price on my bulls at home.

I keep AHIR records on all of my cows. I feel this is very important. Most high priced cows that I have sold have been cows with higher ratios. As a routine, I usually do not mention records to a buyer unless he asks for them.

Most will not ask, but all established breeders buying cattle from me will ask to see my records.

Now after the above things have been completed, the real challenge begins. When a prospective buyer arrives at my farm, I must sell him cattle. I first try to put the buyer at ease and make him feel welcome. Next, I see what he is interested in buying—cows, bulls or heifers. Once I have established what he wants to buy, I show him what I have that may fit his bill. Next and very importantly, I show the buyer how he can make money from buying my cattle. Finally and most importantly, I am absolutely honest with the buyer and try to give him his money's worth.

I try to emphasize the positive things about my cattle. I never criticize my competitors or their cattle. Instead, I try to brag about them and Angus cattle in general. It certainly won't hurt you, and this will usually build credibility. I try to be enthusiastic and keep a positive mental attitude. I always try to remember that if I am not excited about my cattle, then I certainly can't expect anyone else to be. I always try to remember that I do not fear failure, but I only think of it as a game that I must play to win.



Roger Jauer
Jauer Angus Farm
Hinton, Iowa

"It all boils down to advertising our breeding program as it is, and not overstating or exaggerating in any way to lure customers to our herds and then have our cattle not perform up to their expectations."

I became totally involved with the performance movement in 1969 and have totally committed myself to that cause. I focus all my advertising around a **breeding program concept**, and I haven't deviated my style and approach to performance in my advertising since 1969.

Our commercial cattle business

trade makes up 90 percent of our sales, and so we concentrate our advertising around earning as much of the commercial trade in our area as possible. Credibility is very important to Jauer Angus Farm, and so we try to incorporate its importance into our advertising. An advertising program must be built around continuity.

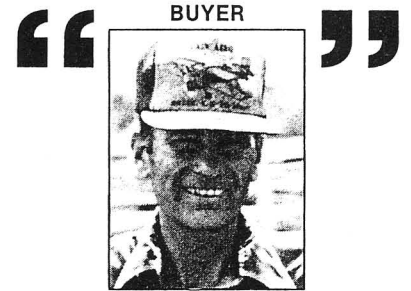
I get a little tired of picking up publication after publication with every ad looking the same as the last—every ad has four to six beautiful pictures with captions under them that say almost exactly the same thing as the previous ad, but with no objective type of breeding program to substantiate what is said. Publications are full of ads I call “fence straddlers” that won’t commit their advertising to either the performance business approach or the visual subjective approach; they end up saying nothing.

An ad need **not** be flashy to convey a message. I want an ad to say something **concrete**. I want an ad that is built around documented facts and figures. I want an ad that comes right to the point and doesn’t beat around the bush.

We make no bones about it that our commercial cattle trade is our bread and butter. At the present time, we try

to convey to readers that our performance breeding program will help him squeak out a profit in these tough survival times. Our advertising emphasizes the importance of production records, maternal breeding values, fleshing qualities and fertility and scrotal measurements in our female and bull sales programs. It all boils down to advertising our breeding program as it is, and not overstating or exaggerating in any way to lure customers to our herds and then have our cattle not perform up to their expectations.

When we make a sale, we always follow up with a hand-written thank you—this is a must. We also follow up with telephone calls from time to time to see if our cattle are performing satisfactorily. At certain times of the year, personal visits are made to our customers’ farms or ranches; this shows our customers we care that our breeding stock performs as anticipated. We hope to make more personal contacts in the future since this is the best way to show our customers we care and that we want to **earn** their business in the future. What I’m trying to say is that our advertising program is only a **reflection** of what in reality we and our cattle truly are.



BUYER
Ron Jennings
Hyland Angus Ranch Inc.
Miller, S.D.

“Performance records, both in herd and especially in national sire evaluation programs, are a must.”

At Hyland Angus Ranch, we do not purchase a lot of cattle. However, we do buy a considerable amount of semen for our A.I. program, as well as some bulls for clean-up use. *(The Hyland Angus A.I. program has included as many as 10,000 cows in a year.)*

Two things stand out for our decisions. Performance records, both in herd and especially in national sire evaluation programs, are a must. We wouldn’t consider a sire without them.

Secondly, the reputation, advice, and past experience with the breeder are of

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equal importance. We are just not anxious to enter into dealings with breeders whose past performances leave any doubt in our minds.

SELLER



Dave Miller
Sun Up Angus
Smithville, Mo.

"Many times we let valuable opportunities pass completely unnoticed, unrecognized and unused . . . you never know how your next sale will be made."

The merchandising part of the Angus business is the most important part of the Angus breeder's operation, but usually is the most neglected as well as the least understood. Word of mouth is an extremely valuable part of any merchandising program. We also try to find out what brought the prospective buyer to our farm.

Many times we let valuable opportunities pass completely unnoticed, unrecognized and unused.

Such an incident which comes to mind here at Sun Up happened during the last American Royal. We were trying to get everything done that should have been done yesterday, when the phone rang and a man from one of our northern states identified himself. He said he was with a group of FFA students and members of a livestock judging team. They were down for the American Royal livestock show and had some extra time on their hands which they wanted to utilize by looking at some good Angus—unfitted, but with known performance. They had seen the Angus Journal report on Sun Up Megaforce, breaker of three world records, and a few of them wished to come out.

The idea evidently grew. Imagine our surprise when at the appointed time three Greyhound buses, fully loaded, rolled up with more people than we had at our last sale. This would have been the perfect base for a good picture and

news article, but because we were surprised and not tuned in on the right channel, it did not occur to us to take any pictures, have them register or use this windfall to our advantage, except that a good time was had by all.

Luckily, "opportunity" does knock more than once, even though we may never hear it. As I was entering an area nursing home, I saw an old man in a wheelchair who had lost both legs. He was alone on the lawn enjoying the nice weather. He looked rather depressed, so I stopped to visit. He was pleased to visit with anyone, even to discuss cattle. On leaving, I jokingly remarked that if he ever needed a bull, we had some good ones with known performance. He joked back that he was as likely to need a good bull as he was to need a good pair of shoes.

However, my brief visit (five minutes with an old man in a wheelchair), sold two bulls at a good price. My new friend had recommended Sun Up bulls to another friend who visited him.

The moral is, you never know how your next sale will be made.

BUYER



Virg Huseman
Hip Pocket Inc.
Ellsworth, Kan.

"Bloodlines, numbers and advertising are all extremely important, but I suspect in the final analysis most commercial producers like to buy their bulls from a breeder they know, trust and like."

I use both Angus and Hereford bulls in my commercial cow-calf operation in central Kansas. I rely heavily on sire summary data. I look for sires with low EPDs for birth weight and high maternal breeding value . . . and after that, as much weaning and yearling weight as possible.

I like to be provided with every possible measure of performance data when selecting bulls. Yearling weight, fertility score and scrotal circumference, etc., are all important to me. The more numbers the better! I'm more likely to

attend a sale where this information is available.

The Angus Journal and the Kansas Angus News are both read carefully from cover to cover. A Hereford breeder provides me with a complimentary subscription to the Hereford Journal which is a great promotional idea.

Bloodlines, numbers and advertising are all extremely important, but I suspect in the final analysis most commercial producers like to buy their bulls from a breeder they know, trust and like. After all, only the breeder can tell me what I really want to know about a bull . . . things like: Can his mamma save a calf in an ice storm?

SELLER



Glen Klippenstein
Glenkirk Farms
Maysville, Mo.

"Merchandising really is nothing more than producing and/or having a product that fits the needs of a potential user or buyer. And very often they are our neighbors."

The business of seed stock production starts with engineering a product based on the needs of an industry—producing that product in such a fashion that if you sell it for what it is worth it can keep you in business.

The weakest link in the chain is merchandising. There are some great engineers of purebred livestock. There are even many more great producers of livestock. They understand the efficiencies, they understand livestock. But far too few understand the seeming complexity of their neighbor who might have a need for their product. Merchandising really is nothing more than producing and/or having a product that fits the needs of a potential user or buyer. And very often they are our neighbors. In fact most successful outfits that stay in business over a period of time have built their business—at least the beginnings, the rudiments—by selling to their neighbors. So, we must identify the needs of those potential customers

or clients; then engineer for those needs; and produce in such a way that we can stay in business, and customers can afford that product. Only fools begin to produce a product and then later look for a buyer. Good businessmen identify a need, produce for that need, and budget their inputs so that there is a profit after the selling.

There are many things that go into merchandising. I think it helps to be a good educator, meaning that you must have a very good grasp of the business of livestock production, and as good a grasp of the business of genetics. After all, that is our business.

I think you also have to be a good stimulator. If you are not proud, pleased and educated in a heads-up, realistic way about your own product, it's difficult to sell it. One of the great incentives of having a genuinely useful, honest, predictable, quality-controlled, genetically-engineered critter is that you can sell it with conviction. There's nothing that rubs off more than enthusiasm and depth of conviction . . . unless it's pessimism. Those that give excuses initially probably turn off more sales than through any other means.

I think it's also useful to understand that sometimes our customers may not be as interested in our product as we are, just as we may not be as interested in computers as is a computer engineer and/or salesperson. Therefore, we have to understand people, their motives, things that turn them on and things that turn them off. We have to be an observer of people and human nature, be sensitive, listen and then understand. Then we must go ahead and find a way—through the rational, emotional, ego, competitive forces or whatever—to allow that person the greatest opportunity to buy a product that he or she may need. After all, I don't think any business in the world is good enough that people will actually beat a path to your door if you produce more than just a few.

Over the years, I think the greatest merchandisers are those with conviction, a policy and a depth of sincerity and integrity that gives them a track record that other people either want to emulate or be part of. In all probability, very few short-cut artists last. The reason is because people need to believe in the people from whom they purchase a product.

One thing we need to be very careful about in merchandising our product is that we don't judge ourselves by somebody else. We are who we are. Our

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goals are sometimes very different from others, as are our expectations and our inputs, and I think some of the great frustrations arise from people wanting to be someone other than who they are. With that, you don't sell as well.

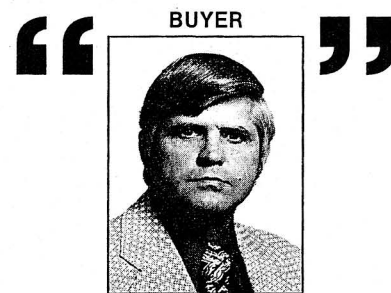
Also, this business of raising cattle—or anything else, really—should be made a joy. That joy is the reason many people—especially those with other interests than agriculture—come into our business. We need to allow it and help foster it. Often, little things

like visiting with people at sales, shows, get-togethers or annual meetings are important. People there for the first time, or those who still know very few people and are nervous and uncomfortable, are the people we need to take time with. We need to make them feel comfortable, listen to what they have to say, give them a feeling of confidence and of well-being. Many times they can become our best customers, simply because we made them feel like they were needed, wanted, part of it.

Lots of times just plain, simple compliments to somebody who may have come out of the show ring in 10th

place with an animal that you liked can do so much good. A little note after someone's sale, congratulating them on the sale or something that impressed you, may be important. Little things really help because all of us thrive on encouragement and people noticing such little things. These things build rapport and friendships and customers and clients.

We are in an added-value business. Our cattle are worth no more than they are downtown or wherever. The value added to that basic price is what we make those cattle worth through our own initiatives, through our merchandising power, and through the extra genetic power that we demonstrate in the cattle we sell.



Ron Davis
Three Bar D Ranch
Newberry, Fla.

“Purchases were made from ranches within our vicinity in order to eliminate adverse effects due to relocation.”

The Three Bar D Ranch (located in Newberry, 15 miles from Gainesville) began its purebred Angus operation Sept. 12, 1983, with the purchase of 15 cows and 14 calves at side from the Stardust Ranch near Micanopy, Fla. Purchases were made from ranches within our vicinity in order to eliminate adverse effects due to relocation. The ranch was previously a commercial operation which had grown from 27 cows in 1973 to 225 cows in 1983.

We have joined the American Angus Assn. and the Florida Beef Cattle Improvement Assn., and we maintain animal performance records with AHIR. I became an avid reader of the Angus Journal and have found it to be my primary source of information with regard to performance data and trends within the industry.

The goals for the Three Bar D Ranch are: 1) develop a 250-head Angus cow herd within a five-year period; 2) become one of the recognized producers

of high-performance animals within our region; and 3) become a ranch with the reputation that sells only high-quality animals that perform in accordance with the performance data presented to the purchaser.

To attain these goals, we selected the Stardust Ranch and Graham Angus Farm at Albany, Ga., as our major sources of seed stock. Since then we have endeavored to select animals based on their performance data rather than just appearance. As a result, approximately 10 percent of the mature cows within our herd are Pathfinders. We culled approximately 25 percent of the mature cows purchased within the first year of operation in order to retain only high-performing cows. We fully realize that the attainment of goal number 3 will be the most rewarding and will come only after many years as a producer of quality Angus cattle.

In addition to educating ourselves through reading, we felt a great deal could be achieved by visiting other Angus producers. Consequently, we visited 10 Angus farms in Florida, Alabama, Missouri, Iowa and Illinois last summer. Following our five-state visit, we began a massive program of artificial insemination using herd sires

with proven records of high maternal traits. Weaning and yearling weights are currently being looked at in a secondary manner, but are considered to be extremely important in our program. We feel that weight and size will be achieved if proper consideration is given to maternal characteristics.



Bill Borrer
Tehama Angus Ranch
Gerber, Calif.

"I must identify the needs of my potential customers and continually adjust my breeding and development program to fulfill those needs."

Merchandising for me means building a total program which will garner

the respect of my potential customers. I must identify their needs and continually adjust my breeding and development program to fulfill those needs.

My main merchandising effort centers around an annual on-ranch sale. I publish an informative catalog with complete, accurate, and meaningful performance records. I go to some length explaining my philosophy of breeding cattle and the importance of using performance data to achieve my goals.

I do everything possible to prepare the cattle (health, fertility tests, and guarantees) to ensure complete customer satisfaction. If any problems do develop—the customer is king.

I have been active in BCIA work, local and state cattlemen's associations, and breed association activities. This is a great help in demonstrating my commitment to helping create a better beef industry.

I consign to the leading bull test in our area (Cal Poly) so my customers can evaluate my program in competition with other programs.

Developing customer confidence is the key to successful merchandising; they must have confidence in me, my program, and the cattle being offered.

MERCHANDISING . . .

OBSERVER



Bill Roche
Galt, Calif.

“Successful merchandising is like a good golf swing: It’s the follow through that helps improve the distance.”

Successful merchandising is like a good golf swing: It’s the follow through that helps improve the distance.

Many trade tools properly used contribute to a successful program. A well planned yearly advertising budget is necessary, and repetition is the key.

There are several sources of help in formulating an advertising program—staff members of a good breed or livestock publication, ad agencies, and sales management firms are among such sources.

The most successful herd sales programs that come to mind use the above tools, but they have one more great ingredient—the “follow through.” They have a good breeding program, their advertising is adequate, and they wisely choose the sales to which they consign . . . but they don’t stop there.

Different tactics are used in the “follow through.” One of the most effective ones used is personal delivery of cattle from a sale. It puts the seller on the buyer’s ranch and gives him a first-hand knowledge of the buyer’s operation for future reference. It’s a great way to build repeat customers.

I know one well-known rancher who personally delivers bulls to buyers who attend his very successful annual sale. If he cannot make a complete delivery trip, he has his hired man drive part way to the buyer’s ranch and he flies or drives to meet the truck to complete the delivery on the ranch. The success of his sales and list of repeat customers attest to personal delivery effectiveness.

Another important tool used by several producers is the “follow through” herd visit. Two or three well planned

trips, generally in the summer months, can cover several stops at former buyers’ and new prospects’ establishments. The seller that shows a first-hand interest in his buyers’ programs, and in the performance of the animals he has sold, is very likely to have good repeat customers.

The use of consignment sales as a showcase for the herd is often overlooked by breeders. Too many breeders I have known bring in thin, underdeveloped, poorly groomed cattle and expect a good pedigree and some feat of magic by the sale manager to sell the consignment at a top price. A sale should not be used as a disposal. Buyers equate an entire herd with the consignment they see from that herd at a sale.

Using good consignment sales to sell a few of the best cattle from the herd can establish a herd’s solid reputation. The small or new breeder generally is not equipped to do extensive showing, but he can consign top cattle to good sales and accomplish as much or more than by showing at a well-known show.

In the final analysis, each breeder is responsible for his own success. He can draft some help, but it is his own initiative and ingenuity that makes a successful merchandising program. It’s the “follow through.”

BUYER



B.G. Barby
Woodward, Okla.

“I began using the Angus Sire Evaluation Report with the first issue and have carefully followed each later report . . . I am most impressed by the records an honest registered operator keeps.”

There is no better way to ensure a profit in cattle ranching than using bulls that sire performance-proven calves. I began using the Angus Sire Evaluation Report with the first issue and have carefully followed each later report. Since I have a commercial cow herd (550 cows, 400 stockers) I focused attention on selection of a bull that would

produce the best replacement heifers with high weaning and yearling weights. In 1982, these traits seemed to be concentrated in Schearbrook Shoshone, who still ranks at the top in maternal traits and ranks respectably high in weight records (WW + 32 lb. and YW + 54 lb.).

In order to ensure clean bloodlines and quality dams, I purchased sons of Schearbrook Shoshone from a wide cross section of top breeders in the Midwest. I attempted to buy only the best bulls from each breeder based on performance records. The next bloodline was selected the same way with more emphasis on height and quality, but I still stressed weight and maternal traits.

The strength and quality of registered Angus operations during these hard times is amazing. I am most impressed by the records an **honest** registered operator keeps. Of course, reputation and service are equally important.

It is my opinion that a good bull is still cheap at \$2,500 or more when measured in terms of total calves he produces. If each bull can breed for five seasons and then is sold by the pound, his calves will bear \$11 of cost for this outstanding semen. If one-half of the superior genetics are inherited, he then adds 27 extra pounds to his yearlings, and the net gain is \$5 per yearling.

I believe the Sire Evaluation Reports have fantastic potential for improving the Angus breed. However, continued use of the Report will probably narrow the predominant bloodlines to the point that inbreeding problems could occur.

“ BUYER ”
Bob Rylaarsdam
Camas Prairie Angus Ranch
Grangeville, Idaho

“A person has to set his own limits as to what to pay for an animal. You need to look at your own operation and see just how and where you can market your animals, and to whom you will be selling them.”

We buy, and have bought, most of our cattle through production and consignment sales. The first place we go for information on the cattle is the sale catalog. We look through the catalog for pedigrees that fit into our operation.

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We also read the footnotes in the catalog for any pertinent information they might contain to help in the selection of the cattle. Good pictures of the cattle for sale can also be an attraction, not only in the advertisements, but especially in the catalog. If you see a good picture it will draw you to the sale. Just the same, poor pictures can discourage people from going to a sale. We also watch for ads in the Angus Journal, Western States Angus News, and other cattle publications.

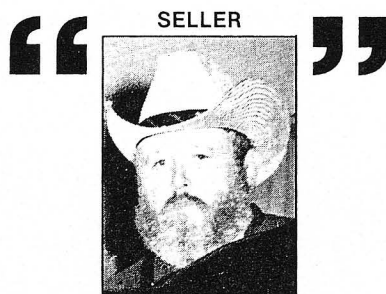
The first and most important thing we look for in the animal itself is the quality of the animal. He or she must fit in with the rest of our herd, and really should be able to help improve the herd.

For information, we turn to the owner himself, sale manager, and the Association's regional manager. Most all are very willing to give you their opinion of the cattle. What better person to ask about the cattle than the owner himself? Most owners are very willing to give you their honest opinion of the cattle as they not only want you as a customer, but also a repeat customer.

The reputation of the breeder from whom you are purchasing is important. If there is a problem with an animal you purchase, you need a very honest and reputable breeder to stand behind the animal, and to make an adjustment if need be.

Price of animals does and doesn't

make a difference to us. We buy according to quality, pedigree and records, but at the same time you need an animal that can make **you** some money. A person has to set his own limits as to what to pay for an animal. You need to look at your own operation and see just how and where you can market your animals, and to whom you will be selling them. Will it be to other purebred breeders, the commercial cowman, or a combination of both? This will make a difference for each individual breeder as to what he pays for animals.



Doran Bollman
Pulaski, Iowa

“If you are going to get buyers to travel a long distance to come to your herd, you have to convince them you have something special.”

The first requirement for a successful merchandising program is belief in your own product. This is definitely true

when it comes to selling cattle. If you know your cattle have the traits the buyer needs, it is easier to have the enthusiasm and sincerity necessary to sell them.

Your advertising program should fit the cattle you have to sell. If performance is your long suit, emphasize that and develop ads to appeal to the breeders most likely to want your kind of cattle. If the frame, correctness and eye appeal of your cattle make them competitive in the show ring, emphasize that and point your ads toward people looking for show prospects or for a herd bull or replacement females that can produce show prospects.

You should develop your advertising program for the entire year. We try to put out a quality sale catalog and good sale ads for our annual production sale. This not only attracts more buyers to our farm on sale day, but it makes it easier to sell semen and cattle at private treaty the rest of the year. Advertising can have a cumulative effect. Someone impressed by a picture of a bull or female in a sale catalog or magazine advertisement may not buy from you now, but the impression can plant a seed that can be harvested at some later date when that individual needs breeding stock and remembers your herd.

Good pictures are the most valuable tool in our selling program. The purebred Angus business is very competitive today. There are many production sales and cattle for sale constantly at private treaty. If you are going to get buyers to travel a long distance to come to your herd, you have to convince them you have something special. Pictures are the best way to do this. We try to breed cattle that are not only big, but clean, correct and straight-lined with completeness and eye appeal. The best way to show people you have this product is with quality photos. Once you secure good pictures, make them the central theme of your ad. The volume of copy or size of type should not be so large that they overpower the pictures of your cattle. Good pictures tell more than words, anyway.

Your ads should be informative, but not burdensome to read. In a one-page ad, emphasize no more than three or four main points. If you try to put too much in your copy, there will be a lot of fine print and the reader will become bored and turn to another ad.

We try to develop cattle advertising that has some style and flair. Style and flair can attract attention, but must be

backed up by substance. You can call a bull the "Bull of Tomorrow," but you'd better be prepared to tell why he is so, by emphasizing traits that are really important to the serious cattleman—performance, frame, correctness, fertility, calving ease, etc.

“ **OBSERVER** ”
John Tyner
Tyner Sales Management
Randolph, Iowa

“... the top salesman is dedicated to his own program, the Angus breed, and to his customers. And he is in the merchandising business 365 days a year.”

The successful merchandisers of registered Angus seed stock seem to have many characteristics in common. They know we have a great breed of cattle; they know that the success of the individual breeder depends on the success of our breed; and most of all, they know their past and prospective buyers are important to them 365 days a year, not just at the time of sale. These salesmen are always seeking to

improve their herds through selection, A.I., etc., and their dedication to improvement never wavers.

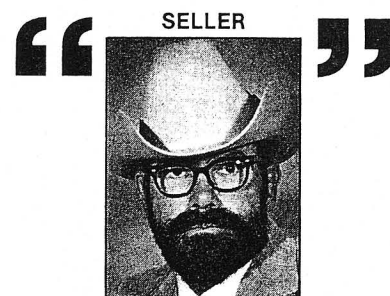
Today, it seems that the data available through the Angus Sire Evaluation Report, AHIR and the presentation of all the facts to potential customers is more important than ever before. And the top programs provide such information.

Successful cattle sellers are involved in shows and performance field days with the full realization that our breed and the continuing success of our breed is an integral part of their own future. These breeders also realize that fellow breeders and programs of fellow breeders need to be successful for the good of the Angus breed and Angus breeders.

One thing we see that never varies is that consistently successful merchandisers are highly interested in their customers, not just on sale day or when the sale is pending, but 365 days a year. They take a genuine interest in customers because, in the final result, their success is directly tied to the success of their customers.

In closing, we feel that the top salesman is dedicated to his own program, the Angus breed, and to his customers.

And he is in the merchandising business 365 days a year.



Fred Blades
Blades Angus Farm
Holliday, Mo.

“The worst advertising is a dissatisfied customer. They can void many dollars worth of paid advertising, so we stand behind our cattle 100 percent—even if it means taking back a sound animal.”

Our merchandising program has developed over the years through a trial-and-error process, and essentially is still developing as we try to keep up with a changing industry.

Our breeding program is built

MERCHANDISING . . .

around raising bulls that will go into commercial herds, and bred heifers that can go into either commercial or purebred herds. The bottom 75 percent of our bull calves will be steered, back-grounded, and either sold as yearling feeders or fed out at home. They usually top the market and are our most effective advertising.

Classified local newspaper ads have been excellent buys for us; the phone usually starts ringing the same day the ads run. We cover all newspapers in a 50- to 75-mile radius of our farm. The Missouri Ruralist and The Drovers Journal ads have also worked well.

The worst advertising is a dissatisfied customer. They can void many dollars worth of paid advertising, so we stand behind our cattle 100 percent—even if it means taking back a sound animal.

My dad is probably my best salesman. He is no longer active in the cattle business, but is still very interested and many weekends will find him attending local sales. In his work, he covers much of our trade area and his personal contacts have resulted in many sales for us.

We consign cattle to at least one local association sale; we participate in local cattle shows and our children have all shown home-raised Angus steers. While the commercial man doesn't give the show ring much credibility, showing does get your name in the paper. It has also been helpful to host an occasional field day, and to provide cattle for 4-H and FFA judging teams.

The hard part of selling cattle is getting the customer to the farm, but we have very few people who come to look that don't buy. We try to have the cattle ready to look at when a prospective buyer comes to the farm: Cattle are sorted by age; bulls are semen tested and females pregnancy tested. We have typed sheets listing the bulls with their ear tag, tattoo, birth date, birth weight, AHIR information, sire, dam and price. Birth weights have become increasingly important to buyers wanting bulls to use on heifers.

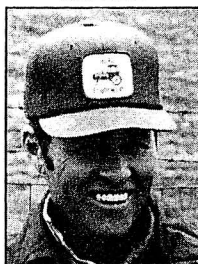
At our farm, the buyer who says he wants a cheap bull will get the same consideration as a buyer looking for a better bull or a truck load of bulls. Many of our "cheap bull" customers have become steady customers for better bulls.

Essentially we have tried to identify our market; aim our advertising toward

that market; produce a top-quality product at a reasonable, realistic price; and stand behind that product.

Fred Blades also mentions this point in his letter to the Journal: "Our major failure in merchandising is probably in the area of follow-up via personal visits to the herds using our bulls. Because of the dollars and time involved, we haven't done this to any extent." We hope readers take the tip from Fred, and also hope his comment encourages others to pinpoint their merchandising weaknesses—after all, that's the first step in correcting them.

“ SELLER ”



W.D. Pipkin
Clearwater Farm
Springfield, Mo.

"Satisfied customers spread the word by mouth and also exhibit our product to potential customers."

For us here at Clearwater, our most rewarding merchandising program is satisfied customers. Satisfied customers spread the word by mouth and also exhibit our product to potential customers. This has been accomplished over the years with a large percentage of private treaty sales, supplemented with numerous local and state association sales and performance-tested bull sales.

We have used local and state fairs of the Midwest over the years as an excellent source of "sight of your product." More recent exposure has been added through participation in trade fairs or "Farm Fests" which have been successful in our area.

Advertising in the Angus Journal plus some local weekly newspaper ads keeps our name in front of people constantly. In addition, we try to introduce a small ad campaign in a different paper in another locality every year for coverage of a new territory.

However, no matter how much we advertise, the cattle still have to speak for themselves. Presentation of the cattle at their potential to a prospective

customer is a necessity. Animals must be in the correct condition, not over conditioned but with enough flesh to have the eye appeal that is pleasing to a buyer, and allow them to continue to grow and be attractive in the future. If they are excessively fat at time of purchase, too many buyers will be disappointed when they lose the fat or lose their bloom. Good dispositions and sound feet and legs are a must for making repeat sales.

A concern for your customer's program is another necessary aspect of proper merchandising. Obtaining an idea of the customer's needs will enable you to present the cattle that will best fit his program objectives.

One other thing we do that can't be determined in dollars and cents, so to speak, is using our cattle for 4-H and FFA judging contests. Colleges and high schools also come to the farm for class discussions on a regular basis.

“ BUYER ”



Billy Moss
Thomson, Ga.

"Breeders with a 'total cattle management program'—where pressure is applied to make the females produce—are the ones I feel breed the kind of cattle commercial producers can buy and make money with."

As a commercial producer, I have purchased only Angus bulls. I buy bulls from breeders who I know are honest, and who I think share the same philosophy of cattle breeding as myself.

Breeders with a "total cattle management program"—where pressure is applied to make the females produce—are the ones I feel breed the kind of cattle commercial producers can buy and make money with.

Performance records that indicate honesty are much more important to me than winnings in the show ring. Some Angus breeders are striving so hard for total height in breeding cattle that they have lost sight of the importance of real economic traits that in-

fluence profitability to the commercial industry.

“ OBSERVER ”



Tommy Williams
Colmar, III.

“... the most important part of Angus salesmanship is knowing your potential customers and their needs, then building your purebred Angus herd to best fulfill those needs.”

“I can't sell my cattle!”

Yes you can! Know your customer—know your product—work hard.

One of the comments most often heard or made is “My cattle are great, but I can't sell them.”

With every business enterprise, salesmanship of your product is probably the most important factor governing the success of your venture. In my opinion, the most important part of Angus salesmanship is knowing your potential customers and their needs, then building your purebred Angus herd to best fulfill those needs. A thorough evaluation of your market area and volume potential, and a realistic evaluation of prices which customers feel are affordable, automatically dictate the course of action your Angus herd must follow. These are the same principles every successful business applies today.

If analysis of your expected income on cattle produced indicates an average selling price of \$1,000 or less per calf produced, then you know embryo transplant is not financially feasible for your situation. Extensive A.I. and embryo transfer are for the very few with exceptional cattle and exceptional promotional budgets at their disposal. Most importantly, remember your market area 95 percent of the time, is within 75 miles of your farm location. Most of us would like to buy a car from the hometown dealer we know and trust—so do most cattle buyers, particularly bull buyers. Speaking of bull buyers, a program that markets male animals at a profit is essential. No business can survive expecting to sell half the pro-

duction at a loss. Males can be marketed at a profit in a variety of ways, including specialty freezer beef; explore all possibilities and come up with a workable plan for your situation.

Once you know your market, many factors concerning your management and breeding program are answered for you. For example, if a need for 30 Angus bulls in your market area is indicated, don't try to merchandise 100. We all know what happens with the over-saturation of any market. A good bull, carefully selected on sound genetic and performance evaluation, will produce cattle easily merchandised to your

customers.

Remember, cost of production is going to be one of your keys to profit, since your research should already indicate realistic prices your customers feel they can afford. It will be easier to control your production costs than to change the buying attitudes of the customer. Knowing your customer means taking time to become personally acquainted. A half day spent on a potential customer's farm will do more good than pages of advertising; make sure he knows you care. Listen carefully to your customers, be sure you understand fully what he expects from his

motion of a non-competitive complimentary product or service. Examples: "Buy a Flight to Hawaii and Receive a Free Kodak Camera," "Buy a New Car and Win a Free Kodak Camera." The cost of the camera is absorbed in the item being promoted. You might wonder how this marketing approach can be used by the registered Angus breeder, since he is not usually in a position to give away his product. I would like to share with you how you, a registered Angus breeder, can use some of the marketing techniques that have proven successful for major corporations.

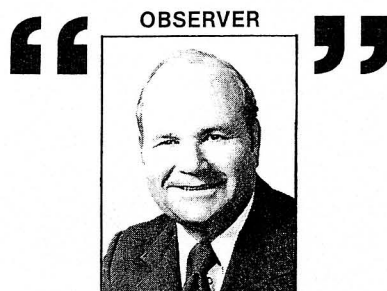
The following examples of marketing strategies are those that I have used or will use in the near future, right here in my local community. Local feed stores usually have an annual anniversary or special sale of some kind. We have a new feed store in our town that recently celebrated its first anniversary. Since I buy feed there, I found out that the owner was going to invite manufacturer representatives from the feed suppliers and vet suppliers to be on hand for his anniversary sale. Why not include **my** livestock? The feed store owner agreed, and gave us free advertising on radio and in the newspaper. The exposure we received was more than I expected. Several hundred people, all who buy feed and animal supplies, were there. They all saw my yearling bull! How many people do you think visited the Pascalar Angus Ranch that Saturday? None! My time was much better spent by taking my product to the people rather than waiting for the people to come to the ranch.

When people in your community think of cattle, they should think of you and Angus. Don't pass up good opportunities to get involved in promoting your ranch. Some of your best marketing events can be found in or near your own community. Your only investment is the time it takes you to wash and clip your animals.

There are many ranch promotions that can easily be tied in with promotions run by local businessmen in your community. Get to know these businessmen and the various sales themes that they promote throughout the year. When your local foodstore runs a major beef sale, that's the time for you to set up an exhibit of your steers in the store's front parking lot. The owner of the store will be pleased to give you the free advertising and space, since it will draw customers—and you will be given the chance to show and talk about your cattle to hundreds of people.

Whenever you participate in community events of this kind you will be able to take advantage of free advertising and free space given by the business sponsoring the event.

Don't restrict your promotional efforts to only traditional approaches. Be willing to utilize different outlets as long as they are willing to promote beef.



E. Ham Wilson
Alabama Cattlemen's Assn.
Montgomery, Ala.

“Early to bed, early to rise, work like hell and ADVERTISE.”

Merchandising must be a top priority for a successful purebred breeder! Far too many breeders overlook the importance of a good advertising and promotion program. You can produce the best cattle in your area, but unless you can sell your product for a fair return on your investment, you will not be successful.

In my 33 years of working with cattlemen, one of the most difficult problems I have encountered is getting breeders to realize the importance of solid advertising and a promotion program.

Here are a few suggestions which I believe will help the producer of purebred livestock:

1. Decide how many dollars you can afford for advertising and promotion for the next year.
2. Check the many avenues available for your particular ranch. Breed magazines, state cattle publications, local papers, radio spots and direct mail are all excellent ways to advertise.
3. Determine the area in which you will sell most of your cattle. This will help you eliminate wasted money.
4. Run regular ads to keep your name before the buyers. One-time advertisements seldom produce much business.
5. Be active in your state breed association, and your county and state

MERCHANDISING . . .

purebred Angus breeder. Structure your breeding program to fill these needs. Be very knowledgeable about all aspects of the cattle you raise; be able to effectively point out their attributes and where they would be advantageous in your customer's breeding program. Most importantly, emphasize the possible: "This bull will lessen your calving difficulty." Don't agree to the highly speculative: "This bull should sire a class winner at the National Western."

It is imperative that every Angus breeder takes an active role in his local, state and national Angus associations. His involvement with every phase of Angus promotion—including shows, field days and junior activities—make him accepted and appreciated by his fellow Angus breeders as well as highly visible to his potential customers.

Print, radio, sign and TV advertising are essential to any good merchandising program. The mix and amount of each advertising form is indicated by your location, cost and availability of each advertising medium. Most importantly, check your customers to see what produces the desired effects on their attitudes.

The possibility of holding an annual sale in conjunction with one or more breeders (if your salable production is 30 units a year), or your own sale (if salable production is 60 units or more a year) is certainly one of the most viable selling tools. I will not get into the details of sales at this time since it merits an article in itself. However, I would like to emphasize that sales channel all your promotional energies to a given

date on an annual basis. This provides a two-fold benefit. A large expected annual income on a given date, which the banker likes, and the channeling of your management efforts to a given sale date each year.

As with everything we do in life, the success of your Angus merchandising program will be directly correlated to the extra effort and diligent hard work you put into it.



Martin Jorgensen
Jorgensen Ranches
Ideal, S.D.

“Credibility is so basic in establishing repeat customers, and no breeding establishment will be long-lived without the return of former customers.”

We all need to sell what we produce, and seemingly that should not be a problem since most producers consider their herd to be the best. The priority of selling is having the **buyer** consider your herd as the best—that requires merchandising.

The core of our merchandising program is presenting facts of herd production measurements in an under-

standable form. The real value of breeding stock can be presented to the buyer in similar fashion to many industry products (as an example, the specifications of a tractor). I consider it very important to gain the trust of the buyer by presenting meaningful and objective measurements that are constructed with all contemporaries compared in the same environment. We therefore make an effort to expose the procedures of our production system to the buying public.

The measurement and comparison systems made available by the American Angus Assn. are one of our greatest selling tools. With their ever-increasing usage, AHIR records have made it possible to obtain a track record on sires listed in the annual Sire Evaluation Report. This available information on a broad base of our sires has introduced our program to a number of buyers.

Credibility is so basic in establishing repeat customers, and no breeding establishment will be long-lived without the return of former customers. Again, breeding stock can be compared with other products that require service centers for follow-up on sales. We communicate by visits, letters, and many personal calls; we want to know how well our cattle are working for others.

When improperly presented, advertising can be a gross waste of money. Therefore we aim our promotion to the largest base of producers, namely the commercial segment of our industry. I consider advertising as being a very basic part of our operating budget. Buyers will not search you out and quiz you about what you have for sale; this is a

very responsible part of getting your product sold. We staunchly believe in merchandising with the broad communication of livestock journals and regional radio time.

In summary, we present our program with proven production facts with the express purpose of broadening our base of repeat customers. We monitor the ability of our stock to be compatible with the environment of our buyers as well as our own; this is a must for retaining repeat sales. Finally, we communicate with buyers and prospective buyers on a year-round basis.

SELLER



Newbill Miller & Sons
Ginger Hill Angus
Washington, Va.

“... new breeders, encouraged by the industry, are sure they will breed the ‘great one,’ make a big profit, and attain true savings on their taxes. Difficult, to say the least.”

Merchandising is the most important, most neglected and the most abused part of the beef cattle industry.

Our marketing program was not initiated immediately. It has evolved over the years, beginning in 1959. A long-term analysis of the market factors revealed several major factors:

1) Rapid breeder turnover—Why is there such a turnover of Angus breeders when breeding cattle is so much fun? We think industry promotion raises expectations that few breeders will attain. Most new breeders, encouraged by the industry, are sure they will breed the “great one,” make a **big** profit, and attain true savings on their taxes. Difficult, to say the least.

This factor made us decide to represent our cattle as they are. We also realized that the true, sound economic base is founded on traits that are sound for the commercial cattle industry.

2) “Bona fide sales” vs. “bogus sales”—Too often, reported high sale prices of animals are not as they are represented, i.e. cash for the animal.

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MERCHANDISING . . .

- cattlemen's associations. Members of these groups will probably be your biggest customers.
6. Participate in your state BCIA program and your state purebred breeds council.
 7. Consign outstanding cattle to your breed association sales. Consign bulls to university-sponsored performance tests and sales. This is an excellent way to get your name and breed out front.
 8. Consider publishing a small, inexpensive brochure outlining your

breeding program and listing facts about your ranch.

9. Attend field days, sales, tours and educational meetings in your area. Cattlemen attending these events are potential customers.

It has been my observation over the years that producers who are doing most of the above are selling most of the cattle and are getting top dollar for their product.

A few years ago, I coined the phrase . . . "Early to Bed, Early to Rise, Work like hell and ADVERTISE." This is my recommendation to purebred cattlemen.



Wayne and Keith Stevenson
Basin / Stevenson Angus Ranch
Hobson, Mont.

"We like to spend as much time as possible on a one-to-one basis with our customers . . . they get cattle that will do a better job for them and we learn their present and projected needs."

One of the most important aspects of planning an advertising program is analyzing and evaluating the potential market with regard to the type of cattle you are raising. If you are raising an average product, you cannot expect to sell it to customers who demand a premium product. Conversely, you cannot sell a premium product for a premium price to customers who only want to pay the price of an average product.

We feel our local market area is our most important area, with most customers within a short driving distance of our ranches. Those who would specialize in selling to a more widespread area would, of course, benefit from more widespread advertising. Magazines, newspapers and to some extent radio are necessary for getting your name and important facts to potential customers.

Our two ranches, Stevenson Angus Ranch headed by Keith Stevenson, and Basin Angus Ranch headed by Wayne Stevenson, are two separate family operations, but our cow herds have basically the same breeding. We have chosen to join together for the purpose of selling cattle and semen, as this allows us to provide a selection of large numbers of cattle that excel in several ways (i.e. high maternal traits, calving ease, faster gain, etc.) that our customers might need.

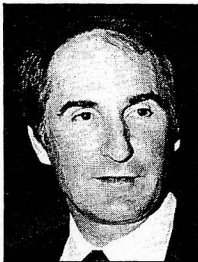
The AHIR program, especially the Angus Sire Evaluation Report, is a useful tool to let our customers know how the cattle they buy can be expected to perform.

Personal contact with our customers is of prime importance to us. We like to spend as much time as possible on a one-to-one basis with our customers to assist them in selecting cattle that

will perform well for them. This benefits us both, as they get cattle that will do a better job for them and we learn their present and projected needs.

We feel that it takes 70 to 80 percent repeat customers to build a lasting program. We feel honesty in regard to the potential of the cattle is essential, even if it means not making a sale. Selling an animal that is not what is needed benefits no one. A satisfied customer is definitely the best kind! Word of mouth from satisfied customers is the best form of advertising available. Personally, we have spent over 25 years developing our herds and with it our reputation for quality cattle and fair dealing.

“ OBSERVER ”



Steve Radakovich
Radakovich Cattle Co.
Earlham, Iowa

“The lack of aggressive merchandising has been a silent but heavy drag on genetic improvement.”

The following appeared in livestock publications as Steve's “Thought for the Month” when he served as president of BIF in 1983.

Why does the seed stock industry breed by fads and traditions? What is popular—right, wrong, or indifferent—is easier to merchandise.

Why has it taken performance testing 20 years to be only partially accepted? Very simple, we have not been paid for our efforts.

Why do breeders resist change? A new or different product requires independent merchandising. “My customers will never accept a change, or that type of cattle, or that kind of bull.” I’ll bet I’ve heard that a thousand times from breeders using poor merchandising as an excuse for complacency.

How about the big genetic antagonism, breeding cattle for the economic good of the industry vs. breeding what is popular for easy merchandising. How many intelligent breeders do you know that would breed cattle more realistical-

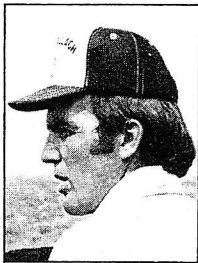
MERCHANDISING . . .

ly today if they thought they could merchandise them? A confident effort in proper merchandising would go a long way in eliminating this costly trade-off.

The lack of aggressive merchandising has been a silent but heavy drag on genetic improvement. I strongly urge universities, breed associations, breeding organizations, and individual producers to correct this shortcoming before we charge on to new and improved concepts that will require costly time for acceptance, if accepted at all. Plans are only worth the paper they are written on, until they are put to use.

“ “

BUYER



Lynn Ballagh
Burwell, Neb.

“I like to think of buying cattle, particularly bulls, as an investment and not an expense. They can either increase or decrease the profitability of my herd.”

In buying Angus cattle, I seek to select those that will be the most efficient in my herd in order to be more competitive and to increase my profit opportunities. This means cattle which

will improve my herd through their performance. Thus, I like to select on the basis of some objective measurements that are taken for specific, important traits. These economic traits (such as reproduction, growth, carcass cutability, maternal ability, longevity, etc.), many of which are highly heritable, are things I key on when selecting cattle.

I like to buy from someone with a program that doesn't follow fads or trends, but has goals similar to mine. I find that superior cattle are a result of a planned, consistent program; one that has a purpose.

To me, the Sire Evaluation Reports are very beneficial in this respect, as they provide information from birth weights to maternal values. By knowing the traits in which my herd is weak, I can improve them through use of bulls listed in the report. The bull test station results are also helpful in showing which cattle are getting the job done because they provide an equal comparison of many different herds.

In buying cattle, I most often select on the basis of performance and genetic potential because of the high heritability of these. The more performance records that are available on the individual and his ancestors, the more confident I feel in my selection and the more I am willing to spend.

I like to think of buying cattle, particularly bulls, as an investment and not an expense. They can either increase or decrease the profitability of my herd. Therefore it is important to me to select cattle from someone that is honest and committed to standing behind his cattle, and is confident of the job they can do to improve my herd.

“ “

SELLER



Bob Browning
Executive Director
Arkansas Angus Assn.

“Put a price on everything that you own. If you really want to keep her, then price old ‘bossy’ such that the pain will be eased if they should load her up.”

The marketing and merchandising of cattle is the greatest shortfall that affects most Angus breeders. There are so very few that have had reasonable success in selling their cattle. There are several assumptions that I would make before addressing the vital area of merchandising. Among these assumptions are that you know the pedigrees of your cattle; that you are concerned with and apply good health measures in your herd; and that you are knowledgeable of bovine nutrition.

There are several practices that would vie for first place, so let me enumerate several and you be the judge of their importance. First, you must somehow make the buyer aware of your desire to sell. Equally important, you must create a desire in potential customers to become interested in what you have to offer. Advertising is certainly one obvious means to do both.

In my own case, I advertise every month in the Angus Journal because the repetitive ad is the one that becomes more ingrained in more minds of readers. I also advertise in my state cattlemen's publication and in every issue of the Arkansas Angus Newsletter. Also, let me state at this point that my comments are addressed to the average Angus breeder and not to the millionaire businessman with a hobby herd or a tax deduction. He can fend for himself.

Most publications are more than willing to assist the advertiser in the wording and compiling of his ad, and the breeder should definitely take advantage of this expert help. Just tell a representative briefly what you have to sell, and listen to his suggestions for a heading, body and signature for your ad. Don't expect miracles after running only one ad. Advertising your herd is just as important to your success as the care you give to selecting your herd's feed and your pasture management. You should also give an eye to the market served by the publication in which you will advertise. Do you specialize in raising bulls, steers, club calves, show heifers, or replacement seed stock? Tell the world about it!

O.K., so you've advertised and the phone begins to ring. Know your product thoroughly. Put a price on everything that you own. If you really want to keep her, then price old "bossy" such that the pain will be eased if they should load her up. Be prepared to answer—without hesitation—all questions about any animal's pedigree and performance data. Before your guest arrives, have written down on a single sheet of paper each animal's ear tag number, birth date, sire, sire of dam, EBVs and price. Do not apologize for the price, but present it matter-of-factly.

Take a good close look at your farm entrance because your caller will soon see it if you've given him good, clear directions to your farm. Is the front attractive and neat, are the fences in good repair and do you have a nice sign near the entrance? You'd better if you want to improve your chances. You should try to make an appointment with each caller so that you can be on hand and presentable when he knocks on your door. Greet him pleasantly and then ask him if he would like to come in for a cup of coffee (or maybe after viewing the cattle would be a more appropriate time).

Take the customer to the penned group or groups in which he has shown

an interest, and don't hesitate to begin talking about the animals as you move through them. Encourage him to comment because a pleasant exchange enhances your chance to sell. The customer needs to feel welcome if he is to spend his money. Of course you have cattle that you are offering for sale in good flesh (not fat) and healthy. They should have good, shiny hair coats and should be in an area where your customers can conveniently view them on foot. You must be confident to inspire confidence. You should be prepared to offer your customer transportation for any purchase. If you don't have a trailer, pre-arrange with someone who does. Quite often this service will clinch the deal.

To sum up, you should be just as prepared as you would expect any professional to be that you would choose to deal with. Think about it!

“ BUYER
Sam Hands ”
Triangle H Grain and Cattle Co.
Garden City, Kan.

“If we have performance to back it up . . . price is of less concern in purebred purchases. The most expensive bull we can buy is one that doesn't live up to expectations.”

This is a family operation with four partners. We're both a farming operation and a commercial cattle operation. Most of our operation is tied around a commercial cow-calf crossbred program. About two-thirds of our calf crop is A.I.-sired and we keep our own replacement heifers. We retain ownership on our calves, and buy stocker and feeder cattle as well.

My number-one selection criteria in selecting bulls or A.I. sires is performance. An operation needs some type of performance records—whether it's through their own testing at home, through AHIR or the extension service, or whatever—so that as a buyer I can get some idea in black and white whether to expect that seed stock to make improvement in my herd. I still rely a lot on visual appraisal, but I first evaluate performance data, breeding data, pedigree and so forth, then I look at breeding values. That really narrows my list as far as individuals to select from, and then I'll make the final selection based on trying to avoid any genet-

ic or physical problem that might be apparent in the cattle (so that we don't come into a structural or performance problem).

In our operation, yearling weight ratios, average daily gain, feed efficiency and weight per day of age are all important. I look at weaning information from a maternal standpoint. Calving ease is important in a commercial operation, too; we're using Angus bulls on our replacement heifers, so it's even more important there. (Angus, Simmental and Maine Anjou bulls are used on mature cows; sire summaries are studied extensively.) I would like to see a lot more on carcass values. We follow our cattle through to the packer, collect data on them, and trace that back to cow families, bloodlines and breeds of bulls that may or may not be satisfactory.

I would like to see breeders put more emphasis on performance. I'm not against the show ring—I think it has its place in setting trends, displaying to the public what the industry needs to be looking for, helping breeders avoid structural problems, and as a source of advertising and promotion. To me, though, there's been far too much emphasis on the show ring; I could care

MERCHANDISING . . .

less if a bull won the National Western, but if he can be "top on the hill" with his progeny in the feedlot or his daughters in a commercial cow herd, then the purple ribbon was worth it. For my selection needs, an outfit that leans hard on the show ring is at a disadvantage; too often they don't have the performance to back up their cattle.

A reputable, honest service is of particular importance in selection of breeding stock. (It's also important when we buy stocker and feeder cattle, but there price is the major factor.) If we have performance to back it up and records to give more accurate anticipation of what to expect a bull to do, price is of less concern in purebred purchases. The most expensive bull we can buy is one that doesn't live up to expectations.



Lyle and Donna Fuller
Salmon Tract Angus
Twin Falls, Idaho

" . . . The most important feature we look for in any operation is the friendliness and sincerity of the people we meet."

We are mainly commercial cattle people. We have always used registered bulls, and when the person we bought from quit selling cattle we started looking for a new place to buy. Then this year we needed to replace some cows and decided to try some registered ones because of the improvement in the breed and also the record keeping done on the cows. We also plan to raise a few of our own bulls and replacement cows, and sell the rest.

We bought our first cattle at the Twin Falls Sale, and from the "thank-you's" and association with consignors, we learned of other sales. We were personally invited to attend these sales and did—not expecting to buy, just to look at the cattle—and we came away with a truck load. We have since learned of sales by personal invitation, livestock

journals, newspapers and catalogs sent directly and unsolicited to us.

Price plays an important part in what we buy. We cannot pay \$1,500 or up for replacement cows; a good bull, yes. We look for good cattle at a fair price, and search for those bred to calve when it fits our program. We calve from Feb. 15 to April 15, thus we want cattle bred for this time and we have had to pass up some very good cows because of when they were bred. We do look at the service sire, but this isn't always a deciding factor.

We look for the friendliness and reputation of the sellers whether we buy one, 20 or none. Awards do not mean that a person has good cattle or that they will fit in our operation. At the moment, we are not too familiar with area breeders and their cattle, so we are attending all possible sales and events to better acquaint ourselves with the people, their cattle and operation. We will probably attend more as observers, and the most important feature we look for in any operation is the friendliness and sincerity of the people we meet. We like being treated as equals even if we are not big time show winners, if we cannot attend all events and if we do not buy something at all sales or events.



Murray Fretz
Secretary Manager
Western States Angus Assn.

"An effective salesman will present his sale offering in the best surroundings possible, and will not have his "keeper" cattle anywhere around."

Many factors are involved in effectively merchandising anything—whether it be cars, clothing or registered Angus cattle—but there are three or four that seem to be common to all successful programs.

Know your market—Perhaps more than any other thing, this is a must. It is futile to spend time and money producing cattle for which there is no mar-

ket. Successful breeders first find out what is needed, and then produce for that need.

Recognize what you have—With today's artificial insemination and embryo transfer usage, every breeder has equal access to the industry's leading bloodlines, so it takes more than just a popular pedigree to command the top dollar. Successful breeders with a track record of effective merchandising have traveled widely, studied the subtle difference between "good" and "great," and learned to recognize it in their product. Then . . .

Promote your program—You may have the greatest set of calves in the history of your breeding program, but it will not make any difference if those looking for a new herd sire or set of replacement heifers don't know about them. The successful merchandiser knows his market so he can effectively place his advertising where it will reach the maximum number of potential customers. It makes no sense to try selling show heifers through a magazine going strictly to ranchers who only buy range bulls. Likewise, advertise your range bulls in the papers the range bull buyers read. Promotion is also more than just print advertising. Successful merchandisers attend their local and county cattlemen's functions, and every field day possible; and they support the 4-H and FFA chapters in their area.

Present your cattle effectively—After the advertising has brought prospective buyers to your ranch, have the sale cattle sorted for uniformity and age. Nothing is more disheartening than to go through a pasture of cattle and select several head, only to be told those are not for sale. An effective salesman will present his sale offering in the best surroundings possible, and will not have his "keeper" cattle anywhere around. The sale cattle will also be priced to reflect the current market. There will not only be profit for the producer reflected in the price, but there will be value and profit potential for the purchaser.

In summary, effective merchandising is a matter of knowing what to produce for the market you have; recognizing when you have a really great one to sell; promoting the fact that you have great ones to sell; and properly presenting them to a prospective buyer. A reputation for honesty and reliability, standing behind the cattle you sell, and follow-up with your customers are also necessary ingredients in being a successful merchandiser. **AJ**