

“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.

ISING”

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.

U

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 succeeders. 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.



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.

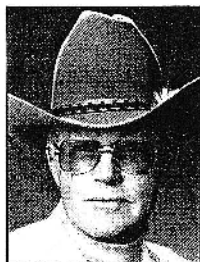
The breeders we all envy for their continued ability to sell their cattle for a premium year after year are the ones who combine sound breeding, management and merchandising programs. They devote comparable time and resources to all three areas. They aggres-

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.

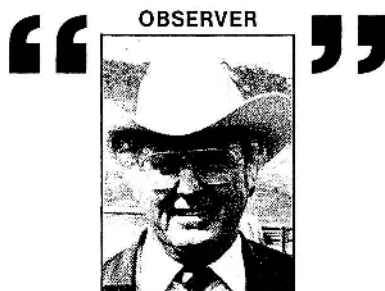
In our part of western Oregon where commercial cow numbers are small or almost nonexistent, I have found that we cannot keep large inventories in cows or calves. There's just not enough commercial cattle operations around needing registered bulls. Since this is the case, I have had to find ways to merchandise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

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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

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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-

MERCHANDISING . . .

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.

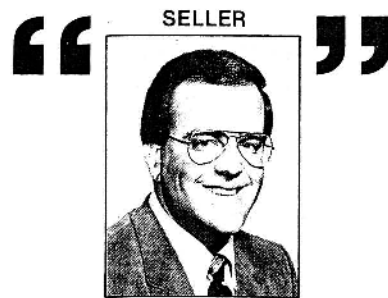
Many breeders today fail to realize that they all play a large part in the selection process. Herds of less than 25 cows will always be a valuable source of bulls for ABS and the Angus industry. There are two reasons for this happening: 1) There are large numbers of small breeders (over 60 percent of 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.

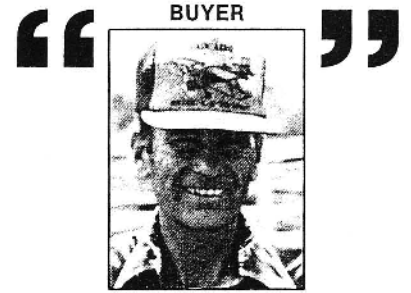
I get a little tired of picking up publication after publication with every ad looking the same as the last—every ad has four to six beautiful pictures with captions under them that say almost exactly the same thing as the previous ad, but with no objective type of breeding program to substantiate what 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