

# CATTLE CULTURE

by Megan Silveira, assistant editor

## Sealing the Deal

*Become a force in the business world with a few simple steps.*



When I was 5 years old, my grandpa sold me my first horse. My grandpa had just bought the retired chestnut gelding as his own, but from the moment I hopped on Stetson's back, I think all three of us knew he was mine.

The actual purchase of Stetson was a grand affair. My grandpa drove a hard bargain, and I had to fork over five dollars before sealing the deal with a handshake. In my 5-year-old mind, it felt like pretty official business; but looking back, it was probably one of the most relaxed sales the agriculture industry had ever seen.

One doesn't often get away with purchasing an animal for five dollars, or being blessed with making the exchange with a family member. When it comes to wheeling and dealing in the agriculture industry, what's the secret to making an official and beneficial business deal?

### Back to the basics

Before we can dive into the nitty-gritty of business, I think it's important to remind everyone of the business basics.

First and foremost, it may sound a bit cliché, but I think there's great value in following the golden rule — treat people the way you want to be treated. The cattle industry is a real

family, and I think there's a lot to be said for producers who act with kindness and respect, even when it comes to making business deals.

For National Junior Angus Association (NJAA) members, I think it's also important to never lose sight of the power of a solid handshake.

My dad taught me from a young age people only take you as seriously as you take a handshake, so don't underestimate this simple gesture.

It might sound silly, but I do encourage young Angus breeders to practice their handshakes. Make eye contact while completing the gesture, and grasp the other individual's hand firmly. Don't just grab fingertips; be sure to use your whole hand.

Remember first impressions are everything, and handshakes are a major part of creating a positive one. Starting a business deal off on the right foot, no matter your age, will help other producers take you seriously and increase the odds of their willingness to make a deal.

### Making the deal

*Forbes* magazine says there are three components of a business deal: expected return, upside potential and downside risk. Put in simpler terms, this means understanding what is expected from the deal and

identifying both the best and worst possible scenarios.

A deal doesn't have to be one-sided to be successful. In fact, *Forbes* magazine describes the most successful deals as being beneficial for both involved parties in the long run. This supports the idea of sustainable business, and if cattle producers adopt the same mindset, we can help our industry thrive for years to come.

However, we all should be cautious when entering into a business arrangement with someone we don't know very well. Be sure to uncover the motivations of the other party, because not everyone has adopted the mindset of perusing fair deals.

*Forbes* promotes creativity in business deals. If you take stock of your resources and abilities, you'll be able to deploy them in ways that draw in potential business partners.

Never be afraid to get deals in writing. A written contract holds power and legitimacy and can save you a lot of trouble down the road if things go south with other parties.

At the end of the day, the key to striking a good deal is to ask a lot of questions, propose alternatives that lean in your favor and keep the entire process as simple as possible. **AJ**