

Why People Spend Money

Regardless of what people buy, they usually do it for one or more of these reasons: To feel good, to look good or to make more money. Registered Angus cattle buyers are no exception.

I am convinced that in today's economy commercial cattle producers buy Angus bulls primarily to make more money. We've had some good years in the cattle business, but on the whole farming has not been all that profitable. What with drought, flood, blizzards and low commodity prices, most operators seek to boost cattle profits whenever possible. For many this has meant a return to Angus genetics to add uniformity, quality and value to their cattle.

As you market registered Angus seedstock keep in mind that an offer to help producers improve profits or cut costs is very attractive. This is particularly true when supported by sound, believable information that bolsters your claim. Making more money is a pretty direct thing. It comes from more pounds weaned, more dollars per pound, more dollars per acre of land, more calves per cow exposed to a bull, or lower labor and production costs. Good advertisers know how to translate the important features of an animal or a herd into the benefits of low costs, more value and potentially higher profits.

What does this mean? Well, for example, Angus are known for marbling and you may have positive marbling expected progeny differences (EPDs) on your bulls. But an animal's ability to marble or its positive EPDs aren't benefits, they are features. One way you translate these features into benefits is to know the price spread between Select and Choice cattle. This allows you to explain to a buyer how much more valuable his 1,200-pound steers would be at today's prices if 75 percent rather than 25 percent of them graded USDA Choice.

Feeling good is a more nebulous benefit to sell. It is a fact that earning more money can make most any of us feel better. But the kind of "feeling good" we are talking about in marketing has a different connotation. It is what happens when you lose weight and for the first time in years your

you sell, and it isn't all that difficult to explain.

Not many buyers of registered Angus cattle look more attractive than they did before they started using Angus bulls. However a good many of them eventually look better in the eyes of their cattle business colleagues. I am convinced that commercial cattle producers have lost a lot of pride of ownership over the years. There is not much pride in owning a multi-colored, variable-sized herd of cows that lack uniformity and produce calves which fail to generate excitement among buyers. These people don't look too good in the eyes of some of their professional colleagues, or at least some feel they don't.

When a registered Angus breeder helps a commercial producer build a better, more valuable herd through the use of top quality Angus bulls it improves the image of that individual in his or her own eyes and likely in the eyes of others. How do you market that benefit?

Very low key. It comes with building confidence in buyers, then seeing them come back year after year because they enjoy the benefits of the cattle they have purchased and their business association with you.

A good Angus marketer would obviously never advertise, "Buy my bulls and you'll look better, feel better and make more money!" But always keep in mind there is a lot more to selling Angus than EPDs and pedigrees. As you design your ads and deal face to face with buyers, always translate the outstanding features of your herd into benefits the buyer will receive.

Those ultimate benefits — the ones all of us really want from any product we buy — are to look good, feel good and make more money.



KARLA KING ILLUSTRATION

belly doesn't hang over your belt and you can button your jacket. It is starting on a long trip knowing that your truck and trailer are in great shape and shouldn't cause you any trouble. In the cattle business it's a commercial producer knowing he won't have to worry about pulling calves, or de-horning, or doctoring snow burned udders thanks to his Angus bulls.

Producers experience a great sense of well-being knowing that their Angus sired calves are in strong demand by feedlot operators and packer buyers. It allows them to approach market day with confidence knowing they are likely to get top price for their feeder steers or finished cattle. Bull buyers who have confidence in the person they deal with, who know that if there is a problem it will be made right, have fewer worries. They feel good about their situation. So when you stop and think about it, "feeling good" can be a benefit of the cattle

Keith Evans