

# Good Writing — It's the Key to Improving Your Advertising



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Well-written ads allow you to influence more people without spending more money. This is why you should know how to write effective advertising, or at least how to recognize well-written ads and demand them from those who produce your advertising.

Writing is a frightening idea to many a livestock advertiser. After all, most of you are cattle producers and breeders— not



writers. But the fact is, much of your cattle breeding skills are wasted if they aren't backed by marketing of equal quality.

Virtually every highly effective print advertisement has a well-written headline that attracts readers and builds interest. It also has well-written, persuasive body copy that builds on the promise of the headline and illustration, explains benefits and lays out an interesting, well reasoned sales message.

These suggestions can help you start producing better ads:

■ Begin by writing down the purpose of your ad. At the top of your typing paper or computer screen monitor complete this sentence, "The purpose of this ad is..." For example, "The purpose of this ad is to explain how Big Blackie can be used on heifers, yet still add yearling weight to the calves he sires." Keep it simple; an ad should have a single purpose.

■ Next, with an idea of what the ad illustration will be, write the ad headline. Imagine that one of your bull customers is

sitting across the table and you are telling him about Big Blackie. Use words that will grab attention, and imply action. Example: "Big Blackie — safe to use on heifers, with yearling growth to boost pay-weights."

■ Now write the body copy. Again, select your words carefully so that they get attention and create interest. Keep sentences short and to the point. Eliminate conjunctions like "and" and "but." Replace them with periods to create short sentences. Try to make each sentence entice the reader to want to learn more. Explain Big Blackie's EPDs and how accurate they are.

Tell how he has worked on first calf heifers. Cite examples of the yearling pay-weights of his offspring. Explain how all this can help buyers make more money, feel better about their breeding program, and look good to customers when it is time to sell bulls or replacement females or feeder calves.

Close by encouraging readers to take action. Explain how to order semen, or buy sons, and who to contact and when. Always

ask for the order. Make it simple for readers to respond.

■ Now go out and do the chores or meet friends at the coffee shop. The next day when you come back and read what you have written it will appear as if someone else has written the copy. This will allow you to be more objective and carefully edit what you have written. Cut out anything that distracts from your main points. Rearrange sentences or paragraphs if necessary to make them more logical and easier to read. Rewrite the whole thing if necessary, and often it is.

■ Let your copy rest again. Later, read it aloud. Ask yourself if what you hear is what you would say if you were talking to a potential customer sitting across the desk from you. If so, you are almost finished. But don't hesitate to make further improvements. Professional copy writers may rewrite copy literally dozens of times.

■ For the last time put the headline and copy aside. Later, check the facts and read it out loud again. Make sure the message is correct, then send it to the publication advertising manager.

When you deliver, on time, a top quality photograph and well-written copy to the advertising department, you are way ahead of the game. The proofreader will check your copy for grammar, spelling and punctuation, and may even offer suggestions for improvement. The advertising artists will have both the material and the time to create an attractive layout for you. The result will be more readers and more response.

When the cattle business is tough, like it is today, you often can't afford to advertise more. That's why it's even more important to advertise smarter. One smart way to increase the number of people who read your advertising is with good writing.

