

# MARKET COMMUNICATIONS

ADVERTISING (PART II)—PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER  
Third of a 6-part series on promoting and marketing purebred cattle.

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From the first, we have stressed *quality* in all phases of your market communications program. *Class*. Not mass. Nowhere is quality more evident than in the production and presentation of your external advertising program. The beef industry in general suffers from poor advertising production and lack of creativity. We feel strongly about quality control in advertising, because we know it works; it will help you reach your objectives, and it will make money for you.

Within reasonable limits in advertising, *you are what you appear to be*. Readers *do relate* your visual appearance to your actual operation. Top quality graphics and outstanding photography imply the same in actual products: If you show your cattle and ranch with class and with pride, people are going to believe that about your operation (unless you prove them differently.) Conversely, poor graphics are better left unpublished.

## Image and Reputation

Your image and reputation can be greatly improved through the use of high quality pictures; good layout and design; clean, concise, meaningful copy; and a distinctive logo or identifying mark. Like good quality cattle, it costs more, but it pays. The alternative is just too risky.

We're talking about print ads; broadcast is another matter. In developing a print ad (magazine or newspaper) advertising campaign, think in terms of an entire program—a series of ads. These elements should be included:

1. Concept or theme. It should reflect the criteria previously discussed. The overall theme or idea should be consistent throughout the campaign. Develop your theme and stick with it.

2. Be unique. Not just to be different but for individuality. I've never met two cattle breeders who had the same objectives, capabilities, needs or desires. Evaluate your particular advantages or uniqueness and present those "differences" in your advertisements.

## Design or "Look"

3. Design or "look" of the ad. Develop a comfortable format ("look") for your advertisement and stick with it. This includes basic layout, type style, logo (identification and address) and use of color(s). This will become your own unique "look" and, if done effectively, will become instant advertising before the copy is read. The extra cost in developing and producing high quality advertising will pay off. If a choice must be made, I'd rather spend more money in developing really eye-popping effective ads at the expense of advertising space. It doesn't really matter how much space I buy if no one notices or reads the ads.

4. The headline, your "grabber." It, with the visual and overall graphic design or "look" of your ad, combines to stop the reader and grab his attention. It can be cute, it can be off-beat, it can be "untraditional" and still be effective. But it must not be dishonest, deceiving or in poor taste. I probably spend more time writing the headline than the rest of the ad, because if you don't get past the headline, nothing else matters.

## Good Photography

5. The illustration. If you use illustrations, by all means use photography. Correction: *Good photography!* Forget artwork. There are reams of surveys to prove that the extremely critical agribusiness market prefers photography when trying to buy a functional product. Some studies by direct mail authorities show that the photograph contributes 83% of the total impact of a print ad in grabbing the reader's attention. Good photography is the quickest way to develop a winning image for your ranch or cattle. Poor photography is worse than no photography, because readers will associate what they see with what they believe you are—good or bad!

6. Copy. Be Specific. Make one main point and stick with it. Too many points in one ad confuse the reader; too many "advantages" or too many things to sell in a single ad usually result in nothing

being sold. No breed, even yours, is all things to all people. So develop one key point for each ad and hammer it home.

## Color, Size and Frequency

If you're serious about making a favorable impact in your industry, there is no point in just being "in" a publication. Be noticed! Get attention! Dominate the publication if you can. (It's not that difficult to do, considering the quality of much beef cattle advertising.) Develop quality ads large enough to grab attention. Use them often enough to keep your name in front of prospective buyers all the time.

Because of different objectives, herd size and financial commitment to advertising, we can't make rule-of-thumb suggestions as to how big or how often you should advertise. By using a rotating schedule in different publications, you should appear before your prospects every month. (Advertising in alternate months in key publications will accomplish this.)

## Size, Color

If you're serious about making an impact, your ad should be a half page or larger. And if you're really in there for keeps and want to develop and maintain a strong image with your audience (whether it be blue ribbon seed stock producers, commercial bull buyers, investors or a combination of them all), use 4-color in publications that can handle it. Two-color ads *may* have a slight advantage over black-and-white—but only slightly. In our experience, 3-color ads have shown no advantages over 2-color ads.

Whatever you do, be consistent. There is cumulative value in repetition. Your influence (and chances for responses) grows with each exposure. But don't get in the rut of using the same ad over and over. You'll generally get better results from presenting fresh new ads. If you do repeat ads, don't do it more than twice in a year. ☺

*Next Time: Where To Advertise and Who Should Do It.*