

doing a better job

MERCHANDISING

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications and Public Relations

Public relation affects your business whether or not you intentionally use PR to help merchandise your cattle.

It is a little scary, when you think about it. The powerful force of public relations is at work in your registered Angus business even if you don't have a PR program. How you are perceived by your customers and potential cus-

3. What do you want them to know about you and your Angus program?

4. What is the most effective way to carry the message to them?

If you consider these questions carefully and write down your answers, you will have developed your basic public relations program. About all that would remain would be to set priorities and get to work.

can invite the FFA and 4-H club leaders to bring their students and club members to your farm to study your cattle and records. When you weigh yearling bulls, have the livestock extension specialist on hand along with the local FFA chapter. Call the local newspaper and tell them what you are doing. They will probably send out a photographer and put a picture and story in the paper.

If you have Pathfinder cows in your herd, telephone your local radio farm director when the American Angus Assn. issues the information. Tell him about the honor you have won and he will probably interview you on the air.

What you will find is that one program often works for more than one group of people. For example, when you invite the livestock extension specialist, the vo-ag teacher and his or her class, the newspaper reporter, and maybe even your banker to your farm to weigh yearling bulls and evaluate them, you are reaching many of the groups you want to influence, (students, local agriculture leaders, etc.). On the other hand, when you set up a planned series of herd visits to your bull customers, you target a more specialized audience.

When you have written out complete answers to all four questions, you will have the makings of a PR plan that will look "totally awesome," to borrow a phrase from the younger generation. But don't let that intimidate you. You don't do everything at once. Start with the most important project and then initiate others at the appropriate time until you eventually have a year-around, planned public relations program in operation.

Remember, public relations is simply conveying the truth about your herd and your business to the right people as effectively as possible—"doing good and getting credit for it." And, a well thought out plan will put you in a position to take control of your PR and make it work for you.

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Take Control of Your PR



Take question one, who do you want to influence? You would likely list your most important group as the commercial cattle producers within a 50 or 100-mile radius of your farm.

Why are they important? Well, for most seed stock producers, these are the people who buy most of their bulls.

What do you want them to know or understand about your Angus business? Hopefully, that you are a cattle breeder who is honest, with integrity, who is serious about breeding top-quality, performance-tested, efficient Angus seed stock and that you back them with a sound guarantee, and thus can supply commercial cattlemen with the bulls and service they need.

How are you going to convey these facts to the public you have selected—the commercial producers within 50 or 100 miles of your place? The honesty and integrity part is an outgrowth of the way you do business, passed along by word of mouth from satisfied customers. But you will want to point out in all your advertising and promotion that you guarantee your cattle unconditionally.

On the other hand, you will have to think of ways to let your customers know about your performance records program and how it affects the kind of cattle you breed. You can volunteer to be a stop on the next cattlemen's tour where you show your cattle and explain your program. You

tomers helps determine the number of cattle sales you make and the average price you receive. If people misunderstand your operation, or don't have all the facts about your herd and management program, and the way you do business, they may look elsewhere for seed stock.

There is much misunderstanding about public relations. It is not, as many believe, an attractive drape to cover mistakes, bad judgement or poor cattle. A beautiful new paint job does nothing to improve a barn with rotten support timbers. Good public relations is deserved, not contrived. Integrity, quality products and customer service form the foundation upon which a sound public relations program is built.

Text books devote chapters to public relations planning. But we will condense this down to four basic questions.

1. Who do you want to influence?
2. Why do you want to influence these people?