

MARKET COMMUNICATIONS

ADVERTISING (PART III)—WHERE, HOW AND WHO
Fourth of a 6-part series on promoting and marketing purebred cattle.

by B.E. Fichte

Frankly, we don't have many ways to reach our buying prospects through paid advertising. Radio and television have limited use because of the cost and waste (audience) factor. We get too many listeners or viewers who are not potential customers, and time is sold on total numbers. Special events such as sales may merit broadcast use.

That leaves print—the agricultural publications—as our main avenues in reaching our customers. Basically, they break down into these categories:

- The large national or regional general agricultural publications such as FARM JOURNAL, THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER and SUCCESSFUL FARMING.

- The state general agricultural publications such as THE TEXAS FARMER-STOCKMAN, MISSOURI RURALIST and so forth.

- The regional all-breed publications such as SOUTHERN BEEF PRODUCER, LIVESTOCK, LIVESTOCK BREEDER JOURNAL (which also represents several state beef cattle associations) and the like.

State Publications

- State beef cattle association publications, all-breed, such as THE CATTLEMAN, FLORIDA CATTLEMAN, OKLAHOMA COWMAN, ALABAMA CATTLEMAN and others.

- Individual breed publications such as the ANGUS JOURNAL.

- Weekly livestock newspapers.

Obviously, all publications aren't alike. Before placing your advertising in a publication, consider these points:

1. What does it cost?

2. What is its reputation? Do readers believe in it? Do they even read it? Can it project the image you want? Do you want to be associated with the publica-

tion? One tremendous advantage to the big national or regional books is that most have excellent reputations and they do pull responses.

Circulation

3. Does it reach your audience? Who reads it?

4. What are its quality capabilities in production? Can it consistently reproduce good color, for example? Will it "make good" when it trashes-out your ad?

5. What type editorial material does it publish? Is the editorial content or policy compatible with your product? Is it likely to appeal to the type of people you want to reach?

6. Does it provide additional services?

7. Does it support your breed?

You can't expect any one publication to meet all your needs. Nor should you expect editorial favors simply because you advertise. But you should expect the publication to meet most of the foregoing requirements before you invest money with it.

Who should do your advertising? You have at least three choices.

You can do it yourself. Many good programs have been developed by producers. It depends on your time, because it requires much of it; your attitude toward this type work; your ability to be objective, because you must remove yourself from personal inhibitions or prejudices and view your operation as a potential customer; and your ability to think in a fresh creative way.

You can find a professional to do it. Admittedly, there aren't many.

You can hire a professional and *both* of you do it.

Should you choose an outside professional or agency to handle your advertis-

ing, you should demand at least the following:

1. A thorough knowledge and empathy of your industry.

2. A proven track record in various phases of market communications. Make sure you're seeing the agency's true capabilities. People in our trade have been known to use the work of others in helping "land" an account.

3. Find out who will be handling your account. Who is developing the ideas? Who is writing copy? Who is taking pictures? What are their qualifications? Some folks tend to lose interest once an account has been "sold."

Critical Point

4. Do you trust them? This is a critical point because so much advertising is based on confidence and "gut feel." You must feel comfortable with the people who are handling your account.

5. Do they have a real interest in you and your account? Or is it just another job? We all tend to get sloppy at times in our client relations. We often forget that *your account* is the *most important thing to you* and you aren't concerned with the other accounts we may be handling. The essential question is whether or not you will be treated as an individual, as you should, or just as "one of the bunch."

These guidelines are far from complete. But if you will take these principles and add your own planning and ingenuity, you'll get a good insight as to just what you need for a successful advertising program. Then you, or whomever you designate, can produce a program that will meet your needs and fulfill the most important function: *Make more money for you!* □

Next time: *Public Relations—Stretching Your Advertising Dollars.*