



Let's try it this way

You know one thing that mystifies some people about registered cattle shows?

It's the photos of show winners with from five to 25 unidentified men, women, and children crowded into the frame. Not only is this phalanx of folks anonymous, many are unseen, except for their legs that appear to dangle purposelessly from the animal's belly.

This phenomena, funny to some, infuriates most newspaper editors who learned in journalism school that they could be drummed out of the press corps for running a photo of human beings staring intently into the camera without identifying who they are and why each is there. We have for several years received nasty letters on this subject from newspaper editors, but none so straightforward as the most recent one from a Shawnee, Okla., editor.

He wrote:

"Please refrain from sending us pictures of this nature which are horrible at best for a daily newspaper. Photos showing parts of faces and tops of heads are unacceptable for publication. Photos which show the animal alone or with people who can be easily seen and identified will be considered for publication."

And he sent all the photos and the news release back with the note.

Just a few days before this letter arrived I attended a meeting of the Livestock Publications Council at which a journalism professor did a critique of advertising that appeared in these magazines. One ad, for another breed of cattle, featured a show picture with a minimum of 15 members of humanity strung across a two-page spread. The professor wanted to know what in the world all these people were doing in the ad which was supposed to sell the merits of the bull. Some in the audience tried, with little success, to explain how much owners, their friends and relatives and assorted other passers-by love to have their photos snapped with a prize bull or female.

Don't ask me how this all came about. When I first came to the Association and started taking pictures of champions, we usually made a photo of the animal, who was held by the owner or herdsman, with the judge standing to the rear. Then multiple ownership, multitudinous queens, and seemingly larger families came into vogue.

At any rate, things have gone too far. We at the American Angus Assn. plan to do something about the problem, if we can get your help. Here's the plan.

Starting with the National Angus Show at this year's North American, we will take only photographs of the winning animal,

the handler, and the judge, or a queen who will present the ribbon, rosette, banner, or trophy. If the handler can be the owner, or one of the owners, so much the better. But the idea is to have two, and no more than three people in each photo. That way each individual can be seen regardless of the size of the bull, and easily identified in the photo caption.

The exceptions will be on the grand and reserve grand champion animals. After the low-density people photos have been taken, we will pack as many people in this "scrapbook" picture as the owners wish.

The results, I believe, will be very pleasing. The amazed newspaper editors will thank us by running more of the photographs, which will help owners of show winners sell more Angus cattle. And if an exhibitor uses one for an ad, the intended audience will actually be able to see the prize winning animal without assorted human feet and legs sprouting from its abdomen.

Let's give it a try, and if you have any comments, please let me hear them.

AJ

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and Public Relations