

# MARKET COMMUNICATIONS

*PUBLIC RELATIONS: STRETCHING YOUR ADVERTISING DOLLARS*  
*Fifth of a 6-part series on promoting and marketing purebred cattle.*

by B.E. Fichte

**P**ublic relations includes everything you do to get favorable exposure for your ranch except paid advertising. It can really stretch your advertising dollars. And it should be coordinated with paid advertising. If you are projecting a specific theme or concept in your advertising, then your public relations should reflect that same theme.

Some specific public relations efforts you can make include:

**A. Preparing and distributing news releases** to newspapers, magazines, radio and television stations in the areas you wish to reach. Subject matter can include particular accomplishments or guest appearances by ranch personnel, outstanding performance by ranch-owned cattle, ranch tours, etc. Some newsworthy items can be developed—hosting tours or field days on your ranch, for example.

**B. Preparing feature articles** about your operation for use in pertinent breed journals or beef publications. The emphasis today is on practicality, offering something that can be used by other cattlemen. The old "purebred" breeder story without a point or matter of practical interest is ignored by most publications today. If you have a good story in management, breeding, performance, crossbreeding using your bulls, etc.—and can document it—get in touch with some of the magazines, summarize your operation and invite one of their editors to visit you. When your information is published—as a news release or a feature article—by a recognized publication, it subconsciously *implies* editorial endorsement, a powerful tool in creating a favorable image.

**C. Hosting seminars and field days** in conjunction with agricultural suppliers, colleges and universities, or your breed association will attract visitors to your place, affording more opportunities to show off your cattle and management. It also creates opportunities for legitimate publicity.

**D. Provide color slides for cover or inside use** by beef and agricultural publications. If you go to the trouble and expense to produce really outstanding photographs for use in your own advertising and public relations, send some of the outstanding shots to different publications for use. Simply ask that they credit the photographer, state where the photograph was made and that it is furnished courtesy of your farm or ranch.

**E. Appearances on programs by ranch personnel** at beef short courses, field days, seminars, etc. This can help promote the image of leadership and knowledge. It also puts you in contact with potential customers.


**F. Appearances on radio-TV programs.** Let local or regional radio and television farm directors know what you're doing. Offer to join them on their programs if they think your story is worthy.

**G. Get other people involved.** Make a list of all the people you could invite to your ranch and thereby help spread the word about your program. Your banker. Production Credit officer. Local feed dealer. Auction ring manager. Pastor. County sheriff and so on. In one month, how many contacts do you think each of these people make that could have a direct bearing on your sales potential?

Don't fake it with these people. Be sincere. If you're serious about what you're doing, if you believe in your ranch and your cattle, then you certainly must be proud of what you have to show. Your enthusiasm should be contagious and create interest and enthusiasm for you and your program. This helps spread the word. "Word of mouth" advertising by outside parties is something like gossip—it spreads fast and is just the kind of stuff that will be believed.

**H. Get involved in your breed.** A good way to get your name before the public is to participate in events that require some measure of public exposure or comparison—state fairs, consignment sales, gain tests, field days and so forth. Many purebred breeders admit that participation in such events has played a major part in their long-range success. Support your breed—show something, display something, participate!

**I. Other merchandising and public relations techniques include:** Direct mail (from mailers to high quality brochures); displays at shows or fairs, which may include cattle and other sales aids; grouping, displaying cattle for sale, which includes grouping cattle by age, sex and stage of lactation; and depending on the extent of your program, you may consider a slide show as part of your exhibit and for on-ranch presentations.

There's no magic in public relations, no panacea. But with careful planning and thought, you can get excellent public exposure, a valuable extension of your paid advertising program. 

*Next issue: Beef Cattle Photography—The Importance of "How You Look."*