

Your Advertisement Should Stand Out in Crowd

Sir Lawrence Olivier, the renowned British actor, once said, "No matter how well you perform, there's always someone of intelligent opinion who thinks it's lousy."

He did his best and ignored the critics.

Fear of criticism, or more accurately, the fear of being judged by our peers, is a great inhibitor. It almost certainly accounts for a good deal of the bland, sameness in purebred livestock advertising, whether Angus or some other breed.

This fear is understandable. Marketing is personal and public. One purpose of advertising is to be noticed, to make one's Angus operation stand out from all the rest. This is a lot different from cattle breeding,

which is more private. Make a mistake in bull selection, and only a few customers might know. Should that expensive cow you bought turn out to be a dud few will know, unless you tell them.

When a breeder designs an advertisement and places it in a publication or on the radio, however, it hangs in public for everyone to see. The advertiser is forced to compare it with what others are doing. Even more disconcerting, other breeders and competitors judge the advertiser's efforts, often harshly. Their sharpest criticism may well be reserved for the best ads that are hard hitting, intrusive, and effective.

I know from past experience that it's not always comfortable to produce especially hard-hitting advertising. I've seen two outstanding Angus advertising efforts cut short because they made Angus people and Angus leaders uncomfortable. Rural people like to get along with their neighbors, even those who have made the mistake of not raising Angus cattle. So these things happen.

It takes at least a little courage to be different. And, it takes intestinal fortitude to not run with the pack. Since being different and getting noticed are part of what successful advertising is about, courage and guts are essential to successful marketing. If your marketing efforts look and sound like all the rest you're saying to the prospective buyer, "I'm just like all the rest, makes no difference whether you buy from me or my competitor."

Have you ever read a medical journal or the *Journal of Animal Science (JAS)*? If so, you have some idea of the boredom of look-alike stories and unimaginative headlines. Each story is

laid out exactly like the other. One headline in a recent *JAS* article read, "Effects of Amino Acids Administered to a Perfused Area of the Skin in Angora Goats." Now doesn't that simply force you to stop and find out what is happening?

I know, the researchers who spend months or years doing the

work, and who slave over their reports, are convinced that the information is so important that people can't wait to read about it. They also think if they write in a more straightforward and interesting way, their colleagues will snicker at their efforts. Research reports have been written in the same dull way forever.

Some livestock advertisers think the same way. They can't imagine why someone would pass up their ad, not after all the effort they've devoted to their breeding program, and the money they have spent. And heaven forbid their ad should be so different as to cause a stir among their peers in the beef industry. **But** take my word for it, when you compete for someone else's time, and your purpose is to sell them cattle, you simply must be resourceful. You must make your message stand out from all the rest. You must translate the features

of your program and your cattle into benefits the buyer can and will receive.

Do a good job and it's almost certain someone will think you are bragging or stretching the truth. Others might take offense, thinking you are criticizing their cattle or their breeding program. Just ignore the critics.

As Olivier said, "No matter how well you perform, there's always someone...who thinks it's lousy."



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Keith Evans". The signature is fluid and cursive.

by Keith Evans, Director of Communications & Public Relations