



Captive Marketing

The atmosphere of the National Western Stock Show offers many opportunities to market and buy seedstock.

Story & photos by **Corinne Patterson**

For many cattlemen, the hustle and bustle of the December holiday season seems to blur with the month of January and the National Western Stock Show (NWSS).

“The atmosphere in Denver is very busy — there’s always somebody coming by to look at your cattle or just to talk about pedigrees or your operation,” Jeff Goldammer says. “A busy atmosphere is a profitable atmosphere.”

Goldammer’s family operation, Goldammer Angus, is located near Mitchell, S.D. For their 60-cow outfit, activities in the yards focus around marketing cattle. They have merchandised females for the last three years at the Foundation Female Sale, which takes place on Friday during Angus week at the NWSS.

“The reason we choose to market at the National Western Stock Show is that the total exposure for our operation can’t be beat,” Goldammer says. “There are breeders from

all over the world who attend this event. Nowhere else can you captivate a clientele like this.”

Return exposure

For California Angus breeders Mel and Darrell Hansen and Jim Vietheer, the hustle and bustle of people stopping by their stalls on the hill was a marketing advantage at the NWSS. At this year’s event, the partnership, HAVE Angus of Wilton, which also includes Jim’s wife, Karen, and daughter, Elizabeth, showcased progeny from a confirmed heifer pregnancy purchased at the 2001 NWSS Foundation Female Sale in Denver. The bull calf was brought to the 2004 NWSS to show and sell in the only American Angus Association-sponsored sale.

Mel Hansen says the reason the pregnancy was purchased was to buy into a cow family they liked, and the resulting bull calf from that initial purchase was brought to Denver

for marketing in the NWSS Angus Bull Sale. The decision to market the bull in Denver had a lot to do with his pedigree.

“We knew his numbers would be good, and we figured with the pedigree that he had, he would sell a little better here than he would in one of our sales out West,” Hansen says.

So what’s behind the two operations’ commitment to market their genetics at the NWSS? While some reasons vary, a common goal to take advantage of a solid marketing arena rings true at the lively event.

West Coast perspective

Both HAVE Angus and Goldammer Angus market genetics by private treaty and through state sales and events. While the local market is a vital part of private-treaty sales, Denver can open many new doors.

“We are trying to enlarge our customer base,” Vietheer says of their 30-head cow

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► **Above:** It’s difficult to find a seat during the Angus Foundation Female Sale at the NWSS. The hustle and bustle of Angus activities during the week offers opportunities to market seedstock, something Goldammer Angus, Mitchell, S.D., has done for several years.

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herd. "To show cattle and to market cattle at a function like this is just another opportunity to enlarge your customer base and to get your name and your product out there to a larger audience."

The NWSS provides the opportunity to see cattle from other parts of the country, Vietheer says. It also allows breeders who wouldn't have the opportunity to visit the West Coast to see their cattle. "We view showing as our No. 1 advertising tool. Plus, we like to show," Vietheer adds.

They will continue to keep their eyes on the female sale in Denver to find the genetics that may work into their herd in the future, Vietheer says.

"Our world west of the Rockies is basically based on range bulls and others producing seedstock. It's a different market," he continues. "We need to be looking at every market. We buy from other markets, so we need to be moving cattle into another market."

North Central view

"One of the big advantages to marketing cattle in Denver is that your cattle and your genetics get to be marketed and spread all over the United States. This year our five different lots went to five different states," Goldammer says of his female lots sold in the Foundation Female Sale.



► Jim Vietheer (right), Darrell Hansen (on halter) and Mel Hansen (center left) market their bull through the American Angus Association-sponsored bull sale at the NWSS. The NWSS provides these Wilton, Calif., breeders a national platform to showcase their seedstock.

The Goldammer operation is run by Jeff and his wife, Janell, and their daughter, Jodi. Jodi is active in showing across South Dakota, and Janell is key to daily Angus business, including heat detecting, calving and recordkeeping responsibilities, Goldammer says. Marketing in Denver requires the entire family's commitment.

"It is very time-consuming, and the expense is higher than your local sales. But your exposure and connections with other breeders definitely offset each other," Goldammer says.

Goldammer recognizes that there is an added expense compared to marketing private treaty or in local consignment sales.

"The biggest challenge in marketing cattle in Denver is time. We travel 600 miles to get there, and once you are there, it is a weeklong promotion," Goldammer says. When new calves are entering the world back home, he

has a lot on his mind. That is where family plays into marketing in Denver.

"We are in the full swing of calving at that time, so not all of us can be in Denver. My daughter gets everything set up, and then I drive out on Wednesday, leaving my wife in charge of feeding and calving," Goldammer says. "We sell on Friday and then head to Mitchell, South Dakota, on Saturday, as long as weather permits."

While there may be a lot to see and do at the NWSS, Goldammer offers some advice on how to get noticed.

"My advice to someone who is looking to market in Denver is to bring a strong pedigree and a very eye-appealing female," Goldammer says. "Be available to represent your stock while they are on display, and have plenty of help because it's an all-week deal."

