

New digital marketing opportunity for Angus breeders of all sizes acts as supplement to print marketing.

by Kasey Brown, associate editor

A hard fact of life is that it doesn't matter how good your cattle are if you can't sell them. You work so hard on your mating decisions, your herd health and nutrition, and your management practices. Despite all this effort, marketing is a true cornerstone of an operation's success. Luckily, there are many options to market your cattle, and the options keep expanding.

The newest option to benefit Angus breeders is www.AngusAuctions.com. This partnership between Angus Productions Inc. (API) and DVAuction combines the resources of both companies to provide Angus breeders with more trusted marketing options.

Benefits

"Angus Auctions is a really exciting opportunity by creating an online marketplace, which allows buyers and sellers to participate in a variety of styles of auctions," says Brett Spader, director of operations for DVAuction. "It lets sellers position their breeding program to a large target market of online buyers. From a buyer standpoint, they can see sales from everywhere in the country, even when they are unable to make it to a production sale."

Every breeder has different marketing goals and methods, and Angus Auctions is an opportunity to support a breeder's current marketing efforts, Spader adds. "This isn't a digital vs. non-digital situation. We're not trying to replace print marketing. Rather, this has great benefits to supplement print. Print is so important in marketing cattle, and using a digital platform serves as a one-two punch."

Angus Auctions allows breeders of all sizes to reach a large audience nationwide, says Wes Tiemann, Association regional manager. "Like most programs done by

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► **Right:** "We wanted to give two different format options with Angus Auctions, the live close and online bid-off," explains Regional Manager Wes Tiemann. "Some breeders want to go online and get away from the fast-paced auction system, but some love that system. Angus Auctions lets us cater to both groups, and the hybrid option is a good mix."

New-age



MARKETING



PHOTO BY KASEY BROWN

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the American Angus Association, this caters to smaller producers to market to a bigger audience.”

Digital auctions can increase the visibility of your sale or operation. Spader notes that he generally sees about 150-400 people in attendance at production sales. On average, there are about 500 online viewers in addition to those at the sale in person.

Nothing can replace the trust and relationships that are generated from live production sales, he emphasizes, but he has seen cattlemen watch online auctions to “window-shop.” They can get a feel for a program’s genetics

without the expense of attending the sale before they know they want to buy.

Additionally, the seller can save some money with the online bid-off option. Tiemann explains that by hosting an online-only auction, cattlemen can save the expense of going to town, grooming cattle or preparing the ranch for visitors.

Tiemann adds that some breeders are starting to have monthly sales with smaller offerings or embryo sales. This allows them to keep their operation’s name in front of buyers. It also allows breeders to test the markets at different times of the year.

Cecil Huff, of Driftwood Holding Trust in Ava, Mo., has used Angus Auctions for three sales. He says he appreciates how it exposes his genetics to a large audience at reasonable cost. “Angus Auctions allowed me to reach out to larger progressive breeders. For producers with strong genetics, Angus Auctions is a good way to show your genetics off and reach customers. It can potentially give you a worldwide reach.”

Huff adds that by hosting several online auctions, he’s seen an increase in his website’s Google search rankings.

How it works

There were many online auctions available before Angus got on the scene with a breed-specific auction, but Tiemann says the reason to wait was to watch the marketplace and develop the most successful tool for Angus breeders. Angus Auctions offers three options so breeders can choose what works best for them.

The first option is the **live-auction broadcast**. This allows online bidders to participate simultaneously during a production sale or a live auction. Spader explains there are three different cameras trained on the salering, and it allows buyers to be engaged in the action if they can’t attend in person.

It was speculated when the technology was first introduced that traditional auctions were dying. That isn’t the case at all, the marketing professional emphasizes. “We want you in the stands to know the breeder. The relationship between seedstock breeder and buyer is built on trust. There’s a social aspect of being at a sale, too. However, the live-auction broadcast can supplement the sale by giving the opportunity to participate if circumstances prevent buyers from attending.”

The second option is the **online bid-off**. Tiemann explains this is set up like eBay, in which sellers have more flexibility on when they can close the sale, and the auctions can occur any time.

Spader adds that sellers can set a minimum and maximum bid. Buyers can bid back and forth until closing time, and if a bid is placed every five minutes, all lots will stay open. The advantage to this for buyers is if your main objective has gone past your highest bid, then you can move on to a later lot.

There is also a “buy now” option. If a buyer doesn’t want to wait until the auction is closed, they can click “buy now” to pay the maximum bid immediately.

The third option is a hybrid, the **online bid-off with live close**. This combines the previous two by showcasing an online offering but generating the excitement of a live close done by an auctioneer. Buyers should be online at closing time because an auctioneer will sign in and go through all the lots.

Huff used the third option in his most recent sale and says, “It creates excitement to get people to look. The seller can also input information while the auction is going on, like saying Lot 5 is the dam of Lot 1.”

Tiemann recalls, “We wanted to give two different format options with Angus Auctions, the live close and online bid-off. Some breeders want to go online and get away from the fast-paced auction system, but some love that system. Angus Auctions lets us cater to both groups, and the hybrid option is a good mix.”

Now is an exciting time to get started with digital supplementation to your marketing strategy. “I think in the next few years we will see tremendous growth in the online marketplace,” says Spader.

Partnership perks

The partnership can benefit all Angus breeders. Spader says, “Both of these firms have a lot of respect out there in the industry with a long track record of providing great results for their clients. People are so

important in agriculture and drive it forward, whether it’s the employees on both the Angus side and the DVAuction side, or those developing the technology itself. People can rely on it — it’s safe to use, and it works time and time again.

“First and foremost the people make this work; you cannot replace the trust and those relationships that we have in the industry on either side of the equation. That’s the really essential thing that makes this partnership work,” he adds.

DVAuction was the first company to broadcast livestock sales and has remained an industry leader with a strong track record. Spader explains that DVAuction has 60 auction markets every week and 184,000 account holders, so there is a large potential audience for the sales listed. They are on track to broadcast 700 beef production sales this year, and he says everyone benefits from the followers of these entities.

Huff says about 25%-30% of his marketing budget goes toward Angus Auctions, and he anticipates increasing that percentage. He said he spent some money advertising his auctions, but API and DVAuction are able to do more outreach. For instance, the sale gets listed on the Angus Calendar on the *Angus Journal* website, and the staff of both entities are very helpful in getting everything set up.

Getting started

To get started with Angus Auctions, contact your regional manager, who can visit with you to decide which option might be best. Instead of needing three to four months of preparation for a traditional production sale, online sales can be started and closed in about one to two weeks if all information — registration numbers, footnotes, breeding status, lot details, videos, photos and other requested links — is ready, says Spader.

How safe is a seller when selling cattle online? Spader assures that cattle are never released without payment, and buyers agree to the terms and conditions when they set up an account and again when they log in to the sale. Buyers also go through a credit approval process over the phone before creating an account.

“It’s amazing how little we deal with buyer dropout. We have a really safe group of people who have been approved,” emphasizes Spader.

To view current sales and to get more information, visit www.AngusAuctions.com.

