TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES EXPANDED -
CONSIGN HEALTHY, SOUND STRUCTURED, FUNCTIONAL CATTLE

In the 2023-2024 Missouri Angus Directory, we released the work of the Missouri Angus Association Industry Relations Committee's, "Top 10 Best Practices" for Regional Association Consignment Sales. The items are not listed in any particular order and are meant to aid consignment sales in running more effective, higher grossing sales that better fit the needs of buyers. This month, we expand upon the first item.

By Julie Conover, Missouri Angus Association

While this may seem like an obvious best practice, we all can be a little barn blind. A great example is if an animal has a pedigree or EPD profile that we appreciate within the herd, we sometimes overlook the other challenges the animal may have when trying to be marketed in public auction. Healthy and functional cattle are the cornerstone of any successful sale.

Longtime Missouri Angus Breeders' Futurity consignor Steve Birk of Birk Beef Cattle stated about selecting a consignment, "If you are going to sell something, it has to hurt to lose her from your herd. If you sell the good ones, people take notice and they will come and want to buy."

Quality and reputation are two challenges of conducting livestock sales. In the consignment sale setting, standing behind cattle when an issue does arise is even more important in maintaining the reputation of your program as well as the consignment sale. To help provide guidance for breeders, the American Angus Association developed the Suggested Sale Terms and Conditions (https://www.angus.org/Pub/suggested_sale_terms.pdf?v=1).

Viewing the topic from a different perspective, Dr. Jeff Jenkins, Missouri Department of Agriculture District Veterinarian stated, "Registered seedstock are a very important segment of the Missouri beef cattle industry. A major part of this segment are sales of females and bulls to commercial cattlemen. With that in mind, as seedstock producers, we need to make sure animal health regulations and testing such as semen evaluations, identification, pregnancy diagnosis and Trichomoniasis testing are performed. Making that information available to buyers makes them more confident of their purchase, reduces possible future problems and hopefully creates a repeat customer."

Looking specifically at selecting and preparing cattle, the Missouri Angus Association Industry Relations Committee developed these specific points as a way to assist fellow breeders:

- **Quality**: Only consign cattle that you would want to add to your own herd.
- **Disposition**: If the animal is flighty or nervous, select a different marketing avenue.
- **Feet**: If an animal has had foot issues or needs to be trimmed annually, use other marketing options.
- **Health**: All consignments must be healthy and free of disease. Vaccines should be boosted, along with deworming and pour-on completed at least 30 days prior to sale. All cattle need to be accompanied by a health certificate within 30 days of the sale date. If you think cattle may be purchased out of state, be prepared to abide by their state regulations.
- **Females**: All cattle must have four functional quarters with normal teat size.
- **Bulls**: Testing is required to market cattle.
  - All bulls 12 months or older must past a semen test.
  - According to Missouri law, regulations require all non-virgin bulls and all bulls over 24 months of age be tested for Trichonomiasis.

While this list is not comprehensive, it is a starting point, especially for new consignors.

Jordan Hunter of JDH Auction Enterprises reminds us, "High quality cattle that are functional in the field prove to bring more at consignment sales. Breeders are always looking for a place to purchase these type of cattle and there's many of these kind across the state of Missouri."

The success of a sale begins at the ground up in numerous ways. Make sure your potential consignments are setting the right foundation for the future of your herd marketing. Stay tuned to the Trails for an article highlighting each of the top 10 practices.