

TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES EXPANDED - CATTLE SHOULD BE IN EXCELLENT CONDITION.

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 third item.

By Julie Conover, Missouri Angus Association

You only get one chance to make a first impression. The same goes for the cattle you offer for sale. Whether it be in person, via a sale book or even a post on social media, the impression will last with potential customers.

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An advertising executive, Fred R. Barnard, brilliantly stated, "A picture is worth a thousand words." While we will have an article that looks specifically at photos in the spring, the first representation of an animal can immediately peak curiosity or turn someone off of interest in an animal and even a sale. With consignment sales particularly, it is a challenge to have the offering appear uniform. Whether it be body condition or animal health such as ringworm and mange, less than ideal conditions can turn into disappointed consignors and unrealized potentials.

In looking specifically at having cattle in excellent condition, the Missouri Angus Association Industry Relations Committee developed this specific point as a way to assist fellow breeders:

- Management for sale cattle should be different than that of your retained cattle. Breeders may need to utilize the statement, "If you think they're ready, give them another pail of grain." Underweight and rough coated cattle most likely will not achieve the desired premium.

In looking specifically at flesh on cattle, Body Condition Score (BCS) can be a great way to determine if cattle are ready to market. Missouri Angus Association member Cody Smith who works with breeders on nutrition plans knows the importance of having cattle in the right condition and the difference condition can make when it comes to the price received on sale day. Smith states, "Cattle should be at the very least in a BCS 5 when getting marketed, but preferably a BCS 6. Fat sells,

but they are not to be obese, just smooth! They should be in good enough flesh that being sheared they are still desirable to view."

With the exception of show cattle, we happen to live in a state with sometimes less than ideal forage situations which lend towards raising slick-haired cattle. While we all know cattle go through that awkward shedding time coming out of the winter, if you are trying to market cattle then, you will need to take proactive steps to have your cattle looking their best. Whether you clip them or hire someone else, in most scenarios, heads and tails along with long hairs should be removed prior to arrival at the sale and even photographing or videoing. If opting to torch cattle, you make want to build-in a little extra time for hair regrowth so cattle are looking their best on sale day.

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With years of experience in prepping cattle for sales, Missouri Angus Association member Brent Schuering reminds potential consignor, "You have to have your cows in shape. If the cows don't look the part, they are not going to sell." Planning and preparations are key to reaching your goal market price. Start early to make arrangements to have someone help you if needed with getting cattle ready for photos and ultimately sale day. Scheuring continues, "The more time you have, the happier you will be with the outcome on sale day. Make every moment count."

In closing, we want you to make a great first impression and that means having paperwork completed and cattle physically ready to sell. Make sure you are putting your best foot forward when it comes to representing your program. Stay tuned to the Trails for an article highlighting each of the top 10 practices.

