

TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES EXPANDED - CONSIGNORS NEED TO BE POSITIVE AND ACCEPT SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR MARKETING THE SALE.

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 fourth item.

By Julie Conover, Missouri Angus Association

When you hear a sale name, what is your initial thought? Whether it be a production or consignment sale, your mind immediately has some sort of reaction. Especially in the case of trying to market cattle, we want the reaction to be positive!

Previous experiences with farms or ranches also weigh heavily into the response and make may the difference if they open the sale book and ultimately show up to the sale or if the sale book is quickly tossed into recycling.

In the past two articles, we've talked about accuracy (#2: Have accurate data available on each lot consigned) and first impressions (#3: Cattle should be in excellent condition). Those two factors also weigh heavily into the requirements of a consignor and helping reach or exceed desired sale prices.

In looking specifically at accepting some responsibility for marketing the sale, the Missouri Angus Association Industry Relations Committee developed this specific point as a way to assist fellow breeders:

- Consignments should be selected early to allow for adequate preparation and advertising.

In addition to having the time to make management changes for the consignment, insuring accuracy of information available on the lot is essential. Some specific areas of interest include, but are not limited to:

- Parentage: With parentage confirmed, this removes much of the concern of potential buyers and can help you sort through things within your own program to increase the accuracy of your records as human errors as well as calf transfer can happen quite easily.
- Pregnancy Status: When opting to sell bred females, providing as much information as possible is a definite advantage. Records become extremely important as well as your relationship with your veterinarian. Some veterinarians do not feel comfortable with pregnancy checks so be proactive ahead of needing to complete a health paper for a sale to make sure you have the right person coming to your farm or ranch.
- Genomics: Genomic testing allows for all boxes to be filled on the EPDs. Although an added charge, this does help market most cattle and requires approximately a 4-week lead time ahead of printing the sale book. Add-on testing is also an option when completing genomics which would allow for testing of any potential genetic conditions.

- Genetic Condition Potential Carriers: Selling a potential carrier can hurt your pocketbook more than you may think possibly going for half of the value of the animal, or more. While some conditions are of little to no concern to potential buyers, others raise a red flag that may stop a person from bidding entirely. Developmental Duplication (DD), along with others, would be one of the conditions that would cause alarm. Next to the registration number is an indication of any known genetic challenges that may be in the pedigree. If a potential buyer saw DDP, I can guarantee you are leaving money on the table when it comes to marketing the animal. The Potential (P), which means the animal has not yet been tested is something that can easily be prevented with a paid test run through the American Angus Association. As a reminder, if the animal has been tested, the abbreviation shows the genetic condition and then F (Free), C (Carrier), or A (carries two copies of that specific mutation).

While it may seem like we are asking a lot of consignors, this guide is to help maximize your success of marketing cattle through consignment sales. An additional area of participating in a sale is marketing. While the actual budget will determine where and how ads are run, individual consignors have a responsibility to positively represent the sale and their consignments. Reaching out to former and/or current customers to make them aware of your consignment(s) is essential in marketing your program and building your own customer database.

Dick Beck, former Missouri Angus Association member and the current Vice President of Sales and Marketing at ORIgen stated, "You need to spend more time with the people you don't know than the ones you do." This business is based on relationships and much of that falls on the shoulders of consignors in the months, weeks and days ahead of the sale.

In closing, your proactive actions will help you in marketing consignments at any level. The more accurate the information you provide to potential customers, the further you are ahead on sale day. Remember your response when you look at other sale books and help your sale to have positive reactions. Stay tuned to the Trails for an article highlighting each of the top 10 practices.