

TOP 10 BEST PRACTICES EXPANDED - IDENTIFY YOUR CUSTOMERS AND MARKET TO THEM.

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 fifth item.

By Julie Conover, Missouri Angus Association

We are blessed to be in a part of the country where we can farm without government infringement and make choices on how and the ways in which we manage cattle. With all this freedom, comes the opportunity to build your own program with your own set of core values and standards. As with all cattle production, there will be challenges and opportunities, and navigating between the two will help determine your success.

One such area of opportunity lies within your marketplace. Breeding healthy, functional cattle that are sought after in different price ranges occurs daily. Determining what will set your program apart and utilizing genetics that you want to market is an ongoing challenge for all producers. With trends and specific marketing pathways available within the Angus breed, the fundamentals are still essential. With over 71 years in the Angus business, Bobby Dale McBride stated, "Don't sell something you won't be proud to own yourself."

Once you have identified your program and the cattle in which you want to sell, you can then focus in on a marketing plan. In looking specifically at marketing, the Missouri Angus Association Industry Relations Committee developed this specific point as a way to assist fellow breeders:

- Maximize the value of your ad placement and set goals to increase your following.
- Recruit and engage potential buyers and consignors throughout the year.

If opting to consign in a regional consignment sale, your most important step is to know the deadlines. Entry deadlines are generally two months (or more) prior to the sale to allow for the sale book to be created and mailed to potential and former buyers. Depending on the date of the sale, the sale manager may be advertising the sale consignments without even knowing what will be in the sale which is challenging and from my experience, slightly terrifying.

As a consignor, you can improve the marketing of most sales by identifying your entries early and having them in the right condition to market. Part of your marketing plan may be to include a photo of the lot in advertising and the sale book. This again needs to be done early which means having arrangements for clipping the head and naval area ahead of picture day to have your animal looking its best in a low stress environment. Depending on the sale, body clipping may be something to consider too.

Brett Naylor, the new Four State Angus Association Sale Manager stated, "A good picture is worth 1,000 words and superior to any singular EPD or pedigree I've found in marketing cattle." When cattle are stressed, they will challenge your photographer and often leave you with a less than ideal photo. Preparation is again key and don't forget the fly spray on a summer day.

Naylor expands on marketing by adding, "Cattle that have good numbers intrigues people, but it's that initial impression of any animal that sways a person's mind on which animal to purchase, or from which herd. Using good photos on social media brings in new customers regularly, and makes existing customers proud of the purchase they made. You can't have a conversation about production records, EPDs, or development of cattle if a person isn't interested initially."

In closing, your program will be on display with the consignment(s) you offer. Make sure you are prepared and set yourself up to be successful on sale day by taking proactive steps in the months ahead of the sale. Maximize the value of your offering by providing sale managers with quality information and supporting image(s) that will help set your cattle apart and continually improve the sale. Stay tuned to the Trails for an article highlighting each of the top 10 practices.

