



The VIEW FROM HERE

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Don't ever underestimate the importance of hype. Whether it's a summer blockbuster at the movie theater, this year's World Series match up, the cattle business or the newest technological gadget, consumers more times than not respond to the hype with their checkbooks.

The latest evidence of that was the unveiling of the new iPhone by Apple Computers. For those of you not up to speed on palm pilots, cell phones, compact music players and the like, the iPhone is supposed to do it all. The reason I say supposed to, is because before it was released at the end of June, no one knew for sure. The folks at Apple did a masterful job of keeping their new gadget under wraps. They unveiled the device this past January at a computer convention to much fanfare, but somehow managed to keep the device out of the hands of journalists and techies all over the world for an unprecedented seven months.

By the time the much anticipated release date arrived, there were people standing in line for several days to pay \$600 for a souped-up cell phone that no one was certain would do half of what was advertised.

I will be the first to admit that hype and a grand marketing scheme doesn't ensure the long-term success of a product that doesn't have the ability to live up to expectations. Whether it lives up to expectations is secondary. The fact of the matter is, Apple Computers developed a product they assumed the public would be rabid for then they let their marketing team go to work.

The cattle business works much the same way. While it is highly unlikely a breeder or breed of cattle will ever develop a genetic line that will cause people to stand in line for days waiting on the opportunity to buy one, we have all seen the frenzy created when unique genetics mesh with creative marketing to generate demand above and beyond what is considered normal. Within our own breed, homozygous genetics, polled fullbloods and high milk EPDs have all created their fair share of consumer enthusiasm.

My point to all of this, other than to fill up my allotted space this month, is to point out that the buying public will respond to a product that is properly positioned to fill a certain consumer need.

The old adage, "if you build it they will come" certainly holds true as long as they realize what you have grazing the back 40. The Limousin breed has been on a near 40-year odyssey to build a beef animal that will grow, grade and yield in an efficient manner with all the convenience traits humanly possible. We still have work to be done (I'm sure the next generation of iPhones will come with even more bells and whistles), but I truly believe Limousin breeders have created a product worthy of standing in line for. The difference between us and Apple Computers is that we have thousands of "companies" producing the Limousin product and it is up to each and every one of those outfits to hold up their end of the bargain, not only from a marketing perspective, but from a quality control standpoint as well.

If you will excuse me, I need to pause my music and save this typed document so I can return some e-mails before making a few calls on my new iPhone. I sure hope the battery stays charged long enough to surf the Internet when I get off work. **LW**