



Around THE WORLD

by Thad Combs

As you flip through this issue and see the impressive results of the National Western Stock Show, Fort Worth and many other stages where Limousin are in the spotlight, it is easy to be energized and optimistic about the spring sale season. I know I am.

During sale season, the number one objective of every breeder is to sell them all, sell them high and have zero complaints. In some areas of the country breeders are having to do more to earn and keep a buyer's business.

For those that find marketing bulls to commercial customers a bit of a challenge, concerns I hear are: "I have to take less, because they do not want to spend enough" or "they can pick up a cheap bull down the road or at the sale barn."

Both can be tough obstacles to face unless you have taken steps to protect your yourself in advance.

If you are looking for creative ways to protect your interests, here are a couple of ideas to consider for improving the profitability and marketability of your program. Think of them as backup plans—Plan B's if you will.

Develop a freezer beef market.

Consider developing a freezer beef market or working with a local, regional or national outfit that will give you a premium price for your unsold bulls. Of course it is not our first preference, but numerous breeders indicate they receive \$1,400 to \$1,800 for their cull or unsold yearling and older bulls. Many of them have a waiting list of local freezer beef customers willing to pay a premium for quality farm-raised beef.

I suggest you decide how much profit you need to cover your risk of guaranteeing the bull and set your prices accordingly. It is much easier to remain firm on your bull prices if you know you have a profitable backup plan.

Only bulls sold for breeding leave your program intact.

When I was in high school, an "old timer" told me, "Never let an intact bull off your farm if you did not collect a breeding-bull price."

People commonly make this mistake, but it can kill your bull market. Chances are good someone in the seats will recognize an opportunity and those bulls could end up back in the breeding pasture, even though you did not get "bull price" for him. You might even get a call to see if he can get papers on the bull you sold at the barn.

Designate them "for slaughter only." It only takes a few guys buying bulls out of the "kill pen" and figuring out they will never settle a cow to cure their appetite for "cheap sale-barn bulls." Even old herd bulls should be sterilized before they are sent to the barn.

By creating a Plan B to capture as much profit as possible from your cull or unsold bulls, and making sure the only way they leave your property is castrated or sterilized, you are taking important steps to protect your interests, maximizing your opportunity for profit on your breeding bull market.

"The bitterness of pour quality remains long after the sweetness of low price is forgotten."

Benjamin Franklin

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