



The VIEW FROM HERE

Kyle Haley

To be honest, I have almost crashed my vehicle more than once trying to figure out what a vanity license plate on the car in front of me is trying to say. Now imagine my frustration trying to communicate via text message with my teenage daughter. JK, LOL, BTW, IDK, and the list goes on.

My aunt, who is an elementary school English teacher, tells me that grammar and spelling are a lost art for many of the kids growing up in this generation. A friend of mine who is a university professor insists the best way to get the word out about a meeting or event is to send a mass text message, log on to Twitter and/or post it on Facebook.

My point is, the way we communicate is changing and can be vastly different depending upon your audience.

The registered cattle business has always been a people business. Sure, the cattle must be able to WTW (walk the walk), but communication between buyer and seller always has been and always will be the most important aspect of this business.

To that end, it is more important than ever to understand the audience you are trying to communicate (sell) to. Are you trying to sell the top end of your replacement heifers to a fellow breeder, a commercial bull to a cow-calf man or a show heifer to a junior? Chances are, the message and the way you choose to communicate with that potential customer will vary about as much as the cattle you are trying to market.

Take this issue for instance. The annual June/July Herd Reference Issue is filled with ads from breeders from all over the country. The products they are promoting are as different as the breeders themselves, and so is the method they choose to deliver that message.

Sure, they are all print ads, but some ads rely on eye-catching graphics and very little copy to attract attention, while others focus less on graphics and more on providing intricate details about their program and their genetics.

Which is better? It depends on the individual reader. After 15 years in the business, if I have learned one thing, it is this. My favorite ad probably won't be your favorite ad. Sometimes it is hard to get a husband and wife or an owner and manager to agree on the best way to promote their products. It all comes down to personal preference and what the prospective buyer is looking for.

If you don't know your buyers as well as you should, now would be a great time to get to know them better. As Bob Hough's explanation of NALF's Strategic Plan points out, "The reason seedstock exist is to supply bulls to commercial cow-calf producers, who—in turn—supply cattle up through the supply chain, including backgrounders, feedyards, packers, wholesalers and, ultimately, consumers."

In other words, the success or failure of any breed always has and always will be tied to its ability to penetrate the commercial market. The tricky part is all commercial cattlemen don't want the same beast, so as a seedstock producer it is your job to figure out what type of commercial producer your bulls should be geared towards, then attack that market with every resource at hand.

The success of your operation as well as the success of the breed depends on it.

WHYETHB

(We Hope You Enjoy The Herd Book)

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