

Earning Loyalty

I was looking through a trade magazine recently and came across a tagline in an ad that really resonated with me, "You don't buy loyalty, you earn it."

Loyalty can be defined as "a strong feeling of support or allegiance," and earning loyalty is a daily undertaking. It is not earned with one action; rather, it's earned with repeated, consistent actions that demonstrate your commitment to serving your customers.

This loyalty is often times measured by how satisfied a customer is with the results of the product he bought from you. I have had this discussion with my sons on many occasions when they ask about why we have gone to the same operations for years to make purchases. My comment is that we have been satisfied with our past results — those firms have treated us fairly, and they have continued to provide the product we need.

Many of us are loyal to sports teams, universities, restaurants, stores,

genetics, programs and others. For example, my family and I have really become loyal Kansas City Royals fans because we have been satisfied with the team's results the past couple of years. This seems a little counterintuitive to my loyalty to the Chicago Cubs, but that might be for another article in the future or maybe even a case study.

As a seedstock producer, in order to create loyalty, you need to understand your customer, his needs and then even the needs of his customers. For example, you may have a customer that uses Hereford bulls in a program that sells feeder calves after they have been weaned and preconditioned. This might seem like a simple task to just put selection pressure on expected progeny differences (EPDs) like Calving Ease (CE) and Weaning Weight (WW) or Yearling Weight (YW) so your customer gets a live calf and sells his calves by the pound.

However, what about his customer — the feedlot that feeds these steers and expects them to have some value at the



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packer level? So, now the satisfaction level grows because if the feedlot doesn't see a profit, it will not support your customer and ultimately your customer will not support you. Even more importantly, your customer may be retaining his own replacements, and if those females aren't within the right parameters for milk, udder quality, mature size, fleshing ability, disposition or fertility, then your customer will not be satisfied.

Your genetics touch many down the line, and it is important that you introduce all the tools necessary to make the right decisions for your customers. They depend on it and they want to be loyal to you, so go earn their loyalty.

Genetic evaluation to be run 10 times a year

With these considerations in mind, in February 2016, you will find the start of more frequent runs of the genetic evaluation. The American Hereford Association (AHA) is committed to

providing you the tools you will need to make informed and well-documented decisions. It is your job to use the tools to make decisions that will keep your customers profitable.

We will run the evaluation 10 times a year, and the EPD Trends & Distributions Report will be updated each run. However, the compliancy rules for Whole Herd Total Performance Records (TPRTM) and evaluations run for different recognition programs will still be on the same time schedule. For Whole Herd TPR compliancy and Gold TPR status, it will still be run in July and December, and animal recognition like Dams of Distinction, Sires of Distinction and CHB Sires of Distinction will be in the spring. The Herd Benchmark Report will also remain updated twice a year. **HW**