

Hereford Is Always on My Mind



Promoting Herefords is a year-round job.

by Bridget Beran

Building up the Hereford brand is an important job for Hereford breeders throughout the country. However, this cannot be accomplished in a single day, week or even month. According to marketing experts, building a brand takes a minimum of four months before producers will begin to see the change in prices.

For most consumers, the decision about where to spend their hard-earned dollars is made long before the day they go to the store. Likewise, commercial breeders have decided what sale they need to attend to purchase cattle months beforehand. This tendency to plan

ahead means producers need to reach out before their sale month.

Building recognition

“Year-round advertising helps build brand recognition,” says Andrew Brooks, Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC vice president of marketing. “We are blasted with thousands of messages a day and now, more than ever, those people can decide what they want to see and hear. For today’s customer to start to recognize a brand and demand a brand, they have to see and hear it over and over again.”

To ensure top-of-the-mind awareness, people need to be hearing about Herefords and CHB®

all year. Whether producers are talking to a breeder or seeing logos on clothing, advertisements and signs, consistent exposure increases the odds that Hereford will be the first thought when a commercial cattleman thinks of what he needs in his new bull or females.

“Promote the qualities that differentiate our brand and breed from so many others,” Brooks says. “Differentiation is our brand, and advertising is about positioning that brand by promoting and communicating our brand’s differentiators to a targeted mass audience.”

Advertisements should focus on providing a constant and consistent

message to customers and meet the marketing focus.

Advertising should be designed to convince potential buyers that Hereford cattle and Hereford breeders are offering benefits that they're not going get with any other breed. While this isn't a short-term program, it can make all the difference. Done correctly, this means implementing a steady, well-thought-out program that breeders can run throughout the entire year. While the effect won't be immediate, in a year or so, breeders may start to see the difference that advertisement made.

"The only way to be heard is to speak and the only way to be remembered is to repeat over and over a very simple, compelling, single-minded message," says Brooks.

A good advertising program needs to send a distinct message that can be repeated for months and years to come. This consistent message creates the brand and builds the reputation a ranch stands on. It sets the precedence of what breeders and customers can expect from the herd and the breeder. This message serves as the platform from which all advertisement stems. Every single advertisement printed, social media blast sent or phone call made should be run through the filter of a breeder's platform to ensure the message is consistent.

Backing the brand

"With millions of dollars you can quickly build brand interest, but without a product that performs you won't keep your customer base," Brooks explains. *Advertising Age* states that authenticity is the most necessary part of an advertising campaign. If the product isn't consistent with advertising, the campaign won't generate the kind of interest desired for the brand.

An important step for breeders is to realize that their ranches, their herds and their families are part of their brand. Ranches and farms aren't just selling a particular animal; they are selling the entire brand. Promoting Herefords needs

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to be a priority for breeders, as well, because what's good for Herefords is good for the individual herd as well.

Advertising has moved from a stage of "persuading" to one of "fostering long-term relationships," according to *Advertising Age*, the leading global source of news, analysis and inspiration for the marketing and media community. This change has led producers to begin a dialogue with their customers and engage them. Developing this relationship includes initiating year-round correspondence and finding innovative ways to connect with their buyers.

"Marketing means generating opportunities and good marketing is generating thousands of potential opportunities every day," Brooks says. CHB LLC helps expand its brand by co-marketing with other products, such as pairing wine and beef. This benefits CHB by doubling the amount of eyes on its product with half the cost and

allows the CHB brand to grow and receive more recognition.

Brand name is a fallback for consumers when they select their products. Consider Coca-Cola®. Consumers know what to expect from Coke and that they like it. Without question, they know it's the one in the red box with white writing.

"The goal in advertising and marketing is to spread the word about a brand and the more people who are familiar with the brand, the greater the brand's market power," says Brooks. "A good brand has familiarity with the consumer and wields the power of persuasion, thus, creating an avenue for others to pass on your message."

Hereford breeders strive to achieve the same recognition with the Hereford breed and the CHB brand. For Brooks marketing CHB and Hereford cattle goes hand in hand to create a consistent message. Producers want a consumer that is walking up to the meatcase to know that CHB is the correct selection.

"Protein is essential to living a healthy life and there's no better protein than Hereford beef," Brooks says. This is vital for consumers to think, believe and know to be true.

"The American Hereford Association is one of the oldest breed associations in the United States, making Herefords worthy of the title 'The Great Improvers.' The heritage is strong, the story is true. That's why CHB is *Excellence built by Tradition*," says Brooks. **HW**

Bridging the Gap

"The biggest challenge facing producers is the disconnect we now have between agriculture and our growing population of young people. We're now approaching third and fourth generations of children removed from some sort of agriculture background," says Andrew Brooks, CHB LLC vice president of marketing. "We need to speak or we cannot be heard. We need to look to social media, blogs, YouTube and ranch tours as all possibilities to reconnect with the public. We're a breed based on 5,000-plus members that take pride in raising a wholesome, healthy and safe product."

Bridging this gap is no easy feat. With the rising average age of farmers and ranchers, many ranchers grew up without a computer, let alone an in-depth knowledge of Twitter, Facebook and blogs. Yet these varieties of outreach are the most efficient ways to reach out to the younger generations of consumers. **HW**

