

## Managing Marketing Strategies

When it comes to marketing your operation, there are many factors to consider. Business success is affected by everyday management decisions, the environment, customer preferences and much more. However, marketing plays a key role in the opportunity for operational growth and success. Through brief interviews on the topic of marketing, the AHA Field Staff present their insight on marketing opportunities for producers within each of their regions.

### Western Region

Ariz., Calif., Idaho, Nev., Ore., Utah, Wash.

#### Clint Brightwell



Clint Brightwell

**Q:** How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?

**A:** “From a commercial standpoint, I think producers are starting to look at other options in terms of marketing cattle. Producers are starting to look at alternative methods of marketing and moving those feeder cattle around. The purebred breeders need to keep moving forward as they would. Purebred cattlemen are known for being progressive, and being progressive lets you rise to the top. The breeders are doing that. They’re not slowing down. They’re just continuing to move forward. That’s what has to keep happening.”

**Q:** What steps should producers take in developing a marketing/production plan?

**A:** “I would say that, long-term, the way the commercial bull business is going, we’ve got to be able to help our customers move their cattle. Everybody’s doing it. We’ve got to have ways to assist those producers. From what I’ve seen, the days of free delivery and a guarantee are not enough anymore. As we are moving forward, with carcass numbers where they’re at, making advancements in terms of carcass quality and merit could bring some value to the table long-term. Just as it can bring long-term success, it requires long-term commitment to make that happen.”

to expand your current market, I think it’s a good time to be in front of as many people as possible. You should act as an assistant for your customers’ marketing programs and help promote their operations as much as any.”

**Q:** How can producers better identify where to improve their marketing strategies?

**A:** “I would look at your market objectives and see what areas you need to expand in terms of how you’re marketing those cattle. When you look at some areas that need improvement, maybe look at some marketing options to get in front of a few more people in those areas, whether it’s doing more business with commercial cattlemen or selling a few more herd bulls or females. Make sure you’re getting your message out so you can make those sales happen.”

**Q:** Are there any promotional components, perhaps specific to digital technology, that could help producers reach new audiences and increase sales?

**A:** “As far as what we’re doing with the Association and HPI (Hereford Publications Inc.), I think one of the more under-utilized resources we have is the use of mailing lists and putting out postcards to get your message out. Using mailing lists and postcards really focuses your marketing toward a specific area that you want to touch on and improve upon. I think that’s one of the things we have that can really help out some people in some different areas.”

think customer service is going to continue to be a larger part of the seedstock business. When you look at how many options cattlemen have to purchase seedstock, it becomes very clear which operations are helping their customers market their cattle. One thing about the Hereford breed is our breeders are very resilient, and I know they will find ways to move forward, stronger from the challenges they have recently faced.”

**Q:** What AHA resources are available, and how can producers capitalize on them?

**A:** “The *Hereford World* is a well-put-together publication that everyone looks at and every breeder should be looking to have an ad in of some size. Additionally, our mailers are a really great way to reach new people, and the Herefords On Demand (HOD) platform is a nice tool that’s available, especially for private treaty sales. With HOD, you can keep costs down, but you can get a catalog online that people can go to and see everything. I think that’s going to be something some of our breeders really enjoy using and find useful in their marketing plans.”

**Q:** How can producers better identify where to improve their marketing strategies?

**A:** “Producers need to ask their customers and friends who have their best interest in mind. The people we work with, most of the time, love to get and give the perspective of one rancher to another.”

**Q:** How can producers better communicate with customers and potential clients about their programs and Hereford cattle?

**A:** “Social media is something we’re seeing a lot of people using and are doing so very successfully. They’re using it to tell their story and get it out there in front of a lot of people. I really think getting off the ranch and attending events in your region is a great way to get out there, learn what’s going on, meet new people, network and talk to potential customers. Also, taking extra time at bull delivery to talk to your customers can really help you understand what they like about your cattle and also shows them you are interested

in their program as well. People naturally like doing business with people that have shown an interesting in helping them.”

### Iowa/Missouri

Iowa, Mo. and eastern Canada

#### Joe Rickabaugh



Joe Rickabaugh

**Q:** How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?

**A:** “I think staying in touch with your clients and customers is more important now – in times like these – than ever before. Figure out your customers’ needs now and their needs for the future. Seedstock producers who can assist in the marketing of their customers’ calves will make all the difference. Work on being able to help your clients market their steers, replacement females, etc. Help them increase their bottom line.”

**Q:** How do you think producers in your region could best improve their marketing techniques in order to better their programs and maximize profit?

**A:** “It’s important for producers to be maintaining good contact with clients and customers and to do so throughout the year, not just prior to the sale. Keep your customers in tune as far as the seedstock you have available.”

**Q:** What AHA resources are available, and how can producers capitalize on them?

**A:** “I think *Hereford World* is the cornerstone. It’s also important for producers to utilize social media avenues such as Herefords On Demand, Facebook, etc. In order to best stay in touch with customers, use both print media and social media to reach all demographics. Herefords on Demand is a dynamic marketing tool that offers a multitude of opportunities – weekly up-to-date EPDs, up to three pictures per lot plus a video capability, an EPD search tool within and across the HOD catalogs and the capability to do private treaty catalogs or a production sale catalog. HOD

### Mountain Region

Colo., Mont., N.D., Wyo. and western Canada

#### Kevin Murnin



Kevin Murnin

**Q:** How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?

**A:** “Now more than ever, it is important to be involved with your customers and how they’re marketing their cattle. As you look

### North Central Region

Kan., Minn., Neb., S.D. and central Canada

#### Alex Acheson



Alex Acheson

**Q:** How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?

**A:** “When producers start thinking about what they should be doing moving into next year, I think they need to be prepared for ever changing times. With our current state of times, producers need to be more aggressive in their marketing plans. I also

puts producers of all sizes on the same playing field with a plethora of tools to use whether you are marketing a small offering of one to 10 head or a large offering of many head. This unique format allows the producer to design and produce their own catalog based on their busy schedule or the Creative Services team can do a turnkey job for the producer.”

**Q: In your opinion, what are some of the barriers producers face when taking their programs to the next step?**

**A:** “I would say one barrier is just the number of cattle an operation can produce for sale. On the other hand, if you have a limited herd, you can use EPDs, etc. to produce as high a quality of cattle as anyone in the business.”



### Upper Midwest Region

Ill., Ind., Ky., Md., Mich., Ohio, Pa., W.Va. and Wis.



**John Meents**

**Q: How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?**

**A:** “I do believe when everybody else is walking, movers and shakers are running. Now is not the time to be walking slowly. Seedstock producers need to bore on forward harder than ever before. When everybody else is cutting back on promotions and advertising, that’s a time to gear up stronger and move forward. The same thing applies when everybody else is wanting to buy cattle; that’s a great time to sell. When everybody else is wanting to sell cattle, that’s a great time to buy. It goes back to supply and demand. So, to make those changes, at this particular time, you need to promote more to gain market share.”

**Q: How do you think producers in your region could best improve their marketing techniques in order to better their programs and maximize profit?**

**A:** “I think it’s important that they set up an advertising budget, and with that, it has to include print media, social media and radio. Data show that people make buying decisions from print media and word of mouth rather than social media. While social media is a tool, I agree with the data that purchasing decisions are made via print media and personal relationships. Investing in advertising dollars can and will help your program and bottom line.”

**Q: What do you think is the biggest obstacle producers are faced with when marketing cattle?**

**A:** “The negativity of the national news media is putting a damper on everything connected to the market, not just cattle but America in general. In my area so much of the market is driven by corn and soybean prices. Grain farmers are struggling to make a profit currently. I have seen a stronger market for Hereford bulls in this area and a little softer open female market.”

**Q: Why is it important to develop a long-term marketing plan?**

**A:** “Name recognition and a great reputation are so important in selling purebred livestock. I think setting up a budget and using institutional advertising is important in print media versus just running an ad when you’re having a sale. It’s important to keep your name out there in the public every month, like in *Hereford World*. If you are consistent, you create that branded marketing concept. For example, the golden arches represent McDonalds. Your farm logo or slogan used repeatedly represents your farm or ranch.”

### Southwest Region

Ark., La., N.M., Okla. and Texas



**Colton Pratz**

**Q: How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?**

**A:** “It’s important for producers to keep an open mind. There’s a new generation of cattlemen starting to come in who are wanting to buy some of these

cattle. By maintaining good practices in how you raise cattle, adjusting marketing strategies will help the rest fall into place.”

**Q: How can producers better communicate with customers and potential clients about their programs and Hereford cattle?**

**A:** “One thing I’ve seen work for people when communicating with their customers is just picking up the phone and calling some of those customers. Check in with them and see how those cattle are performing for them. On the bull side of it, call and see how the bulls are doing and make sure everything’s still going well. If you reach out to your customers and maybe even go visit them and check out some of the calves out of those bulls you’ve sold them, they will be more willing to come back and buy from you again. At the end of the day, people are going to buy cattle from people they like. Anymore, customer service is a big thing to the cattlemen that are buying bulls. The more connections you can make with buyers, the better results I’ve seen.”

**Q: Are there any promotional components, perhaps specific to digital technology, that could help producers reach new audiences and increase sales?**

**A:** “I think the Herefords On Demand platform is certainly a good tool producers can use, especially for the guys that have private treaty cattle and work to sell 15 to 20 bulls a year. Buyers can compare the EPD traits and all the performance stats on those bulls when they use Herefords On Demand. It can help potential customers who are looking to buy bulls study and analyze the data after looking at the bulls. I think that’s a really good tool that anyone who is selling bulls right now can certainly utilize.”

### Eastern Region

Ala., Fla., Ga., Miss., N.C., S.C., Tenn. and Va.



**Tommy Coley**

**Tommy Coley**

**Q: How should producers prepare to make changes in their operations rounding out the year and heading into next year?**

**A:** “I think producers need to position themselves so that they are recognized as the leaders once things square up. They need to be aggressively marketing their programs and themselves because once this thing turns around and you try to play catch up in that respect, you’re kind of behind the curve.”

**Q: What do you think is the biggest obstacle producers are faced with when marketing cattle?**

**A:** “I have a lot of small breeders in my area. I think the biggest problem is name recognition and lack of reputation with breeders outside their area.”

**Q: What are key factors for producers to consider when looking to restructure or improve marketing strategies?**

**A:** “In my area, breeders could better utilize websites and social media, as well as print advertising. It would do a lot of folks good to get out and go to cattle events so that people recognize them and can put a face with a name. It’s a people business. People buy cattle from people. I’ve never had a cow write me a check.” **HW**

Grace Vehige, Billings, Mo., is the 2020 Hereford Publications Inc. intern.