

by Taylor Belle Matheny

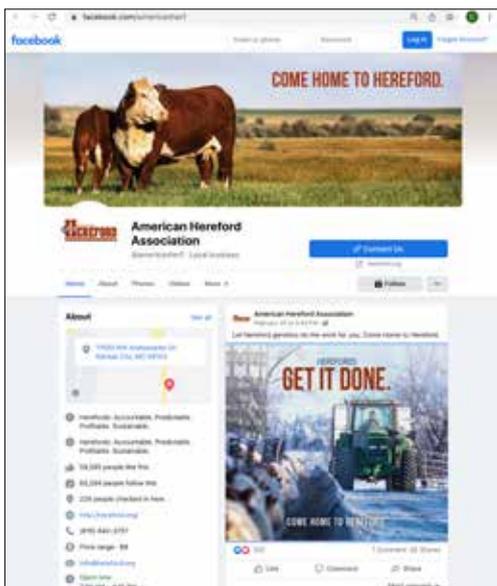
Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing opportunities are endless. Last month, we focused on better understanding social media platforms and the basic terminology associated with the technology. In this column, I'll provide insight on the role each platform may have in marketing a business, farm or ranch.

Creating a robust marketing plan that includes print and digital components will help generate leads for your operation. It is important to note, similar to print advertising, social media does have the option to pay for advertising. The unique part that varies from print advertising is that social media can help build a brand for free while incorporating paid advertisements.

Facebook

If you are starting to market and build a brand digitally, I recommend beginning with a Facebook business account. See the American Hereford Association's Facebook business page picture below. Creating a Facebook business account will allow you to share content, as well as pay for advertisements as you advance on the platform.



When starting the account, begin by completing all the steps the platform recommends, so people inquiring about your farm or ranch know details like the physical location and website address. Once the account is established, begin sharing a glimpse of your operation with viewers, such as information about your family, the people behind the brand and pictures of your cattle. This helps followers understand your operation. The key thing to remember is to consistently post to help build a better connection with followers. When starting, aim to post four times each month and increase the number of posts as you feel comfortable. Beginning to tell the story of your operation and Hereford cattle will help followers connect with the brand.

Instagram

When looking to expand your social media marketing beyond Facebook, I encourage you to consider Instagram. Instagram and Facebook have many of the same features, but they vary in terms of their look. Instagram provides the same opportunity for you to share content in the form of your feed. The benefit to Instagram over Facebook is the use of stories. Instagram users tend to be more inclined to view stories or content that will disappear after 24 hours, whereas Facebook users may skip over stories. Instagram also has the option to pay for sponsored posts.

Twitter

Are you looking to keep it short with your followers and share small bites of information? If so, Twitter is a great option to share the latest information with your customers. For example, if your sale catalog is published online, Twitter is a great place to easily share the link. Often, Twitter serves as a way for the people

behind the operation to gather a following based on the content they share that appeals to a wide audience with similar interests.

Snapchat

As mentioned in the previous column, Snapchat isn't the ideal platform to focus all your social media marketing attention. However, the advantage of Snapchat, similar to Twitter, is people have the opportunity to connect with others who enjoy updates about their operation. Snapchat is a great place to share with close friends what you are doing on the farm or ranch. Whether it is feeding hay, moving cattle to a new pasture or calving, Snapchat friends enjoy seeing the operation from a personal viewpoint.

TikTok

Videos tend to be a great way to connect with followers on social media, and TikTok capitalized on that by creating a video-only platform. Currently, major brands are sponsoring content on TikTok to connect with potential customers. In the future, I foresee TikTok being a way to connect with a wide variety of followers and gain new followers with appealing and interesting content.

The best way to begin marketing your operation on social media is to share your story and build a network of followers who enjoy engaging with your content. Remember to share more than just sale information because people want to see what you are doing throughout the year. Social media is a great tool to share the story of your brand and promote the Hereford breed. **HW**

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