

The Source



by **GINETTE KURTZ**, *American Angus Association*

Loyalty program options for Angus collection.

Do you have a reward card from your bull provider?

The list of reward or loyalty cards available from grocery stores is mighty long. If you want the best price, you'd better sign up, otherwise you pay a few cents more on your purchases.

Does your seedstock supplier provide you with any rewards or benefits for your loyalty to their breeding program? How about a referral? Do you receive any discounts for bringing additional buyers to your bull supplier? How does your bull supplier help you with marketing your calves?

Marketing and advertising can bring new customers, but the best advertisement is a satisfied customer. Most people are quick to tell you about an unpleasant experience or bad deal. Customer service and loyalty can be one of your best marketing tools.

Joe Mayer from Guymon, Okla., was a part of the marketing workshop at the 2014 National Angus Convention & Trade Show. He started using the Association's AngusSource® program in 2004 when his seedstock supplier reimbursed commercial bull buyers

for program enrollment for every bull purchase. This is just one way seedstock producers can build customer loyalty. Another important feature is the introduction to other commercial-Angus programs. This can truly be a winning situation for both the seedstock producer and his customer.

Seedstock producers know they will be able to continue to market high-quality registered-Angus bulls to their commercial customers when they make an investment in the customer's program. Jordan Valley, Idaho, commercial Angus breeders David Rutan, Morgan Ranches; Craig Baker, Sierra del Rio; and Kirk Scown, Parsnip Peak, all purchase their bulls from the same seedstock operation.

The seedstock breeder and his wife hosted an AngusSource meeting via conference call at their ranch in 2004. The rest is truly history. These commercial operators felt AngusSource was one value-added program that would increase their bottom line. Their seedstock supplier is also a video representative and does a great job lining up buyers and working to get data

back on those calves. This helps each customer and the seedstock operator make more-knowledgeable breeding decisions and improve herd quality. What better way for everyone to increase their bottom line? These producers sell on the same video each year and had the top-selling AngusSource calves in 2014.

There are a few other ways seedstock suppliers can build customer loyalty. Purchasing groups of calves back is another way to add value to the commercial man's calves. After all, they are known genetics, then seedstock breeders can feed out the calves, sell on the grid and both parties can use the data to determine where to make program improvements.

Communication — it doesn't sound that difficult, but sometimes it can be a deal breaker. A friend of mine is a seed salesman. He told me the company he works with highly recommends they visit the farm at least four times per year. Even if your seedstock provider doesn't come around that often, communication is still important.

Talk to your bull providers at least once a year after you pick up the bulls.

It can be beneficial for your seedstock provider to learn more about the bulls and how the calves are performing. This is a great time to talk about calf performance and determine if any breeding program changes are on the horizon for each producer.

Each month and every year I look at the list of AngusSource producers. If producers continue to enroll, that is great — but if they don't, I need to know why. Was the program not of any value to them? Did they purchase another breed of bull? Our department picks up the phone and does our best to find out from producers why they did not use the program again.

Time is difficult to find. Communication can be challenging for many. Yet time and communication can really add up to customer satisfaction. The American Angus Association continues to develop programs, services and tools to help registered-Angus bull suppliers retain their customers. If your seedstock provider doesn't take advantage of these resources, be sure to tell them about AngusSource, AngusSource Genetic, Beef Record Service, commercial DNA technology (GeneMax® Focus™ and GeneMax Advantage™) and — coming March 2015 — Future Angus Stockmen.



Editor's Note: *Ginette Kurtz is the director of commercial programs for the American Angus Association.*