

# *Promoting your product often an overlooked step*

**W**hy not be pro-active with marketing strategy?

How many times have you heard it? "I raise good cattle, but I just take them to town and I take what they give me!" Many Oklahoma commercial cow calf ranchers do a great job of selecting, feeding, caring for, and taking to market top quality cattle, yet do very little, if anything, about promoting the products they sell. Perhaps most of us are not boastful by nature and hope that the quality of the calves we raise will speak for themselves. Nonetheless, doesn't it make sense that we would do everything in our power to assure that our calves bring top dollar at market time?

Recently I read of a commercial cow calf operator that "promotes" his calves. He is confident that his cattle are genetically sound and will perform well for the stocker operator or feedlot that purchases his calves. He pre-conditions the calves. They are properly vaccinated and weaned 45



**David Cantrell**  
AGRICULTURE EDUCATOR

days before he takes them to market. These management practices all have value to a potential buyer. Therefore, he makes certain that as many buyers as possible know when and where these calves will be offered for sale.

This producer keeps track of all of the previous buyers of his calves. He makes an effort to locate and contact other potential buyers of his weight and breed of calves. Then he composes a short letter telling them that he will be bringing his calves to XYZ Livestock Market on a given sale date. He will include information on the number, weight, breed makeup, and sex of the calves. He will also tell when the steers were cas-

trated, implanted, and when the calves were vaccinated and which products he used. He makes certain that the buyers know that the calves were weaned on a certain date and how they have been fed since weaning. He includes data on previous calves (that have been evaluated in programs such as the O-K Steer Feedout) or closeout data from past buyers that fed out his calves. In other words, he is telling potential customers that they can buy his calves with additional confidence about their performance and their health.

Whether you participate in an organized Value-Added Calf program (i.e. Oklahoma Beef Quality Network, or one sponsored by pharmaceutical company or local livestock market) or whether you simply sell your calves on the regular sale date at the closest market, it makes good business sense to tell buyers that your good calves are available for sale. Don't just rely on others to tell your story. This fall promote the good quality, healthy cattle that you raise. They deserve it!!