

DROUGHTMASTER MARKETING

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Volume 6

Developing a Customer File

Indispensable for your marketing tool kit is a customer file. It can be very detailed, or it can be as simple as maintaining a list of every person whom has bought cattle from you. I recommend as much detail as possible. The best customer files include the following:

- ◆ Name, address and telephone number of the person or firm.
 - ◆ Whether customers are members of the breed society. If so use their official membership name as well as individual's name.
 - ◆ First names of spouse and children, even their birth dates if you are willing send birthday greetings to them.
 - ◆ Name and complete information of the herd manager, if it is different to the owner.
 - ◆ All purchases made from you, along with the date, name of animal and amount paid per head.
 - ◆ Breeding of the bulls purchased to help commercial producers avoid inbreeding.
 - ◆ Directions to the farm or property to help you make deliveries and herd visits.
 - ◆ Detailed information on potential customers and the type of cattle they raise.
- These can be people you know personally or names gleaned from sales reports.

The uses of this kind of file are many. Certainly it is essential for any kind of direct mail program. It makes an instant invitation list to encourage people to visit your farm when you are the host of a field day or when you have some other event, like a tour, stopping at your place. You are ready for visitors, so you might as well invite customers as well.

The file tells you when it is time for customers to purchase bulls, and what they are willing to pay, or at least what they have paid in the past. I have known people who keep each customer on a file card, but the computer is the obvious place to store this kind of information. If you do, make sure you print out a list regularly. A computer crash could destroy the permanent file. Most businesses consider their customer records to be the most valuable asset they have. They keep updated copies in a safe place.

ESTABLISHING A MARKETING BUDGET

Without a marketing budget you are a bit like a man digging a ditch without any notion of how deep it should be. He is never sure when he should stop digging down and start moving toward the goal.

Without a marketing budget you may find yourself out of money before you reach your sales goal. There is no firm rule for setting a marketing budget. But here are three ways for you to consider:

- ◆ Do what others are doing. If it works for them, it may work for you.
- ◆ Allocate a percentage of your gross sales of registered cattle.
- ◆ Decide what you need to do and allocate that amount for your budget.

More than likely you will use some combination of these three. The important thing is to establish a budget and invest it wisely.

