

24 TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR BEEF WEEK DAY SUCCESSFUL

The record entry of 262 studs representing 37 breeds will be vying to attract Beef Week visitors. Just 'hoping' people will turn up will not work. Beef Week is advertised and promoted throughout Victoria and interstate in rural and regional media and in rural radio to generate awareness and create the right environment but then it is UP TO YOU.

Some properties attract hundreds of visitors. Many use Beef Week to market their year's production of seedstock, some use Beef Week to showcase their lots for upcoming on-property or multi-vendor sales, while others use Beef Week to get their name and their cattle 'out there'. The seedstock industry is more competitive than ever and Beef Week is a low cost high value marketing opportunity available to all. The good season plus strong demand for bulls and commercial cattle could make 2012 a great year for seedstock producers. Make the most of it.

Here are 24 tips to help you gain optimum value from your day. And remember, the two most important words are 'PROMOTE YOURSELF'.

1. Have a decent display of cattle comprising sale bulls, embryo donors, cows with calves, heifers, steers etc. You could even invite a bull client to bring along a pen of steers to display how your bulls work in commercial herds. It's amazing how quickly the word gets around that 'it's worth going (or not worth going) to such and such's place'.
2. Come up with some displays of special interest. Maybe you have some of the first progeny of the latest world beating sire, you may have some Royal show champions, you may have bought a new sire or a top cow, you may have installed a new set of yards; come up with reasons why people should come to your place but make sure you let everyone know. Promote your entry in the RASV Beef Week Heifer Challenge.
3. Tidy up a bit. Make a good impression on visitors.
4. Have a brochure to give to visitors with details of your stud, the history, the breeding program, when you have cattle/semen/embryos available, your successes and markets you are targeting (i.e. supermarket/restaurant, Jap B3, local trade). This need not be elaborate; it can be as modest as a photocopied sheet.
5. Because Beef Week is timed to precede the bull selling seasons, include dates and details of your on-property sale (if you have one) or your offerings at multi-vendor sales. TELL people, do not assume they know.
6. Your on-property sale catalogue is a valuable document to have on hand. If not available, harvest names and addresses of visitors to send one when available.
7. Have sale bulls clearly identified and available for inspection. If your catalogue is not yet available, have an abridged version available listing the sale bulls with basic information.
8. If you sell privately, consider having an easy to follow basic catalogue of cattle for sale with plenty of copies for people to use and to take home for further consideration.
9. Take time to talk to the visitors, show interest in their breeding programs, their target markets and their particular environment. Do they finish their own cattle or sell to feedlotter? Do they sell their cattle as weaners?
10. Offer to visit potential buyers' properties to inspect their herds and give them advice to assist them in maximizing returns.
11. Have a visitors' book during Beef Week (something you should have all year round anyway) to harvest names and addresses. A 'lucky door prize' is one way of ensuring visitors record their names. It is also a good 'ice-breaker' when unknown visitors arrive.
12. Use the visitors' book and your past buyers' lists to develop a mailing list and invite them all (by mail or email) to Beef Week next year, to your sale or to advise them when you have cattle available..
13. On a mounted map of Victoria or eastern Australia or one that covers your market area, plot with pins or dots all locations that have bought your cattle. This demonstrates widespread demand but also indicates to you areas where your cattle are popular, and maybe other areas that have potential.
14. Beef Week sponsors have the ability to request to have a display on your property. The decision to allow or disallow this is yours. However, it is suggested you be proactive and invite sponsors to have a display on your property. It may assist in attracting a crowd.
15. Ask your breed society for a supply of breed promotional material. Some breed societies automatically send supplies of promotional material to members in Beef Week.
16. As well as inviting clients and breed society members, sit down with your family/staff and come up with a list of other people you could invite. Don't grizzle if your agents don't visit if you haven't asked them. Ask the stud stock agents to come to see your cattle plus agents in your local area as they do advise bull buyers. Invite your bank manager, your accountant, your neighbors, your feedlot buyers, the stud where you have purchased bulls, the semen sellers and your friends.
17. Remember, the vast majority of bulls sold go into commercial herds. The 'stud to stud' sales may be more glamorous but are often 'one-offs'. Commercial bull buyers pay good money for the right bulls.
18. Have facilities to protect visitors from inclement weather.
19. Offer refreshments such as water, tea, coffee, cup of soup, sandwiches and biscuits. These need not be elaborate.
20. Use the road signs to advantage and don't rely on the maps in the book which by necessity are indicative only. You know where you are but many others don't. We have had instances of 'we couldn't find them so we kept going'.
21. Make sure you, your family and staff have name tags with LARGE LETTERS. A distinctively coloured top or shirt carrying your stud name makes you and your staff easier to find.
22. REMEMBER, the Beef Week open days are primarily to showcase your stud and sale cattle; it is an opportunity for potential bull buyers to look around and compare studs and breeds without feeling compelled to buy on the day.
23. Consider developing a website that visitors can refer to a later date – it need only be basic and if you don't possess the skills, they can be bought or it could be a good project for a young person you know; their skills can be quite amazing.
24. Use Stock & Land as an advertising vehicle to draw crowds, especially the Beef Week preview feature which runs in an issue prior to Beef Week.

While this list may seem daunting, and while you are probably doing many of these things already, pick out a few ideas that may assist you in increasing the demand for your cattle.