

Good returns for producers in busy autumn season

Food chain information for cattle and sheep

From 1st January 2010 new legislation came into force requiring slaughterhouse operators to receive, check and act upon food chain information. This forms part of a whole chain farm to fork approach to the management of food safety. To comply with these new requirements we have modified our movement documents for all classes of stock coming to market to include the necessary declarations on food chain information. This will allow us to pass on the necessary information which must accompany all animals to slaughter.

At prime stock sales a Food Chain Declaration must accompany all livestock to market. Store stock, feeding cows and ewes should also be accompanied by a Food Chain Declaration as this is required for the trade of forward conditioned animals, some of which may be short keep. This is important for animals which have been in the producer's care for a short period, particularly in relation to withdrawal periods for veterinary medicines.

Our movement documents for store stock have also been modified to accommodate this and allow us to pass on medical withdrawal information when required.

Consignments of sheep will require two documents, the Scottish Government SAMU movement document and our movement document incorporating the Food Chain Information Declaration.

We ask for your consignors' cooperation to ensure that a new movement document incorporating food chain information is used to accompany all livestock to market from 1st January.

New forms are available from the Mart Office, Auctioneers, or can be downloaded from www.goanm.co.uk. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information.

The autumn of 2009 has seen a continuation in the good returns for livestock producers.

Cattle and sheep prices have been very buoyant and have shown significant increases in average prices for all categories - going against the general trend experienced in other sectors due to the recession of the wider economy.

The autumn has seen the number of cattle traded on a par with previous years whilst sheep numbers have been tight in line with the reduction in the national flock.

The sheep trade got off to an excellent start at the first sheep sales at Quoybrae in Caithness and this has continued at sales throughout the season.

Significant factors

No doubt the tighter supply situation and the weakness of the Pound against the Euro are the significant factors which have tipped the balance in the producers' favour.

At Thainstone, the autumn saw the usual series of special sales starting with a successful Spectacular - the champion from which went onto take the Supreme Championship at AgriLive, Smithfield.

The favourable trading conditions were also reflected at other special sales, including the annual sales of gimmers, breeding rams and weaned calves and breeding cattle.

Rounding off the year, the Christmas Classic was, as always, one of the highlights. The local judging team saw Aberdeen Fatstock Association President, Harry Brown jnr take the overall championship award and his animal went onto sell for £5,000 to award winning local butcher, and judge for the event, John Davidson.

Notably, the Classic also saw successful sales of Pedigree Texel, Beltex, Suffolk and Charollais sheep - it is pleasing to see this section of the Classic growing.

I am pleased that the buoyant livestock scene combined with a good year for Thainstone Specialist Auctions together with the other diversified activities and events will give us an acceptable result for the Marts division for the year.

As we pass our 20th anniversary of the opening of Thainstone, we can only hope that the fortunes of the livestock sector continue in 2010 and are reflected in the prosperity of producers and the Mart alike.



John Gregor
General Manager
Aberdeen & Northern
Marts

BVD Certified sales

This autumn saw the successful start of an initiative for the sale of animals tested free from, and vaccinated against, BVD,

Endorsed by both the farmer and the farmer's vet, animals were tested and vaccinated in accordance with the new Scottish Standard Cattle Health Declaration which in turn allowed them to be traded by traditional means.

Guidelines on the requirements for testing and vaccination were agreed by an all-industry stakeholder group which was facilitated by NFU Scotland. Included in the industry stakeholders are: NFU Scotland, SAC Premium Cattle Health Scheme, Hi-Health, QMS, and the Institute of Auctioneers (IAAS).

The autumn saw bulling heifers coming forward during September and then large consignments of in-calf heifers later in October.

Feedback from buyers and sellers has been excellent and there is considerable interest growing across the North east of Scotland on moves to control the spread of BVD. A series of sales for BVD tested and vaccinated cattle will be rolled out through the year.

