

Marketing Opportunities for Feeder Cattle in the Tri-State Area

Buyers of feeder cattle today are looking for low risk predictable cattle, however there are buyers at every sale for most every type of cattle. An attempt will be made to highlight those marketing opportunities that are available in each state within the tri-state area. There are weekly auctions in each state, with some having special sales for feeder cattle. No attempt will be made here to identify each of the weekly sales as most producers are familiar with them already. In some cases the Internet url/address will be given where a schedule of graded sales, video sales or other special sales are listed. If the Internet is not available, the producer should check with his local Extension office for assistance. The marketing opportunities will be listed by state, however in the case of video/Internet sales, those sales typically market cattle in more than one state.

Virginia

The state of Virginia has a number of feeder cattle marketing alternatives available to producers. Many of the sales are conducted with the cooperation of the Virginia Cattleman's Association (www.vacattlemen.org) and the Virginia Department of Agriculture. A list of sale dates can be found at the following Web site www.BuyVirginiaCattle.com. The Virginia Quality Assured (VQA) sales market cattle which are source and process verified (Gold Tag Program) and VQA Purple Tag program in which there are also genetic requirements. Virginia makes extensive use of the Tel-O-Auction concept for sales on most Mondays of the year whenever producers have load lots to market. There are also Board Sale loads of cattle that are offered in conjunction with in-barn graded sales. With the In-Barn Graded Feeder Cattle sales, the Virginia Cattleman's Association in cooperation with 18 local or regional feeder cattle associations sponsor graded feeder cattle sales throughout the year. Calves must be produced by the consignor and be from beef-type cows and bulls. Calves are state graded and sold in commingled loads or near loads. There are also two cattle buying stations operating in Virginia. They are G & G Livestock LLC at Max Meadows, Virginia and CH Cattle Co. at Glade Spring, Virginia. The cattle are graded by state graders and priced on the previous day's auction prices.

North Carolina

There are over 20 state graded feeder calf and yearling cattle sales each year. These sales are held in the spring and fall of the year. The cattle are graded according to USDA grading standards by North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS)-Markets Division personnel. The sales are in locations statewide with easy access to good highways. About 70 percent of the cattle are medium and large frame # 1 muscling and of mostly British and Exotic crosses. Health permits are available on all cattle. Contacts for the graded sales are E. Bruce Shankle II, Livestock Section Manager NCDA&CS and Brian Blinson - North Carolina Cattleman's Association. A listing of sales scheduled may be found at the following Web site www.ncagr.gov/markets/livestock/cattle/index.htm. Western North Carolina also has a Mountain Cattle Alliance which has sales in late summer. These sales have special preconditioning requirements and are managed by the Southeast Livestock Exchange, Canton, North Carolina.

Tennessee

There are a large number of graded feeder cattle sales in the state, although they are located mostly in Middle and East Tennessee. There are few if any traditional graded sales east of Knoxville. A listing of scheduled graded feeder cattle sales and video sales can be found at the following Web site www.tn.gov/agriculture/marketing/cattlesales.shtml. There are two fairly new marketing opportunities in upper East Tennessee. The Hawkins County Cattleman's Association (HCCA) has monthly sales of calves that are preconditioned, requiring a 60 day preconditioning period, and a prescribed vaccination protocol. The cattle are consigned before sale, remain on the farm until sold, then assembled, sorted and loaded at the Wilson Livestock Market in Newport, TN the next week. A complete description of the sale requirements is included in the proceedings. The cattle are marketed through the Hodge Livestock Network, Inc. and the sale has been very successful at obtaining load lot premiums for the cattle. In 2010, 5,343 cattle were sold belonging to 262 producers. The cattle grossed \$3,753,830 and a premium of \$166,551 or \$4.19 per hundred over weekly auction prices. Contact person for the sales is Robert Moncier, Hawkins County Extension Director at 423-272-7241 or the Hodge Livestock Network.

A newly formed Appalachian Beef Marketing Alliance has conducted two sales with great success. At the present time producers from Hancock and Claiborne counties in Tennessee and Lee and Scott counties in Virginia are participating. The sale follows the graded sale protocol, but has a required 45 day preconditioning period and a definite product specific vaccination and de-worming protocol. The sales are held at the Lee Farmer's Livestock Market in Jonesville, VA. As a result of the two sales of 952 head, the estimated value added to the cattle was \$68,922.

There are other alliance marketing groups in the state, but located 130 + miles from Bristol. The Smoky Mountain Feeder Calf Association in conjunction with the East Tennessee Livestock Center have several graded sales and preconditioned sales. Several graded sales are held by the Athens Livestock Market. The Tennessee Beef Alliance has sales in the Middle Tennessee area with some participation 30 miles west of Knoxville. Those sales are in the August - December period and are managed by Tennessee Livestock Producers, Inc. There is one known Tennessee buying station operated by Rick Keller in Greene County. He buys cattle weaned and preconditioned as well as unweaned calves. This operation was featured as one of the tour stops at this year's conference. Young Livestock operated by Eddie Young also operates a buying station in Strawberry Plains, TN.

Video/Internet Auction Sales

There are four video/Internet auction sales that service the tri-state area. These sales sell mostly yearling cattle but also market several calf crops from larger producers. In addition, they work with groups of producers to market truckloads of commingled cattle. Contact information is listed below for these four marketing Agencies.

<p>Bluegrass Marketing Group Jim and Glenda Gibson - Managers Office: 1-800-621-3972 or (859) 255-7701 Cell: (859) 333-2378 or (859) 333-4706 www.bgstockyards.com</p>	<p>Hodge Livestock Network, Inc. Randy Hodge - Owner/manager Lemmy Wilson - Manager Office: 1-800-654-6181 Cell: (865) 414-7801 www.hodgelivestocknetwork.com</p>
<p>Southeast Livestock Exchange, LLC John Queen - Owner Office: (828) 646-0270 Cell: (828) 646-3446 www.southeastlivestockexchange.com</p>	<p>Tennessee Livestock Producers, Inc. Darrell Ailshie - Manager Office: (931) 388-7872 Cell: (931) 212-8512 www.tennesseelivestockproducers.com</p>

This material was assembled by Emmit Rawls, Professor Emeritus and Extension Livestock Marketing Specialist, UT Extension. An attempt was made to include all marketing alternatives in the tri-state area. Any omissions are the responsibility of the author.