



THE VALUE OF LIVESTOCK AUCTION MARTS TO BRITISH FARMING

Livestock Auctioneers' Association Manifesto





The Livestock Auctioneers' Association (LAA) is the national organisation representing auctioneering firms that occupy and run the livestock auction markets of England and Wales, representing livestock auctioneers in negotiations

and discussions with government, public authorities, national and international representatives and trade organisations. The LAA takes all possible steps to develop the system of selling livestock through auction markets, and to enhance the throughput and turnover of markets, encouraging efficiency and the highest animal welfare standards.

In this manifesto, the LAA highlights the four key areas of importance for livestock trade that we are setting out to our new government, to ensure that the value of livestock auction marts is realised and protected.

Chris Dodds, LAA Executive Secretary

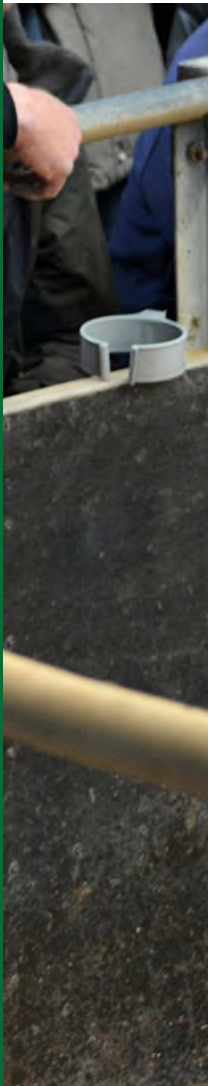




1. A COMPETITIVE, TRANSPARENT MARKETPLACE

The live auction ring offers many benefits:

- Competition between prospective buyers
- Transparency of sales
- Valuable knowledge transfer
- Benchmarking
- The opportunity to understand national trends
- The opportunity for farmers to see animals through to the point of sale
- A marketplace that offers the same services and opportunities regardless of the size of farm, or number of animals presented for sale



1. A COMPETITIVE, TRANSPARENT MARKETPLACE



Livestock farms are small businesses and have little market power when compared to large scale, corporate food companies. Put simply, they are weak sellers if entering into private negotiations with powerful buyers and risk a transaction that under-values their animals.

Neither buyer or seller can unfairly influence the price and the auctioneer is an independent individual, working for both the buyer and the seller. They ensure the price is 'fair' – it accurately reflects current demand based on available information.

The live sales ring is crucial in securing fair prices, and a transparent and traceable marketing system. Without them, farmers would be in a far worse position due to lack of competition, and livestock numbers across England and Wales would inevitably fall.

Surveys have found that more than 93 per cent of farmers use auction markets to buy and sell livestock, citing convenience, market reach and the guarantee of prompt and confirmed payment as the main draw to the ring. (<https://www.laa.co.uk/news/research-and-reports/3911/surveys-reveal-prompt-payments-and-wider-customer-base-attracts-farmers-to-the-live-auction-ring/>)





2. THE HEARTBEAT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES

In March 2019, the LAA commissioned a report by Sean Rickard, an independent economic analyst - *Livestock Markets: An Economic and Social Contribution*. The report found that livestock auction markets across England and Wales are contributing at least £3.42 billion and supporting over 3,000 jobs annually.

READ THE REPORT:

<https://www.laa.co.uk/news/research-and-reports/3907/livestock-auction-markets-an-economic-and-social-contribution-much-greater-than-the-value-of-livestock-traded/>

2. THE HEARTBEAT OF RURAL COMMUNITIES AND BUSINESSES



Livestock markets are a crucial place of business for thousands of rural businesses. They are places to do business, network, meet other buyers and sellers, benchmark market prices, and more.

Livestock auction markets are now increasingly found at the centre of a network of rural businesses that not only includes livestock-related activities such as feed companies, farm machinery sales offices and land agents, but also non-farming activities including retail outlets, conference facilities and venues for social gatherings.

The LAA urges our government to understand the value of livestock auction markets to rural businesses and communities in a continuingly difficult industry.



3. MORE THAN 'JUST A MART'

Marts have always played a role as a social institution, and today this is more important than ever...

Livestock markets have reacted to the increasing need to provide the support and facilities to help farmers and provide a forum to meet and socialise – it is not just about buying and selling.

They are a crucial resource in helping to tackle mental health concerns within rural communities and provide an outreach to those feeling vulnerable and alone.

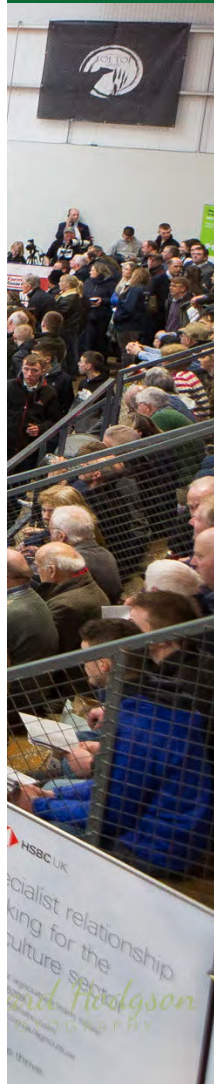
3. MORE THAN 'JUST A MART'



Livestock auctioneers are better placed than many others to see the every-day demands, pressures and concerns within the farming community. They are at the coal-face and are very often the single-point of contact, or shoulder to lean on, for farmers facing frustration, anxiety and increasingly, a feeling of isolation.

For many, the weekly sale is the only date in the diary for farmers to network and socialise with colleagues, friends and others within the community.

A further study has been commissioned by The Princes Countryside Fund with the University of Exeter, to investigate the social benefits, functions of and prospects for livestock auction marts in the UK.





4. POST-BREXIT TRADE

Open and tariff-free trade with the EU and other third country partners is essential for the future of the livestock sector. Our trading bodies representing the industry need to be more progressive in order to establish these relationships and develop further opportunities in our world markets.

4. POST-BREXIT TRADE



The opportunities over the next few years and beyond will be crucial to livestock producers - if farm gate prices drop as a result of leaving the EU with no deal, Government support must be targeted at farmers and feeders with animals to sell into the slaughter market.

Livestock producers will need to prepare their businesses for the marketing of livestock after the Brexit transition period, which is increasingly difficult if they don't know if we will have access to the EU market, with, or without, tariffs.

For more information on the activities and work of the Livestock Auctioneer's Association, please visit our website: <https://www.laa.co.uk/>

Follow the LAA accounts on both Twitter and Facebook by clicking on the icons below, to find out how we are increasing awareness of the hard work that goes into keeping our marts alive.



#MartsTheHeart

