

# UTASS Briefing: 8<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

## **COVID 19: MARTS**

Marts have been operating throughout Lockdown as part of providing an essential service to the food supply chain. Systems have been devised to ensure Social Distancing but this has been done with a relatively low throughput. The backend sales provide a rather different and more complex challenge.

UTASS have been in contact with the Cumbria Farmers Network to see if a standard procedure could be used to cover all Northern Marts. Adam Day of the Network has produced the guide overleaf to help explain current and proposed practice. We will try to keep you updated of any changes or developments

For further advice and assistance please call UTASS 01833 641010.  
Richard Betton.

## **UTASS MEMBERSHIP**

For a while now, behind the scenes, we have been working to move our computer records to a purpose-built system. We are now at the point of beginning the process of moving our members over onto the new system.

Before we do that, we need both to check the information we already have, and also gather some additional information.

In order for the system to work, we need to have separate details of each individual person within your household, who may access our services or wish to receive information. This would include your partner, resident parents, and older children who may access occupational training or advice in their own right.

At the moment we do not require individual details of younger children who attend the youth club or trips, these will be added to the system at a later date.

This will have several advantages, including as an individual allowing you to select which information you receive, saving money, and ensuring you only receive relevant information.

To help us gather this information we have designed a form that we hope is simple to complete.

We would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete the enclosed form. We would also welcome any feedback regarding it. However if you'd prefer you can contact us on the number above and a member of staff can take the new/updated details over the telephone if you'd rather not complete the paper form.

***Many thanks in anticipation.***

**Please Turn over**

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## LOOK AFTER YOUR MARKET AND THEY WILL LOOK AFTER YOU

The back- end is upon us already. For many livestock farmers in Cumbria and the Dales, it is the culmination of a year's work. For vendors, the drive of sheep or cattle from the pen to the ring and out at the fall of hammer, is over in a flash. You're in, and you're gone – usually to the mart office to pick up your seller's statement – job done!

For many months, Farmer Network members have expressed real concern about whether markets could be shut down under a local lockdown, or through perceived bad practice. The answer is clearly yes, they could. DEFRA has let it be known that if they see farmers or auctioneers ignoring the social distancing rules, they will remove the market's operating licence for 14 days or more.

There are also concerns about whether farmers visiting several markets during this busy time could be caught up under "track and trace". Even more important then, that all markets are seen to be operating safely. That is why most markets have installed plastic screens in the office and the staff wear visors or masks both inside and out. It is also vital that farmers, whether buying or selling, do the same. It is a partnership between all of us to ensure we get through the next few weeks with no mishaps and hopefully some very pleasing sales!

It is difficult in the heat of the moment but we can all forget the situation when we are in the market, amongst the pens or meeting and greeting old friends and customers, but we have to obey the rules and we must keep reminding ourselves. Failure to do so, could easily result in temporary mart closure. If sales are cancelled or postponed the system will fall apart. No one wants to be left with cattle or sheep at home that should have been sold, and our buyers gone somewhere else to stock up.

The Farmer Network has been talking to the Livestock Auctioneers Association about creating some general guidelines for buyers and sellers and as we are now moving towards the bigger hill sheep sales and major cattle sales, please keep a look out for any new information about visiting and using local markets. Some auctioneers may decide to issue their own guidelines. These are our thoughts and we hope that it helps. Whether you are buying, selling or holding the gavel have a great back- end!

<b>VENDORS</b>	<b>PURCHASERS</b>
Check with the auctioneer what information is needed when entering stock.	Register with the market if you have to – check how you do this.
Make sure all necessary paperwork is in order.	Please ensure you sign- in. This is a legal requirement.
Check you have mask and sanitising equipment.	Wear a mask and carry sanitising equipment
Where possible, sort and mark stock before leaving home.	When inspecting stock in the pen, please wait for the person in front of you to vacate the pen. Keep a safe distance from the vendor. A mask must be worn at all times.
Keep distance from prospective buyers in the pens, and auction staff when moving stock or selling in ring.	Take notice of auction rules when at the ringside. Do not encroach on other buyers – people are watching!
Please be patient with office staff when queuing.	Please be patient with office staff when queuing.
Check auction rules on giving out luck to buyers – remember you are not supposed to approach them directly and auctions may not be handling cash.	When loading stock, please work with auction staff in a safe manner.
<b>OBEY SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES AT ALL TIMES</b>	<b>OBEY SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES AT ALL TIMES</b>

**Please Turn over**