

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 thought's and we hope that it helps. Whether you are buying, selling or holding the gavel have a great back- end!

VENDORS	PURCHASERS
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
OBEY SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES AT ALL TIMES	OBEY SOCIAL DISTANCING RULES AT ALL TIMES

