

NZ Farmers Livestock Limited
201 Broadway, PO Box 304, Stratford 4352

t: 06 765 6199 f: 06 765 6195
e: headoffice@nzfill.co.nz
w: www.mylivestock.co.nz

MyLiveStock

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Innovative platform a first for NZ – saleyards reopen for normal livestock trade and online auctions

NZ Farmers Livestock will reopen its saleyard facilities once COVID-19 alert level 3 is activated.

In a New Zealand first, farmers will also be able to actively participate (including bidding) in livestock auctions streamed live and direct from these saleyards and a number of on-farm auctions.

Bill Sweeney, NZ Farmers Livestock General Manager Livestock said it's a great concept which will open livestock trading up to all farmers.

"We have been working on this for some time but the urgency ramped up when we went into the COVID-19 lockdown. We have literally worked night and day to bring this to the market as soon as a date for Level 3 was announced.

"The new platform is a first for New Zealand. Until now dairy and beef farmers have had limited ability to sell livestock online but the livestream auction format that we will launch shortly after Level 3 becomes operative will complement the traditional saleyard auction and On Farm sale format.

"The new platform will also support and enhance our agents' ability to deliver superior service to our farmer clients during a challenging time."

Bill Sweeney said farmers are "under the pump right now to move stock. Many have come through a tough drought with lingering impacts. Feed and grass is tight on many farms. Winter and dairy changeovers are approaching and this, combined with long processor wait times and recent schedule movements, means there is plenty of demand to get trade moving.

"We're a New Zealand owned business and our prime objective is working with farmers for farmers and adding value. New Zealand needs farming firing on all cylinders and the world needs the food farming has to offer. We're committed to getting livestock yards and on-farm auctions underway during COVID-19 alert level 3 and beyond. Adding this on-line option alongside the ability to attend a COVID-safe sale will, we believe, deliver for farmers."

Bill Sweeney said NZ Farmers Livestock vigorously lobbied to have stock agent services classed as an essential service and as the online auction platform became a reality, again lobbied Government urging early re-opening.

"Until now the only recourse farmers have had to sell stock has been via paddock selling and a variety of online sites which offer a type of direct sale or auction programme but which have not

met farmer needs and do not provide the price discovery that the saleyard programme generates to guide farmers in setting a price for their stock. It's been a tough market, with limited trade and pricing transparency, and we expect that yard re-opening and on-farm auctions will quickly improve trade and pricing confidence.

“With little over a month till the dairy farm moving date, there is a critical need for effective on-farm clearance sales.

“NZ Farmers Livestock has upgraded our MyLiveStock digital platform adding the on-line live capability that will support a range of real livestock auctions run either in saleyards or on-farm. This hybrid of the traditional saleyard format will meet stringent MPI conditions and support a return to confident trading.”

Bill Sweeney said the sales will be safe and compliant with Ministry of Health guidelines. “A range of safety rules will apply when you attend making them different to what farmers may be used to at sales, but they are critical to support the safe re-opening of this vital option for farmers – with live on-line capability added for those from anywhere in New Zealand who cannot get to the sale.

“The need for this range of sale options is urgent. NZ Farmers Livestock will have the new auction platform operating shortly after Level 3 comes into force on Tuesday 28 April.

“Auctions at saleyard venues will run on our standard sale calendar and we will advertise restart and On Farm sales (Clearing sales and Bull sales) dates and venues. Full details of the new standards and conditions of all sales will be published on MyLiveStock (which, along with the on-line live facility, is available free). Farmers are advised to talk now with their NZ Farmers Livestock agent to book stock,” Bill Sweeney said.

Ends

For further comment:

Bill Sweeney. General Manager Livestock, NZ Farmers Livestock Ltd phone 0274 515 310