

Thoughts from a Northern Mart December 2007



Indian Summer finally comes to a end

The weather finally broke with the first snow across the north of England. This has led to final housing of lots of cattle. As a result this will use up the precious stocks of winter food and increase the demand for the expensive cereal based rations. A prolonged spell of frost could have a beneficial effect by killing off the midge population responsible for the spread of Blue Tongue.

Foot & Mouth/ Blue Tongue

The on- going Blue tongue restrictions where markets and farmers in East and South Yorkshire York and Selby districts, continue to be affected by the disruption of marketing and movements. These restrictions are starting to affect prices with a reported difference. Already some of the livestock events planned for 2008 have been cancelled as the show cattle cannot be moved freely between different shows etc . Father Christmas is reported to be having problems planning routes for his Reindeer as a result of the Blue Tongue movement restrictions!

Finance.

Mutterings around the auction marts about rent review notices are being heard and the fact that some landlords see the upturn in corn prices as good reason to look to increase rents, it has to be remembered that many of these business are experiencing the first upturn for quiet a few years of grain prices in the doldrums . The livestock sector certainly cannot stand any talk of rent increases and the hill sheep farmer has grounds for a rent decrease are the comments to be heard around the marts. Farmers who have been forced out of once profitable enterprises are wondering if they went back into them for 48 hours like British Sugar did at York, they too could be entitled to a £60 million pay out! Most farmers are stealing themselves for the fact that the 2007/2008 SFP will not arrive until March at the earliest. With cash flows designed around the arrival of this money at this time of year, many will need realigning and so it is no surprise that lending to agriculture is at a the highest level ever , after F&M etc . The high price of oil on the world market is not just affecting the price of fuel, but is also driving up fertiliser and agrichemicals, as well as the consequence of farmers having to move all their produce by road to and from premises rather than being able to use other methods of transport.

Shows

One farmer stood round the ring at a cold northern mart discussing the fact the farmers where no longer consider a vital part of the community said next weekend we will suddenly become popular as people come looking for holly. The Christmas Show season has once again turned up some spectacular animals to show the best of British livestock around our local marts. Two of the Northern marts hold Carol Services next week with Malton on the 21st December (7pm in the Cattle ring at Malton Mart) and Thirsk on the 22nd of December (2pm in the Foyer at Thirsk Mart). What better place to start Christmas and to support our farmers? Join us if you can.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A PEACEFUL NEW YEAR.

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