

MEDIA RELEASE

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BENDIGO LIVESTOCK EXCHANGE TO MOVE CATTLE SALE DAY FROM TUESDAYS TO MONDAYS FROM AUGUST 5 AS PART OF A NEW TRIAL

In a break with a long-held tradition, the Bendigo Livestock Exchange will move its weekly Prime Cattle Sale from Tuesday to Monday starting from August 5 as part of a three month trial which aims to benefit farmers and producers, boost the saleyard market for cattle and help reduce livestock transport costs by consolidating lamb and cattle sales to one day.

Cr James Williams, Chair of the Livestock Exchange's Advisory Stakeholder Group, said that the change was made following extensive consultation with the group members representing livestock agents, farmers, transporters and purchasers.

"I agree with the decision made by the Stakeholder Group to trial a Monday market over the next three months starting from August 5," Cr Williams said.

"Historically, Bendigo has always conducted its Prime Lamb sales on a Monday morning and its Prime Cattle on a Tuesday morning since the saleyards began in 1861, but the stakeholders want us to respond to changing times in the meat and livestock industry.

"The sale days have been consolidated because the Prime Lamb sale market every Monday is one of the biggest in the country and attracts significantly more farmers and buyers who travel long distances to Bendigo from across the state and borders, from as far as central New South Wales and South Australia.

"We know that many of the buyers attending the Lamb Sale are also beef processors from retail and the meat industry sector as well as farmers operating mixed farming stock, but these significant market groups are often not represented during our current Cattle Sale on a Tuesday, so the aim is to tap into this significant and lucrative buying market on Mondays from August 5.

Manager, Livestock Exchange Andrew McCulloch said that the Bendigo Livestock Exchange sold around 200 cattle per weekly sale, but this varied quite a bit seasonally and recent numbers had declined significantly.

"By moving the Cattle Sale to Mondays at 8.30am before the Lamb Sale will increase demand from a much larger diverse buying group, and also help farmers to get a fair price for the livestock that they have worked tirelessly to rear, feed and present to market," Mr McCulloch said.

"It is also a highly attractive prospect for buyers and farmers to attend an additional sale in the same location on the same day knowing that they have the transport capacity to accommodate both sheep and cattle so it could potentially keep travel costs down for all involved."

The Cattle Sale, which will start at 8.30am and aim to finish at 9am, will not affect the operations of the Prime Lamb Sale which will still be held at 9.30am on that day starting from August 5. There will be a change in the process for both events to happen on the same day.

Cattle will be pen-sold and weighed immediately at the end of the sale with weigh scales being operated by City of Greater Bendigo staff to ensure independent accuracy of weights. Importantly cattle will still be weighed from around 9am, from a 9pm curfew, which is the same period of time as under the current ring-sale process, so as not to penalise farmers.

“Pen-sales have been very successful at a number of other centres, as it speeds up the selling process, making it an attractive investment of the buyers’ time. Ultimately by keeping many buyers active in a short period, demand will be strong, which is critical to increasing numbers through the yard. Local farmers will always adjust their strategies to meet market demands,” Mr McCulloch said.

“The switch to Mondays will be reviewed over a three month period. The success will be judged on sale numbers and the feedback from all stakeholders, but we are confident that the move to Mondays from August 5 will benefit all parties.”

In 2017/2018, over one million sheep and lamb were sold at the Bendigo Livestock Exchange and 8,824 in cattle sales.

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