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## Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

### ADD Grant Project Final Report

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*The goal of Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association's Agricultural Development & Diversification Program (ADD), contract number 15059 was to expand how producers market their products through the development of real-time, on-line agricultural auctions to enable increased efficiencies, increase the number of buyers to foster greater competition, enhance price discovery inherent in live auctions and help stem the tide of concentration in agriculture by opening up more market opportunities to established, as well as, new farm operations.*

*During the contract period, Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association has not had to adjust its stated goals or objectives. This vital grant allowed Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association to purchase a digital camera for photographing livestock. Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association then modified the Online Real-time Internet auction software to display the livestock images on its Web site, in addition to, the presentation of a default image during the actual live auction. This provided perspective buyers with the opportunity to view the livestock being marketed and to enhance their decision making process. The ability to display images greatly enhanced the Online Real-time Internet auction software's marketability. This enabled Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association to present a high quality professional product.*

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*"We strive to be the trusted provider of competitive livestock marketing and strong supporting programs for the economic benefit of our producer owners"*



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*Internet communications by its very nature is unstable. A portion of the awarded funds was used to obtain quality information on network / communications stability schemes. We enlisted the help of some established Internet consultants to help us to understand the communications issues and to implement a strategy to stabilize communications. After much research, a vendor was selected to manage our Internet communications & Router accounts. Although we haven't eliminated network / communications issues, we have significantly reduced the number of occurrences. This has led to increased confidence by our participating producers and buyers. We now benefit from increased support and interest in this project. From a buyer's perspective, this system provides another viable tool to secure commodities from farmers. From a farmer/producer's perspective, this provides another accepted method for marketing their product.*

*We have modified our Online-Real-time Internet software to utilize database technology. We have designed the core software around a popular database. This database will serve as a holding pen for livestock information. Livestock information can be added to the database as a listing service for our producers, or can be directed to our Online Real-time Internet auction or in the future our message based Internet auction. Each of these alternatives extends additional market opportunities to our value producers.*

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*Additional funds were utilized to purchase a quality, high availability Web Server, in addition to allowing Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association to add an Internet messaging based auction software capabilities.*

*During the first three quarters of this grant period we added a total of 52 qualified buyers to the system. By increasing the qualified buyer base, we have also increased the level of competition. This provided true price discovery for our producers, which has resulted in a fair market value being received for their livestock on any given day. Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association has secured all major packers in the Sheep Industry as active livestock buyers on the Online Real-time Internet auction. We have held 240 Online Real-time Internet auctions during this time period and are actively looking for ways to increase this number.*

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*Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association presented the Online Real-time Internet auction at the annual ASI (American Sheep Institute) conference held in Reno, Nevada. The presentation was well attended, with the highlight being the actual presentation of a live Online Real-time sheep auction. We also invited representatives from Heartland Livestock Services, an interested Canadian livestock marketing firm, to a full day presentation on the Online Real-time Auction. The Online Real-time Internet Auction software was also presented at Farm Progress Days held near Eden, Wisconsin &*

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*World Dairy Expo held in Madison, Wisconsin. Each presentation led to some lively conversations and increased the level of awareness by all participants.*

*This ADD Grant Project has met Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Associations stated goals and objectives. We have significantly added to the qualified buyer base, which has led to increased competition. With the implementation of database technology, we have now have repository of information to draw from and to utilize to the benefit of our patron/owners. Producers who have livestock to market now have another marketing opportunity to explore. As we discuss this product with interested participants, we continue to learn additional and exciting opportunities to enhance this marketing tool. We look forward to the future in this area and are eagerly looking to enhance this product to the benefit of the Agricultural Industry and our Patron/Owners.*

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