

# SUCCESS WITH ONLINE SALES & PROMOTION

by Lynnette Wright

Have you ever sat at a sale and asked yourself, "What did we do at cattle sales before cell phones?" These days, it seems like more animals sell to someone on the phone than to actual people attending the sale. And what will the future be like if we've already seen so many changes in the dynamics of a typical auction audience? What's the next step in sales promotion and execution, and more importantly, what can we do as buyers, consignors and bidders to be ready for the next phase?

In the very near future, you just might be asking yourself, "What did we do at cattle sales before live internet bidding?" That's right. The future of our beloved auction industry just might be centered around internet bidding some day, so how can you be prepared for that? We talked with Jason Lamoreaux, a sales manager and auctioneer from Belding, MI, who sees a very clear and progressive future for the industry in regards to internet use in dairy sales and marketing. Jason has been using Holstein World Internet services for many years now, and has not only had much success, but continues to be excited and intrigued about what the future holds for all of us.

Jason has utilized several internet tools that *Holstein World* supplies to benefit his auctions and marketing, including placing catalogs online, holding online auctions and using banner ads to direct visitors to his sales. He is very pleased with the results he

has seen from using these services. Jason says "Holsteinworld.com has become known throughout the global dairy industry as a valued source of current information for commercial dairymen and breeders. The Holstein World Internet Services have been extremely effective. The staff combines the marketing talents and knowledge from the World with technical expertise and outstanding customer service of the Internet Services department." He continues, "From a sale manager's perspective, the Holstein World Internet Services has allowed sales to be

conducted and promoted in new ways as well as communicated to new markets. Banner ads and online catalogs have the ability to reach more potential bidders and buyers in a much more proficient manner. The online promotion and posting of a catalog is no longer an option but a requirement."

In addition, online auctions have been very successful for Jason. He feels online auctions "will remain a mainstream method of marketing. Online as well as live auctions on a regular schedule will be held in the future featuring live cattle, picks of flush, and embryos that will involve extensive internet marketing."

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Jason thinks the use of online technology in the dairy industry is still evolving. The number of farmers that are using the internet will only continue to grow, as will their knowledge and ability to take advantage of all the internet has to offer. He commented, "An increasing number of dairymen and breeders are utilizing and relying on the internet to promote their operations as well as make strategic marketing decisions not only related to cattle but also commodities, equipment, weather and milk. The internet is a valuable management tool in the dairy industry. Time and current up-to-date information are precious commodities in any business. Current users and future generations will continue to further implement internet technology into daily management practices for greater profitability and efficiency."

Just recently, Jason worked with the Holstein World Internet Services department to develop a new website called Bovinebid.com, which implements online technology into the traditional cattle marketing process. Jason explains, "In the initial product release, Bovinebid.com Live Auction Webcast (LAW) is a secure website that will broadcast live auction sales with real time bidding capabilities. The network has the ability to broadcast sales held throughout North America and accept bids from a pre-approved global audience. All of the technical expertise, on-site personnel, and equipment are supplied by Bovinebid.com. This service has applications in every dairy breed as well as purebred and commercial dairy auction sales." This mean you'll be able to follow a sale from your computer or internet capable phone anywhere, and place bids in real time! Bovinebid.com, in conjunction with and supported by Holstein World Internet Services department, will also host future online only sales.

The next phase for bovinebid.com is a new product to be released on August 1st called Bovinebid.com Productions. Jason is very excited about the potential of this next phase. He noted that "this service creates promotional video productions for farms, breeders, AI companies and specific marketing efforts. Bovinebid.com Productions final products can be integrated into a website or utilized for marketing purposes on a CD. Professional videos from Bovinebid.com Productions

are a great way to tell a story and increase visibility in the marketplace." You could also upload the videos to another new Holstein World Internet Services venture, www.moo-tube.net. Moo-Tube is an exciting new video file sharing site for the dairy industry.

"The internet opens your farm, marketing program and business to an unlimited audience. Sale managers, embryo exporters, AI personnel and potential buyers visit websites for knowledge," Jason states. "Make your website a source of information that will make an impression on viewers.



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Everyone in the industry, no matter age or level of computer knowledge, has the ability to utilize a website or promote sale consignment online." He also warns that "A website is a great tool for promotion and marketing but one that needs to be maintained and updated. Breeders need to make sure that information on websites is current including new index numbers, changes in classifications, show results and inventories."

Furthermore Jason reflected that "success in the dairy business is predicated on relationships, communication and a keen eye for cattle. The internet will never replace the personal touch in a business relationship but it will allow more relationships to developed and grown productively utilizing new forms of communication."

The possibilities for the future of the internet and dairy industry are endless. Jason

remarked that "From an auction sale perspective, the internet has the capability to be implemented into the current traditional sales process with products such as Bovinebid.com Live Auction Webcast. Then maybe it will become commonplace for live cattle sales to be held online or in a ballroom setting with video of the animals selling.

While traditional live auction sales will always be a useful marketing tool, there are economic factors that will challenge breeders, dairymen and sale managers to think 'outside of the box' throughout the sales process. The internet will be the catalyst for more efficient means of future marketing efforts."

With the price of gas and all travel costs on such a steep rise, as well as an increased emphasis on biosecurity issues, Jason's ideas for the future definitely seem plausible. So perhaps in the future, instead of sitting at a sale, you'll be sitting in your office, or milking, or on the tractor, thinking "what were dairy cattle sales like before live internet bidding?"