

Swine Management News

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MARKETING PAYS OFF IN PROFITS

tion to your farm, then estimate travel times, miles and price differentials between one sale and another. Since price discrepancies between markets will always occur, find the markets which will yield the most profit to you.

A producer must learn to expand marketing opportunities to maximize a livestock operation's profit potential. One way is to explore alternative markets. This requires regular analysis of local outlets.

At a conference a few years ago, I met a producer who had developed an ethnic trade for some of his hogs. By catering to groups who wanted a certain kind of hog at specific times of the year, he was able to increase his profit substantially.

Marketing is a skill that can be learned by producers of all ages. A few weeks ago at the state fair, it was apparent to me that some youngsters had done their market-

ing homework prior to the Junior Livestock Auction. Even though all livestock project animals sold well, some entries sold for 40 cents per pound more than the average. A few youngsters contacted potential buyers ahead of the sale to promote the purchase of their project animals.

Seeking out potential buyers, contacting them personally, and selling them on the idea of buying a project animal helped these young exhibitors learn how to market livestock.

In my last column, I suggested that buying expensive feeder ani-

mals in the hope that the animal will be a champion is a dubious course to winning. But I have to applaud the initiative of the several youngsters who cultivated possible buyers in order to get a better price per pound at the sale.

They also gained practical experience in hog production from feeding and health care to developing marketing know-how and people skills. In addition, they learned to keep records of production costs of their market hog or other

livestock-project animal and make a profit.

I encourage all Junior Livestock Auction participants to calculate the actual cost of producing their project animal. Now compare that figure to the actual market value of your project animals the week it sold at auction. The real profit picture may be very different. Maybe it's time to write to the buyer of your auctioned animal to thank them for their support of your educational experience.

Buffalo Enthusiasts Gather At Seminar

MESHOPPEN (Wyoming Co. — Did you know that there are a lot of people interested in raising bison (buffalo)?

The Pennsylvania Bison Association (PBA) has just presented the second seminar this year at the Ramada Inn at Clark's Summit. It was attended by 42 bison enthusiasts from Pennsylvania, Ohio, West Virginia, and Delaware.

There was a large, beautiful shoulder mount of a 10-year-old bison bull on exhibit.

The morning program started with Walter Baumgarner of Wayne County, Penn State extension service, who gave a presentation on "How to Judge Bison" - knowing the good points (and

bad) to look for when you buy bison.

From colored photographs on a screen, Baumgarner was able to point out and discuss conformation necessary for a good breeding bison or other characteristics desirable for raising a good meat-producing animal. This topic was most necessary for those present who are interested in buying animals at the bison auction to be held at the Middleburg Auction Barn near Selingsgrove in central Pennsylvania on November 2.

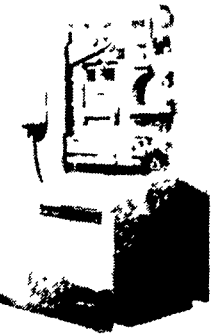
There was also a VCR tape played from the 1990 Bison Gold Trophy Show and Sale, an annual event in Denver, Colo. This showed the excellence available in bison breeding and helped to understand the prices paid for these animals. (The grand champion yearling bull was bought for \$8,400.)

The program ended with two judging contests given to help the individuals learn how to pick quality bison.

At lunch, delicious juicy slices of rolled, round roast of bison au jus were served plain or on a roll with a choice of sauces, accompanied by baked beans, coleslaw, and a festive sherbet for dessert. Various door prizes were handed out at this time. There was bison jerky for sale and hand-painted buffalo nickel banks of ceramics, and also black diamond (coal) bison statues.

Bison love to roam. But if you want to raise them, you need good fence to keep them home. So the afternoon part of the program was involved with various kinds of fencing. Ira Beiler of AG Fence Systems, Ephrata, PA gave the pros and cons of fencing. For more information about PBA, call (717) 965-2237.

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