

IMPACT



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Teamwork Brings Positive Changes to the Eastern Idaho State Fair Market Animal Sale

The Situation

The Eastern Idaho State Fair is held the first week of September each year and includes the Labor Day Holiday. Youth livestock exhibitors from the 16-county fair district bring their market animals to the fair to compete for a spot in the sale. An exhibitor may only sell one animal in the sale. Only the top 20 animals in each species qualify for the sale, so the number of animals remains constant. The Eastern Idaho State Fair Junior Market Animal Sale had always been held on the last Saturday morning of the fair. Buyer participation had been declining in both the number of buyers attending the sale and the amount of money they were spending. Consequently, a few major buyers were providing most of the financial support at the sale.

The sale seemed to lack excitement and didn't provide the buyers an opportunity to meet and mingle or feel appreciated. It seemed like the buyers that were attending were there out of duty. The sale committee, made up of volunteers and University of Idaho Extension Educators, was concerned about the lack of buyer participation and the perceived decline of the sale.

Our Response

After the sale in 2003, the Eastern Idaho State Fair Show and Sale Committee met to identify reasons for the sale decline and discuss ideas to improve buyer participation at the sale. The decision was made to talk to the fair board about the opportunity to move the sale to Friday evening. Once the fair

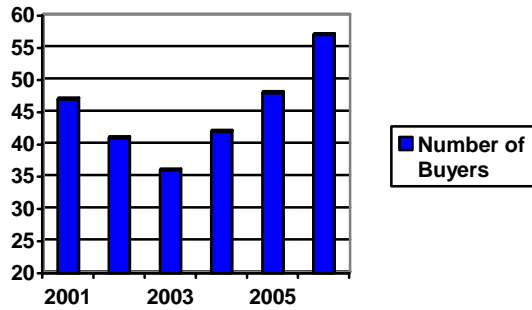
board gave the approval to have a Friday evening time of 6:00 p.m. in 2004, a survey was developed to send to buyers. The survey asked buyers their opinions on moving the sale to Friday evening or leaving it on Saturday morning. In addition, personal contacts were made to the major sale buyers to obtain their input on moving the sale.

The committee realized they needed to offer something to the buyers to entice them to participate. The fair board has always provided fair tickets as a way to invite buyers, but nothing had been done at the fair in the way of buyer appreciation. Committee members decided a pre-sale social might be just what was needed. Sponsors were identified and solicited to provide pre-sale hors d'oeuvres and refreshments for the buyers. The 2004 sale was scheduled for Friday at 6:00 p.m. with pre-sale refreshments being donated by local commodity dealers.

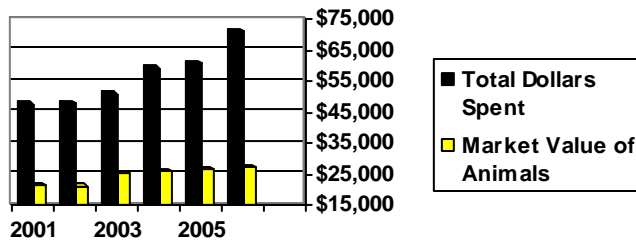
Program Outcomes

Surveys returned from the buyers indicated that 84% of them favored the move to a Friday evening sale. All of the major buyers were in favor of the move as it would give them Saturday to enjoy other activities. The Idaho Beef Council provided some of the new pre-cooked beef products as part of their consumer education program. A local potato processor provided cooked potato products, a dairy product dealer and a soft drink company provided drinks and an ice distributor provided ice.

The buyers met and mingled with youth and adult participants as they enjoyed the pre-sale food. The first evening sale held in 2004, had a 14% increase in the number of buyers and a 17% increase in the amount of money spent at the 2003 sale.



Since the change in sale time in 2004 through the 2006 sale, the number of buyers has increased 59% and the total dollars spent has increased over \$21,000 for a 40% increase. The increase in dollars spent is significant because the market value of the animals has not increased from 2003 through 2006 and the numbers of animal sold has remained constant during the same period.



With more buyers participating in the sale, the pressure has lessened for previous major buyers. In fact, in 2006 one of the historically major buyer companies changed ownership and actually spent less money than it ever had with no negative affect on the sale. Now buyers mingle before and after the sale with each other and with the youth.

The Future

The sale is scheduled annually for the Friday evening of the fair. Commodity group sponsors are willing to provide products for refreshments. The sale committee continues to work together to provide a good atmosphere for buyers, spectators and youth.

Other Contributing Faculty

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