

The Market Report

JUNE PROFESSIONAL PONDERINGS

I am sure that we are all relieved that some of the elements of the Coronavirus Lockdown are starting to be eased. However the government, and country as a whole, still has a difficult balance to tread between resuming some level of social contact/opening the economy up on one side and managing the public health implications of a new virus which seems unlikely to go away anytime soon on the other.

For our part we have managed to keep the Livestock Markets open at Thrapston and Stratford and it is thanks to our dedicated market team and the market users that this has been able to take place in a safe manner.

It is also positive that the government has recently issued updated guidance which allows the resumption of residential estate agency activities. Bletsoes have now been able to open our estate agency office and restart our full sales and lettings service.

I am pleased to report that we are currently seeing strong levels of activity and the residential market appears to be regaining the momentum from earlier in the year. In fact in the first few days since re-opening we have seen a large increase in viewings for house purchases as well as increased demand for rental properties.

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It is also worth commenting that a number of offers have been received including for some of the premium residential properties we currently have on the market.

So the early indications are looking positive and the trend that we are seeing seems to be occurring in other areas as well, with Rightmove reporting that last week saw some of their busiest days ever since the business started approximately 20 years ago. A lot of the demand appears to be coming from people based in London, Birmingham and other urban areas who have had an opportunity to reflect and are now keen to live with more space and to be closer to areas with outdoor leisure opportunities. The rural areas that Bletsoes operates in have huge potential to fulfil this demand with attractive villages and market towns, scenic countryside and good connectivity to infrastructure and commercial centres. A lot of commentators are also suggesting that Coronavirus will speed up the home working trend with increasing numbers of professional roles taking place on a part home working and part office basis. Again this should be positive for the demand for rural residential property with buyers able to purchase in a wider geographical area and with less reliance on the densely populated and very expensive areas in close commutable distance to the major urban centres.

Developers are already adapting to this trend with a number looking at the internal layouts of the properties to accommodate areas suitable for home working and home leisure. The development industry is understandably still cautious about the demand for housing but sites are re-opening and the enquiry levels appear to be good in the right locations. Encouragingly many purchases that were entered into before the lockdown started are still progressing to a conclusion which hopefully shows an underlying confidence in the market.

Farm shops seem to have been the stand out performer during the Coronavirus lockdown and many farm shops have adapted their offering to include home deliveries and click and collect type services. In addition to a more enjoyable shopping experience, and the ability to offer socially distanced shopping, farm shops appear to have also benefitted from an increase in demand for quality food with eating out being replaced by premium foods consumed at home. When the lockdown restrictions are relaxed further it is also likely that UK based tourism will see a considerable increase in demand with the concept of a foreign holiday a long way from anyone's thoughts at the moment. Again farms and rural businesses could benefit significantly from this change in consumer behaviour.

We are going through a period of considerable change and we are likely to see changes in where people live, work, shop and take their leisure activities. Change can create opportunity and over the longer term rural businesses and the rural environment will hopefully be able to benefit from some of the structural changes that we are beginning to see. Bletsoes looks forward to working with our clients to help their businesses adapt and to take advantage of potential new opportunities. We are able to offer advice in relation to property sales and letting, planning/development, grant applications and business development, so please feel free to give us a call and discuss any plans with us.

Peter Moore
Partner

FUR & FEATHER, PRODUCE & MISCELLANEOUS SALE

Currently remains CLOSED

Recently a number of people have turned up on a Tuesday at Stratford Market, hoping that the Fur, Feather, Produce & Miscellaneous Auction will have resumed. Unfortunately this is **not** the case and we are not yet able to re-open this section of the Market. We must follow the latest government COVID-19 regulations and more specifically the guidelines from DEFRA via the Livestock Auctioneers Association. The welfare of our staff and those attending our sales is of utmost importance and in order to re-open this section, we will need to be able to meet social distancing requirements. Please bear with us, as we can confirm that the Fur & Feather, Produce & Miscellaneous Sales will resume when the time is right and we will publicise the re-opening widely.

For further information and guidance please see our Coronavirus Procedures on pages 7 & 8, or alternatively please do contact the Market Team at any time.



Click the link to view our Stratford Facebook page for further
Up to date information about our sales pre and post sale.

<https://www.facebook.com/StratfordLivestockMarket/>

REPORT FOR TUESDAY 2ND JUNE

The past week saw no let-up in the relentless hot weather, therefore some lambs are perhaps not doing as well, with numbers slightly less than last week, along with many farmers literally making hay while the sun shines.

Prices seem to be holding up well with all that is going on during this worldwide lockdown, many liveweight centres are seeing prices better for many lambs than selling on the grid. A fine example today with the Spring Lambs weighing 59.5kg along with those over 50kg, as well as at the other end of the weight range some exceptional, well shaped lambs seen today weighing only 32kg. Slightly heavier is the key to sell your lambs at the moment, 42kg+ seem to be the best to gain a decent return per head.

Keep the numbers coming, Stratford Market means a very easy morning sale, with no queues, and the drop and go system enables you to drop and return to your farm to carry on the best part of a full day's work at the moment. We appreciate that many are missing the social aspect of marketing however this will eventually change, so keep selling live so that farmers can thrive.

Please contact the Auctioneers with your entries, so that we can inform the buyers. Turning up and hoping for the best isn't marketing, some disappointed vendors seem to be weeks off the actual current weeks/days trade. Also looking at averages doesn't always tell the full story of the quality forward. We are pleased to talk through with you the current trade and visit you.

312 New Season Lambs

6 Lights – M Digweed sold his 32kg lambs to 217p or £69.44.

To		From		Average	
217p	£69.44	217p	£69.44	217p	£69.44

95 Standards – 227p topped this section with 35.5kg lambs from SP & GK Smith with others 3kg heavier at 225p; Tim Withers also saw 225p for his 38kg lambs; AJ Webster sold his ten 33.5kg lambs to 220p; John Bourne & Son saw 217p for their 39kg lambs; John Peebles sold his 38kg lambs to 215.5p; Baylis Farming saw 215p for their 38.5kg lambs and 214p for their 37kg lambs.

To		From		Average	
227p	£86.63	212p	£73.70	218.5p	£81.94

189 Mediums – Joint top price of the day in this section went to John North and Edward Brain with their 41.5kg (£98.36) and 42.5kg (£100.73) lambs selling to 237p; Will Spencer sold his 43kg lambs to 230p (£98.90); JR Hughes & Son sold 42kg lambs to 229p; Pip & Mark Careless sold their 42kg lambs to 228p; and GC Hodges & Son sold their 44kg Suffolks to 223p. Prices per head saw 44.5kg lambs sell to £100.13 from JR Hughes & Son; 45kg Suffolks from GC Hodges & Son sold to £99, just showing that a bit more weight can see the lambs sell up to the £100 mark.

To		From		Average	
237p	£100.73	212p	£84.80	222p	£94.97

18 Heavies – RE Greenhill entered some big heavy lambs which topped at 216p for 47.5kg Suffolks realising £102.60 and at the same weight 212p for a pen of Charollais.

To		From		Average	
216p	£102.60	212p	£100.21	214p	£100.99

4 Over 52kg – RE Greenhill topped the day per head with four, 59.5kg lambs which realised £104.72 or 176p. Try weighing them on a deadweight grid!

To		From		Average	
176p	£104.72	176p	£104.72	176p	£104.72

84 Old Season Lambs

Still last year lambs about, with less buyers requiring this type of lamb. Though the next Muslim festival (*breaking the fast*) is being held at the end of July and any lambs with teeth will be wanted. But it probably won't guarantee a big lift in prices.

15 Standards – Selling to £60.75 for 37.5kg hogs from R Peach; Keith Taylor sold 38kg hogs to £60.42; and Will Steele saw £51.75 for his Easycare rams.

To		From		Average	
162p	£60.75	138p	£51.75	154p	£58.20

36 Mediums – Keith Taylor topped this section with his 43.5kg Texel hogs selling to £81.35 and his 43kg Suffolks selling to £76.97; MJ Gillett & Partners saw their 45kg hogs sell to £76.50; PG Kane sold a 41kg hogg to £65.60; and Will Steele sold 42.5kg Easycare rams to £65.45.

To		From		Average	
187p	£81.35	154p	£65.45	168p	£72.09

23 Heavies – Keith Taylor realised top price for his hogs in this section too, with 48kg Suffolks selling to £80.16; B Page & Son sold their 47kg hogg at £77.55; Will Steele saw £72 and £71.04 for his two pens of 48kg hogs and his 47.5kg hogs with teeth sell to £57.95.

To		From		Average	
167p	£80.16	148p	£71.04	157.5p	£75.41

7 Over 52kg – JW Higgins sold in this section hogs to top at £84.32 weighing 62kg; JE Andrews sold three 55kg Charollais to £81.95 and some 2kgs lighter at £78.44.

To		From		Average	
149p	£84.32	136p	£78.44	146.5p	£80.78

31 Store Lambs

A pen of New Season lambs forward from C Lockton selling to £48.50; S Healey entered 22 Welsh and Herdwick type x lambs to top at £56 from £41; and GJ Nichols sold a single store lamb for life at £40.

To	From	Average
£56.00	£40.00	£46.83

127 Cull Ewes & Rams

Prices have crashed for all types at the moment, especially for the 2nd/3rd quality or feeding ewes. The best Texels sold to £83 for PG Kane; Charles Vernon-Miller sold a Texel to £83 and his Beltex realised £70; B Page & Son sold two Charollais ewes to £73; JR Hughes & Son saw £67 for their Charollais. Mules sold to £61.50 from Will Spencer, with others to £58.50 from G & R Duckett. R Peach sold his pen of five ewes to £50. Rams sold to £46 for a Wiltshire Horn from PJ Cooper.

To	From	Average
£83.00	£14.00	£45.32

NEXT SALE

Tuesday 9th June

Prime, Cull & Store Sheep, Ewes & Lambs

Vendors are to Drop & Go

Buyers Only around the Pens

Keep your distance 2 Metres

Bletsoes Procedures for Markets & Sales in respect of the Covid-19 Restrictions

Update 27th April 2020

As the situation with Coronavirus develops, we regularly receive updated guidance from DEFRA via the Livestock Auctioneers Association, regarding the running of the livestock market and other sales. We are pleased that DEFRA has recognised the importance of livestock markets continuing to operate as an important part of the food supply chain. We are following the advice of DEFRA and adding our own additional measures to do all we can to provide a good service to all our clients and users of the markets, whilst taking reasonable precautions.

We are delighted that we are able to continue to offer a service to the farming community and remain open for business. Until further notice, the sales on Thursday and Saturday at Thrapston and on Tuesday at Stratford will continue for sheep, cattle, pigs, goats and calves.

The following applies to all sales:

1. We are operating a “**drop & go**” policy in respect of all livestock. Sellers must remain in their vehicles and allow market staff to unload livestock and pass any relevant paperwork through the vehicle window.
2. We will restrict the attendance within the market to as few as possible:
 - Only those that are **buying or working in the market** should attend
 - A register of all Buyers attending each market has to be maintained.
 - If you wish to attend Market as a Buyer, please register in advance with Al & Jake, in order that your attendance is registered and so that you can be allocated a space to stand around the cattle ring for Saturday sales.
 - Any person over the age of 70 should not attend sales
 - Any person that is knowingly ill, showing symptoms of the virus, or has an underlying health issue should not attend sales
 - Children should not attend sales
 - Any lady that is knowingly pregnant should not attend sales
3. The market canteen will remain closed, for the foreseeable future.

4. All non-essential food chain supply sales, such as the Fur & Feather, Machinery, Shrub & Plant sales, etc. are cancelled until further notice.
5. We have arranged suitable hand washing facilities – in the gents wc and ladies wc.
6. We will limit numbers in the market office. so that any queue is outside in the open and you should maintain 2 metres distancing, in any queue.
7. All of the pens are inside though with good ventilation, please ensure that you **observe 2 metres distancing at all times.**
8. If you wish to arrange collection of stock from the farm, please speak to Al or Jake, who will be pleased to organise this with you.
9. In addition to now being able to sell breeding stock, we are also operating a **Private Sale Register**, which can be found on our website, in respect of Store Cattle, Bulling Heifers, Breeding Sheep, Ewes with Lambs at foot as well as Fodder, all for sale by Private Treaty.

Please follow the current government guidance on how to reduce the likelihood of contracting the virus:

DO

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitiser gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin immediately and wash your hands afterwards

AVOID

- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

We look forward to helping you through these uncertain times. Any concerns or queries please speak to Al or Jake. Please take sensible precautions and keep safe.

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