

INNOVATIONS

Cattle Market Mobile app provides reports, tools

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Hello, I'm Austin Miles, a beef producer, agriculture advocate and self-proclaimed nerd. I serve as a research associate in the

Center for Advanced Agricultural Systems and Technologies (CAAST) at the Noble Foundation but have served in a variety of roles over the last four years working with our research support and operations staff. Being a part of an organization that supports and empowers those involved in agriculture in the Southern Great Plains brings me great joy and pride. Throughout the year, I will be reviewing mobile apps I think could be helpful to producers.

Growing up, my grandfather captivated me with stories about his life, raising cattle and peanuts, the challenges he and his family faced on the farm, the struggles they overcame, and the tools he had at his disposal to take a crop or trailer-load of calves to market. While a lot has changed in 75 years, a lot has remained the same. Technologies are constantly being improved upon, torn down and rebuilt just to be dismantled once more. When we talk about technology, we are talking about a broad

array of innovations be it in the form of a new implement, using sexed semen to breed cattle or a smartphone in the palm of a rancher's hand with more computing power than NASA had when man landed on the moon. The rate of change is mind-boggling; it is faster than yesterday yet slower than tomorrow, which makes it virtually impossible to stay on the cutting edge for long.

Cattle Market Mobile is probably one of the most used applications on my phone. This free app is a great way to check cattle prices for almost 300 locations nationwide, all gathered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS). In a few seconds and a couple of taps on my phone's screen, I can review information from the previous week's sale, itemized by animal class and weight, and read a brief summary of the market trends at that particular location. This app offers the ability to generate a variety of reports, such as a direct national cow and bull report, and the national daily and weekly slaughter reports. Additional features include built-in tools, such as a gestation calendar and a live-animal approximate value calculator. These tools provide quick dates and figures to help cattle producers make critical management decisions when deter-



mining a breeding schedule or when to market their cattle. Finally, Cattle Market Mobile is also available online at www.cattlemarketmobile.com. The website is just as user-friendly and concise as its mobile counterpart.

Likes

- Customizable by location
- Tools
- Additional reporting
- Multiple platforms ▶

If I had to make one tweak to this application, I would like to see more local auction reports available. While major markets tend to bring larger drafts of animals weekly and yield higher prices, a large number of producers, including myself, still do business with their smaller local barns. Market reports from these venues are typically available, but it would be nice if they were in the same conve-

nient location and format found on the Cattle Market Mobile app and website.

Dislikes

- Auction information not available for smaller markets
- Tools only available in app, not on website

Accessing and understanding the information needed to make better

marketing decisions is crucial to maximize the value of your cattle at the time of sale. Monitoring cattle prices and staying abreast of changes in the market is easier than ever thanks to advancements in technology and applications such as Cattle Market Mobile. Isn't it cool when cowboy boots and a keyboard collide? ■