

## Case Study: Portal for Beef Producers

### Beef producers positioning for future growth through online collaborative communication

Why would a small cattle association go to the trouble of establishing a web portal, when it could rely on traditional means of communication such as field days, shows and social gatherings, along with a web page and published newsletters?



The Galloway Cattle and Beef Marketing Association was formed to promote and market Galloways to the beef industry. Galloway cattle originated in south-west Scotland, and are pre-eminently a beef-producing breed.

For Nelson Quinn, association President, there was no question at all in adopting more appropriate and cost-saving technology: it was simply a logical progression from

the association's first generation web page established – along with the association itself - in 1997.

"In short time, our association realised that the web page was little more than a static brochure. Once having read the contents, there was little encouragement to go back to visit it again on a regular basis," says Nelson Quinn.

"Further, our traditional site did not allow us to collaborate online, and it required that the site administrator be skilled in HTML. We knew that to grow, and to progress our marketing aims, we needed a means by which the membership could communicate freely."

"ECEnable offered us the ideal system – extremely low cost, the services of a Commercial Partner to set up, paying as we go, and only paying for the services we use."

The association embraced an online community management system in February 2002. Now all members and associate participants can actively publish and retrieve information from the site. On average, over 20 pages are added to the web site each month. Members can also advertise cattle or semen for sale, access a technical data base and links to other industries, or even sell equipment.



Importantly, there are user controls over access to the site. "Password protection and permissions mean that we can make sure that individuals, groups and the general public only see what they should see. Further, when a member publishes an article, we can make sure it is appropriate by using the moderation process. And, because the Web Portal is template driven, only basic computing knowledge is needed to administer the site. It literally takes minutes to add or edit a page.

"Now that we have access to an easy to use web tool, our members can manage their own web page and content. The forum module allows members to communicate on important issues of the day – we can even invite industry experts to participate from anywhere in the world. As well, the events calendar allows us to publish coming events."

Nelson Quinn explains why the process is beneficial to his association. "Trading communities harness the power of networking to create a virtual cycle of business communications. This heightened level of contact cultivates commerce among businesses, and the Web Portal allows us to support new initiatives such as group buying with online co-ordination."

"The challenge now is to engage our supply chain participants, such as beef buyers, to grasp the opportunity of supply chain learning and collaboration."

The concept of supply chain learning networks is still very new, and the ECEnable Web Portal has the ability to facilitate collaboration and the distilling of information for members while enabling growth through online partnerships with suppliers.

"We have to allow for members to accept and become accustomed to using the Web Portal to increase their knowledge and market power," says Nelson Quinn.

According to the Association, one important aspect will be the ability to have what amounts to closed-loop monitoring of the performance of Galloway cattle in the marketplace. Using the national livestock identification system, it will be possible for breeders to get feedback from consumers on quality and taste, and to feed that information back into their breeding and nutritional programs.

It's a subject the Galloway breeders already are fairly (pardon the pun) bullish about. At the 2002 Sydney Royal Easter Show, Galloways took out the Championship of Taste competition against some of the nation's best cattle. For further information about:

Galloway cattle, visit [www.gallowaycattle.com.au](http://www.gallowaycattle.com.au) , or

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