
STATE OF MONTANA

STEVE BULLOCK, GOVERNOR

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To whom it may concern:

The Montana Department of Livestock began implementation of the Fast Auction system in 2011. It has been fully implemented since 2012. Since then, we have seen significant benefits in both animal traceability and overtime cost reduction.

Montana Brands Enforcement personnel inspect between 500,000 and 700,000 cattle and 10,000 horses annually through 13 livestock auction markets. The smallest handles 18,000 head per year, and the largest handles over 100,000 per year. These markets are staffed with 35 inspectors; some handling more than one market. Prior to Fast Auction, cattle were inspected and tracked with a paper tally system. Records did not get centralized until paper records were sent each week to the main office in Helena. They were then entered into a DOS based computer system. The search capabilities in this system were limited, and maintaining the paper records was necessary in order to track specific animals. The system was accurate, but very slow and labor intensive.

Since implementing Fast Auction, we have seen the following benefits:

- Reduction in overtime. We have had a \$1,000 per month reduction during the monthly horse sale in one auction alone.
- Standardization of process. All markets are now conforming to the same methods and practices.
- Access to sales information. With Fast Auction, all markets have access to all sale data throughout the state.
- Integration. Fast Auction has allowed us to integrate the workings of our Animal Health and Brands Enforcement divisions. Ranches that are required to test have their brands flagged. When their cattle come to a market, inspection staff are alerted to any required tests before they are sold. This is a vital step to maintain our brucellosis Designated Surveillance Area.
- Service and Support. Fort Supply offers superior support and the hours necessary to keep a brand office running.

In 2010, the Department of Livestock entered into a contract with Axiom IT Solutions for development of brands recording and registration software. Montana rerecords all 56,000 recorded brands every ten years, and that cycle was to begin on January 1, 2011. Axiom developed, tested, deployed, and integrated their program with an online rerecord service on time and on budget. The rerecord process was finished sooner and with less personnel than any rerecord previous.

Since then, the Axiom program has been deployed to all thirteen livestock auction markets and is in use by several local brand inspectors. Before this system was in place, customers could wait up to four months for a brand application to be processed. Since implementing the Axiom program, the longest wait time has been two weeks; most applications are processed within 24 hours.

The Axiom program also allows for flagging of brands for a variety of reasons, such as disease testing requirements, lost, strayed, and stolen reports, and quarantines. All thirteen markets have real-time access to all brand information which was never available before.

Fast Auction and Axiom have been a huge benefit to the Montana Department of Livestock and we look forward to productive partnerships in the years to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Mackay". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Christian Mackay, Executive Officer
Montana Board of Livestock