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UDAF Warns of Potential Livestock Purchasing Scams

Taylorsville, UT — Officials at the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food are warning livestock purchasers of potential scams with online livestock purchases as has been seen in surrounding states.

“Our department has been made aware of scammers taking advantage of livestock buyers, purchasing livestock from online classified listing sources in surrounding states such as Colorado,” said UDAF Animal Division Director, Leann Hunting. “We want buyers in Utah to be aware of these potential scams and know how to identify them.”

Buyers should be cautious when purchasing animals online when not purchasing from a reputable auction house or face to face with the seller. Scammers often ask for payment or partial payment before allowing you to see the animals. Never send payment without in-person verification that the listing is real and accurate. If the seller is not open to an in-person viewing, know that this could be a scammer.

Scams could potentially be higher this year, especially for cattle, due to the higher market prices for these animals. Cattle prices rose to the highest since 2014-15 in July of 2023 and are continuing to rise according to data provided by local auction houses in Utah and Idaho.

Buyers should also be aware that all livestock sales require an official brand inspection by UDAF. If the seller does not arrange a brand inspection, this could also be a sign of a scam or the selling of stolen livestock. If you have experienced this type of scam, contact your local law enforcement office to report the offense. For more information about brand inspections or to find your local brand inspector, visit ag.utah.gov/farmers/animal-industry/.

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