

TIPS TO MAKE CATTLE TRANSACTIONS SMOOTH

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The activity of the Ethics Committee has been at a low level for the past several years. Our charge is to deal with fraud or dishonesty, particularly with regard to registration papers and association procedures and regulations. We also function in cases of animal cruelty or gross negligence. Most of the situations that have come to our attention recently have been the result of poorly defined or poorly conceived cattle deals. Loaning bulls, housing other breeders' cattle, complicated cattle shipping arrangements, the cow was exposed to a bull or guaranteed in calf, or simply unusual deals involving actions to be completed at some future date after delivery. Exchange rates with international shipments can be a problem. Health records including vaccinations can be a source of difficulty. A handshake between two well meaning honest people is a grand thing but memories and perceptions can fade over time.

Another source of difficulty is confusion about registration transfers. A common situation is the new buyer is handed the registration papers

for their Highland cattle purchase. They are told they must send them in to AHCA to complete the transfer. In the excitement of the delivery and new ownership, the papers get put in a pile on the back of a desk and forgotten until they are needed months or years later. There is often a misunderstanding that simply holding the papers constitutes a completed registry. **The best procedure is for the seller to send in the transfer.**

A good source for many breeders to use when selling cattle is the "Recommended Terms and Conditions of the American Highland Cattle Association". These can be found in the Membership Directory and Handbook and AHCA's website on the registration tab. These clearly outline the sellers' and buyers' responsibilities and procedures to follow if there are any problems. It is a good idea for sellers to sell their cattle under these terms and buyers to require them from the seller. They clearly state that it is the seller's responsibility to transfer an animal, defines breeding status (ex. pregnant, pasture

exposed, served, open) and outlines procedures to follow in the case of an issue.

It is also good business procedure to have a signed (both parties) bill of sale or sales agreement. This should detail what is being sold, breeding status of females and the exact price. When an animal is sold, a good idea would be to give the buyer a photocopy of the registration paper if the transfer is not complete. Remember, problems tend to reflect poorly on the seller so avoiding miscommunication is key.

Check List

- Complete description of animal(s)
- Price and payment arrangements
- Breeding status
- Delivery details including dates and cost responsibility
- Accurate description of any unusual situations such as loan, joint ownership, boarding, things to be completed at some future date, etc.
- Health records