

Briefing note
Mon 9 Sept 2019

Auctioneer Matt Stevenson to retire from United Auctions



One of the top commercial sheep auctioneers in Scotland is to hang up his white coat and gavel after a career spanning 50 years during which he has been involved in the sale of more than 14million sheep.

United Auctions' Sales Director Matt Stevenson will step down from the auctioneer's box on Saturday 28 September at the sale of Blackface ewes and gimmers at Stirling Agricultural Centre where he has been based for almost 29 years.

Originally hailing from a farming family in North Ayrshire, Matt has made Stirling his home for the past 45 years.

Starting his career as a trainee auctioneer aged just 15 at Kilmarnock Mart selling young calves, cast cows and furniture, he will retire as a Board Director of Scotland's leading livestock auctioneers.

In 1990 Matt was headhunted by the late auctioneer Jimmy Weir to head up and expand the commercial sheep sales for United Auctions. In his half-century wielding the gavel, Matt has knocked it down on some of the most expensive sheep to go through the Stirling ring, fetching £20,000 for a Blackface shearling and £12,000 for a Blackface ewe hogg both from Ian Hunter, Dalchirla, and £5,500 for a Blue Leicester shearling.

Matt met many of his customers playing rugby for Stirling County RFC. He played on the wing and scored 175 tries in 11 years before retiring aged 31 and taking up refereeing for a further 17 years.

He said: *“When I joined United Auctions, I stipulated that the weekends were my own because I was a rugby man. Farmers and rugby went hand in hand for years and I made a huge amount of contacts. I’ve still got a lot of those contacts today.”*

At the weekend, United Auctions saw its biggest ever ewe lamb sale at Stirling Agricultural Centre with a record entry of more than 12,000. The sale has grown year on year with Matt at the helm and is recognised as a key date in the sheep farming calendar.

Matt continued: *“A big percentage of top breeders bring their ewe lambs to Stirling Agricultural Centre to win the cup. That’s not by accident, we’ve worked hard to go out and get the business and we look after our customers once we have them.”*

George Purves, Managing Director of United Auctions, said: *“Matt has dedicated 50 energetic years to the industry, which speaks volumes about the measure of the man. One of farming’s big characters in and out of the rostrum, he’s been a close colleague for the last 18 years and hugely supportive as a fellow Director. Matt leaves a lasting legacy and a strong team who have gained experience and knowledge working with him for years. We wish him a long and happy retirement.”*

On hanging up his gavel in September, Matt Stevenson said: *“In some ways, it will be a sad day for me, but in other ways I’m delighted. I always wanted to be the number one commercial sheep auctioneer in Scotland and sell as much as I possibly could, and I’ve had a good innings. So, while I’m still fit and healthy, I want to do a bit of travelling and spend time with my grandchildren.”*

A drinks reception to celebrate Matt’s career will take place on Saturday 28th September at Stirling Agricultural Centre. All friends, customers and colleagues are invited to the presentation at 4.30pm.

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Issued by JK Consultancy on behalf of United Auctions. For further information, please contact Jenny Kumar on 07989557198 / jenny@jkconsultancy.com

Notes to editor

About United Auctions

United Auctions are Scotland’s leading livestock auctioneers and procurement specialists and operate a network of different auction markets across Scotland, including Stirling, Huntly, Lairg, Dalmally, Tiree, Islay, South Uist and Oban. The company conducts auctions of both commercial and pedigree livestock, including the world-famous Stirling Bull Sales, and provides farm-to-farm and farm-to-abattoir procurement services.