



Beef Cattle Identification & Farm Management Tool Excel Business in Kentucky at Anderson Circle Farms

Harrodsburg, Ky. — Nearly half of the nation's 2 million farms are connected to the Internet, and it is estimated that 54 percent of all farms own or rent computers according to a U.S. Department of Agriculture survey conducted last year. However, many farmers can only link to the Internet through traditional phone lines. While more farmers can get online, the focus on installing rural broadband -- a fast connection is key to the future of farm management.

This factor is perhaps a symptom as to why the USDA typically has waded through a mound of paper records and other data to trace product. However in April, the USDA laid out the framework for an industry-led National Animal Identification System (NAIS). According to Dave Maples, executive vice president at the Kentucky Cattlemen's Association, the specifics are still being worked out. However, the Cattlemen's Association is looking to Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) for livestock management and evaluating the challenges of tracking approximately 1.1 million beef cattle and calves within the Commonwealth. Kentucky has the largest beef cow herd east of the Mississippi River and eighth-largest in the United States.

In Mercer County Anderson Circle Farms, owned by Ralph Anderson, wants to move the industry further ahead and is testing a new application that combines the RFID program with a Farm Management Solution developed by Belcan Corporation. The pocket-size PC application provides easy access and availability to real-time data. It allows farm workers to record information at any location inputting inventory, labor, machine maintenance, physical structure, agronomics, accounting and livestock data.

Harvey Mitchell, Anderson Circle Farm General Manager, said "today's consumers are demanding quality and safety in the food products they buy and this tool has the ability to record every aspect of the herd, from grain consumption, to veterinary records, down to heredity." Added Mitchell, "it is really about benchmarking your operation, looking at your financial debt structure, the quality of your farm and your ability to manage every aspect in order to be successful."

As Mitchell sees it, the problem is that most farmers are working within the constraints of multiple software packages and using handwritten notes - which means the data is not easily accessible, or accurate, making the transfer of data cumbersome. The technology of the Farm Management Solution is designed to expand along with the business. The primary concern is the extensive data, storage of data and whether farmers are willing to log on to the Web for a service of this nature.

While the University of Kentucky's Beef Program and others within the industry believe the opportunity for Kentucky farmers to convert more than 7 million acres into cattle farming is even greater than before due to the use of matching funds from tobacco settlement money to upgrade facilities and improve herds. At Anderson Circle Farms, the Farm Management Suite technology is a means to manage every aspect of the business, from the cost of the tractor to the real cost of production, it will excel the farm workers ability to succeed. And while the Farm Management Suite is still in development, Mitchell is confident that the project will move forward to revolutionize farming methods at Anderson Circle Farms, in Kentucky and beyond the border.

Mitchell noted "Ultimately it is about the customer and what they want. They want a consistent, quality product that they can trust. While the RFID tags provide a good first step in the identification of livestock, I believe there is a demand for product that can be proven to be safe and affordable." By using RFID and the Farm Management Suite, Anderson Circle Farms has the capability of providing the high level of accountability needed for an evolving marketplace. Additionally, they utilize these tools to further enhance other crop and livestock enterprises.

About KY 120:

In the fast-paced world of technology-driven business, it should be recognized that best practices can be studied and emulated. As a part of the [connectkentucky](#) initiative, CiTE (Center for Information Technology Enterprise) is profiling business initiatives in each of Kentucky's 120 counties.

Name:
Anderson Circle Farms

Internet:
www.andersoncirclefarm.com

Products/Services:
Angus Beef Cattle

Location:
Harrodsburg/Mercer County

Leadership:
Ralph G. Anderson, Owner
Harvey Mitchell, General Mgr.,
Greg Robey, Commercial Cattle
Manager and Mark Straw,
Resource Nutrition Manager

Employees: 16

Founded: 1967

Reach: National

Innovative Insight: *"The Customer is always right. You must understand what it is they want and be willing to evolve in order to meet their needs."*

Advice for Growing Companies: *"You must understand your debt structure, your farm quality and your management capabilities."*

Way Internet Has Made You More Competitive:
"The Internet has provided a valuable networking tool to build alliances, share resources and management our business."

Ways to Attract the Best Workers: *"We provide challenging opportunities for young farm workers to learn the business."*