Minister McConalogue confirms COVID mart guidelines

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Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Charlie McConalogue T.D., has today (23rd December) confirmed the practices for buyers and sellers at marts following the announcement of new public health restrictions.

Buyers may continue to attend the sales ring and view stock in pens. However, this must be done by prior appointment with the livestock mart.

All those present in any area of the mart must wear face coverings and adhere to strict 2m social distancing. Sellers must drop off their livestock at the mart and then leave the mart.

Marts must also prevent the congregation of members of the public in the mart car park or at entry ways into mart buildings.

Marts are required to submit updated standard operating procedures (SOPs), reflecting how they will operate under these rules, to their Regional Veterinary Office.

Commenting on the new restrictions, Minister McConalogue said he is encouraging farmers and buyers to continue to use online platforms as a way of purchasing livestock.

“Livestock mart sales will continue to be a blend of both online and ringside as part of new public health restrictions announced by the Government. This blended approach, with a strong online element, has proved to be an excellent way of trading cattle and sheep with strong throughput coupled with steady prices in recent weeks, while offering a safe environment for those involved. The various Covid measures implemented by the marts have undoubtedly played a role in minimising the risks of transmission of Covid 19 in these settings.

“I am urges farmers, buyers and marts to pay particular attention to the new public health restrictions announced by the Government. The health, safety and wellbeing of the general public is our top priority at present as we continue to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. We all have our role to play in keeping each other safe and this is as important at the mart as anywhere else.

“I again commend the work of mart managers and farmers for engaging so meaningfully with all public health restrictions and regulations over the recent months. It has been a challenging period but I am confident we will get through it together,” Minister McConalogue said.