



Industry:

- ✦ Agriculture

Application:

- ✦ Cattle Sales Documents
- ✦ Mortgage Lien Documents

The Problem:

- ✦ Storage Space
- ✦ Copy & Postage Costs
- ✦ Security of Confidential Information

The Solution:

- ✦ FileBound SaaS ECM Solution
- ✦ Kodak Capture Pro Software
- ✦ Fujitsu Scanners
- ✦ TPG Custom Programming

The Benefits:

- ✦ Elimination of Paper Documents
- ✦ Automated E-Mail Notifications
- ✦ Cost Savings

“Working with The Priton Group allowed us to automate our sales processes and save the organization significant time and money.”

Nancy Bilz
Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer
Equity Cooperative Livestock and Sales Association

About the Company

Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association was established in 1922 to aid producers in the marketing, managing, and financing of their agricultural businesses. As a federated cooperative, headquartered in Baraboo, Wisconsin, Equity Coop is Wisconsin's largest and the nation's second largest independent livestock marketing agency. In 2008 they marketed nearly one million head of livestock.

The organization operates twelve auction markets located in Wisconsin and Iowa along with three livestock collection points in Wisconsin and Michigan. Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association's wholly owned subsidiary Equity Livestock Credit Corporation provides financing through its various lending programs.

Business Need

Equity Coop facilitates the sale of livestock through their auction services. Assisting farmers to sell nearly half a billion dollars in livestock requires careful and accurate closure of each sale. With twelve markets located in rural areas, systems integration can be difficult. The centralization of all accounting functions required each market to mail their sales invoices and supporting documents to corporate, which accounted for large shipping costs.

In addition to sales documents the Cooperative had to deal with the fact that many livestock are secured through liens. Financial institutions require that any payments for livestock with liens have checks made out to both the farmer and themselves. With independent systems located in each market the only method of sharing this information was to have the corporate office make copies of each lien notification letter and send them to each market. This process was both time consuming and expensive.

Solution

Equity Coop engaged The Priton Group to conduct a high level ECM discovery to help define their needs and suggest technology solutions that would solve them. The result of that discovery was a set of recommendations to implement an Enterprise Content Management solution and remote scanning at each of the markets.

Technical limitations due to the rural location of most markets, meant a wide area network was not available for hosting an ECM solution. As a result, TPG recommended the use of a Software as a Service (SaaS) solution along with a distributed capture option.

For the Cattle Sales application operators within the market scan the signed sales invoices immediately following each auction. They also scan the accompanying sales documents into the FileBound system.

An email notification is sent through the Kodak Capture Pro Release Script developed by TPG to the accounting department at corporate, notifying them that the sale was closed.

The Mortgage Lien application allows the system operator to scan the lien documents and save them into the SaaS solution. FileBound allows for the redaction of social security numbers and



thus protects the privacy of the farmers. The information saved in the system allows each market to view the lien status of every farmer auctioning livestock. An added feature notifies each market when a lien letter has been added or updated.

Benefits

The Cooperative began with the Sales Documents application. For the initial implementation the two largest markets were selected. The Cooperative immediately realized reduced postage costs while making sales information available to corporate accounting following each auction. Storage costs also declined as paper documents no longer needed to be retained.

The Cattle Mortgage Lien application followed. The backfile of existing Lien Notices were scanned into the system. Once the backfile was complete, the Lien Notification Utility was activated, providing each Market notification when a new Lien was entered into the system. The use of this application saved the Cooperative the cost of making copies for each location and sending out duplicate sets to each market. It also assisted with compliance. Redacting, or blocking out the social security numbers, enables Equity to protect the confidentiality of taxpayer ID's. Electronic notification of the

notices now occurs on the same day they are received, protecting both the financial institutions and patrons.

Next Steps

Now that the core applications have been installed and are being used daily, Equity plans to leverage their investment by adding additional applications to the system. FileBound provides a simple user interface allowing them to take control of the system from creating applications, to setting security levels to making updates when necessary. Board minutes will be the first application added followed by a host of accounting applications and human resources.

"We like the fact that we can take ownership of our system, creating new applications and controlling security."

Nancy Bilz



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