



ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE & INDUSTRIES

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PRESS RELEASE

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ADAI Warns of Livestock Scam on Social Media

MONTGOMERY, Ala. – The Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries (ADAI) is urging producers and consumers to exercise caution when purchasing cattle through social media platforms, following reports of fraudulent listings involving livestock sales.

Recent incidents have involved fake profiles posing as legitimate cattle operations, advertising heifers for sale online. In some cases, buyers have traveled to pick up the purchased cattle, only to discover the operation had no knowledge of the transaction. These scams have extended beyond state lines, highlighting the need for increased awareness.

“Producers and buyers must remain diligent, verify who they are doing business with and take the necessary steps to ensure transactions are legitimate before purchasing,” said Alabama Commissioner of Agriculture and Industries Rick Pate. “Protecting our livestock producers and buyers is critical to keeping the integrity of our beef industry strong and resilient.”

ADAI encourages all prospective buyers to conduct proper due diligence before purchasing livestock online. This includes verifying contact information, requesting references, confirming the legitimacy of the operation and being cautious with financial transactions. Buyers should also be aware of warning signs, such as artificially generated images of cattle that may appear realistic but are not the actual livestock.

These signs include:

- Unnatural details in the animal such as misshapen bodies, missing tails, uneven legs, distorted faces or irregular ear and nostril shapes.
- Inconsistent backgrounds where fencing, grass or barns appear warped, repeated or unrealistic.
- Overly “perfect” appearance that looks too polished to be real.
- Blurry or uneven edges around the animal, especially where it meets the background.
- Duplicate or reused images of the same animal in multiple locations.
- Missing context photos such as no images of the full herd, facilities or handling areas.
- No identifying marks such as brands, ear tags or coloring that would normally distinguish real cattle.

ADAI recommends other state departments of agriculture, farm bureaus, cattlemen’s associations and other agricultural stakeholders spread awareness of this issue and protect producers across the agricultural industry.

Anyone who suspects livestock fraud is encouraged to report it to the [Alabama Law Enforcement Agency’s Rural Crimes Unit](#) at 334-288-8328 or the [Alabama Securities Commission](#) at (334) 242-2984.

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