

“Global forum”

John Peterson,
Chief Executive,
Peterhead Harbour,
Scotland



We have been researching the possibility of introducing electronic trading for more than 12 years but it is very difficult to implement in Peterhead. Everybody has to agree on the decision and there is a great diversity in market users, especially regarding buyers and salesmen.

However, I believe electronic auctions are a good technological advance. I think it is a modern fishing method of linking the market to the chain.

This year we are reviewing the port and we may study the introduction of electronic trading, once again.

Roger Smith,
Dock Manager,
Grimsby Fish Market, England

Electronic auctions are good for the future but it is up to every port to decide at what point they want to start selling by electronic system. We have already installed the technology in Grimsby but it is not working yet.

In the port of Grimsby, there is a large number of fish selling agents over 100 fish buyers, the largest in the country, who will decide when they want to start using electronic systems.

If they see it could be a benefit in prices, they won't have any reason to object. But this does not seem to be the right moment for Grimsby to start operating electronic auctions.

What effects have electronic auctions had on the industry

Krisjon Bergmundsson,
Chief Executive,
Fishgate,
Hull, England



For us it was an easy process to join the EFICE Network, the technology was already in place and it was a relatively in-expensive process for us.

I don't think trading for us will be affected greatly but it does bring markets together in a way that can benefit us all.

But the key aspect from all this is the sourcing of the fish. E-commerce, internet buying, networking are all frills and buzz words. Technology won't produce the fish. The platform doesn't start with e-commerce it starts with the sourcing of the fish. E-commerce won't bring more cod back to the North Sea or improve quota problems. A lot of people need to get their priorities in order before they start talking about e-commerce and networking.

A chance for leading industry figures to air their views on a topical subject

Alain Schlessler,
Directeur Generale CCI Quimper,
President of EAFPA, France



Whilst electronic auctions are sometimes presented as radical they are, at their simplest, only a natural progression from cell phones.

Of course the clarity and speed of this computer technology also ensures openness and absolute fairness in the auction process. Supplies can be 'grouped' from a number of landing points within an auction cluster, such as that of the CCI Quimper (Brittany) or the EFICE group (Netherlands).

Buyers, local and 'remote' have equal opportunity to purchase defined products via an intranet leading to a better balance of supply and demand. Such processes benefit all parties, producers and merchants. Prices are stabilised, often at a higher level and processors can better organise and control their purchases. Experience has shown that whilst the smaller auctions benefit most through improved prices, all achieve higher average prices.

In brief e-commerce applied to fish auctions is a management tool that facilitates swift and accurate transactions; matches buyers with sellers (and their products); it allows small and large market players equal opportunity and may in fact be a catalyst in the development of added value services.

That improved product definition, quality assurance procedures and handling are often associated with the introduction of e-commerce is to be expected. This in turn makes possible remote buying and selling whether in another chamber, neighbouring auction or across national borders.

Many auctions which were the first to introduce these bidding systems have now upgraded to second generation web based operations. The latest trend is towards auction clusters: these will develop and mature through the pressures of globalisation and scale economies of scale.