



□ *Editor's note: This is one in a series of features that will spotlight businesses in Imperial. The community has a thriving business community, and all residents may not realize the extent of services and products local businesses provide. This feature will be a regular offering throughout the year and beyond, and will include those businesses with a commercial address located outside of the home.*

By Carolyn Lee
The Imperial Republican

On a calm Tuesday at Imperial Auction Market on East Hwy. 6, some horses were being held that had been sold the previous Saturday.

On other days, cattle to be sold are being shipped in and fed. There's always something going on in the yards.

Owner Lloyd Wilson purchased half of the business from Dick Buffington in 1981, and the second half several years later. Imperial Auction Market has been a fixture in Imperial since the 1930s.

Cattle in an 80-100 mile radius are shipped to the market for sale. Cattle are sold on Fridays, or every other Friday in the summer.

Wilson said he sells 35,000 cattle every year, with 40 sales a year, so just under 1,000 head are sold each sale. The yard has a capacity for twice that number.

"This fall has been up and down" as far as cattle numbers, the owner said, "because of harvest."

Horses are sold once a month on Saturdays, but aren't as big a sale as in the past. Most horses are shipped to Mexico or Canada for slaughter, Wilson said.

Imperial Auction Market also leases a sale barn in St. Francis, Kan. for a Wednesday sale. Wilson said there is "quite a bit of tradeoff" between locations.

Some Kansas ranchers bring their cattle up to Imperial, while some Chase County ranchers take theirs to Kansas if a sale date is more convenient.

On sale days Imperial Auction Market has between 15-20 employees. There are also five in the leased cafe in the building.

Wilson's wife Sandy is the office manager, daughter Julie Rigel works in the yard, office and also clerks, while son Doug works part time and is an auctioneer.

The office is open 9-5 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, with Sandy in charge. Wilson said he's usually out in the country talking with producers.

Most of his business is done by phone except on sale day. In fact, Wilson estimates that he receives 200-300 calls per week on his two cell phones.

