



Clayton Agri-Marketing

Moo-ving business forward.



CLAYTON AGRI-MARKETING
JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI

A GLOBAL EXPORTER OF AMERICAN LIVESTOCK

When you spend your days arranging shipments of pigs, cattle and other livestock to places throughout the world, you learn how to plan for every possibility.

That includes managing the logistics of sourcing, testing and quarantining 1,000 or more head of pregnant cows prior to shipment by sea and after shipment. And for the animals flying overseas, it means maintaining the cash flow needed to pay for a \$200,000 charter flight upfront and making sure the livestock are loaded on time.

“We have a really good relationship where I can pick the phone up and tell our banker the good, the bad and the ugly. There aren't many banks that would understand.”

Still, nothing prepared Tony Clayton for the challenges his livestock export business, Clayton Agri-Marketing, faced on September 11, 2001, the day of the World Trade Center attack. “On that day, we had a plane of pigs scheduled to go to China and a shipment of cattle going to Taiwan,” Clayton recalled. “Then the banks and the borders shut down.”

The business survived, but the experience taught Clayton a game-changing lesson.

“We knew we needed to secure ready access to capital if we were going to grow,” he says.

And grow it has. At its founding in 1996, Clayton set his sights on completing one livestock shipment a month. Today, his company averages between five and six a month. To keep cash flowing, the business relies on Commerce Bank, which utilized the Small Business Administration's export working capital program that guarantee its line of credit against foreign receivables — a line that has increased twice over the past three years to accommodate growing demand.

“Fortunately, Commerce not only understands agriculture, but also what it takes to make an export business tick,” says Clayton.

