

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 31, 2017

Media Contact:

Tammy Samuel

Marketing Department

Lancaster Event Center

402.309.5802

tsamuel@LancasterEventCenter.org



#

LANCASTER COUNTY AG SOCIETY REFOCUSES 2018 SUPER FAIR ON 4-H YOUTH AFTER 17% INCREASE IN 2017 PUBLIC ATTENDANCE



Lincoln, NE—The Lancaster County Ag Society voted Thursday, October 19th at their last monthly board meeting to focus the Lancaster County Super Fair on the 4-H days with 2018 dates set as Thursday, August 2nd to Sunday, August 5th. Before making this decision, the board heard reports on strong 2017 Super Fair attendance with public visitors up 17%, making it one of the strongest attended fairs in its history.

The Ag Society decided after producing 10-day Lancaster County Fairs since 2010 when the State Fair left Lincoln that the public feedback has been that they really want the full fair experience any day they attend which is only available when more than 700 4-H youth are exhibiting over 5,000 entries during the first four days.

“The board got a lot of input on this change and we’re feeling like it’s the right time for our local youth and the community to focus in on the 4-H days of the fair which is the heart & soul of the Lancaster County Fair going back 147 years,” said Ron Dowding, President.

The Lancaster County Ag Society received input from surveys and comments from fairgoers, vendors & other local city/county officials as well as extensive input from the Extension and 4-H leadership over the last year.

Tracy Anderson, 4-H Extension Educator, commented, “The Super Fair is a valuable youth education opportunity and community celebration which provides the public the opportunity to view and learn about the 4-H youths’ projects -- animal and static. 4-H has always been an important part of the county fair, and we look forward to 4-H youth accomplishments being the focus next year.”

The Super Fair will continue to be the largest county fair in the state of Nebraska and one of the largest 4-H county fairs in the USA. The Ag Society believes that the public that attended the fair since it was lengthened to ten days will still come out and will be happy to see a rich county fair experience any time they come. During the 4-H portion of the fair every part of the grounds and the barns are full showcasing over 5,000 entries in animal, static exhibits as well as attractions, entertainment and vendors.



“The Lancaster Event Center team will work to support the Ag Society, the Extension team and 4-H leadership to make the fair even more exhibitor- and spectator-friendly,” said Amy Dickerson, Managing Director, Lancaster Event Center. “And we look forward to opening up two more weekends before and after the fair at a popular time of year for other shows which helps us better fulfill our mission to host events year-round to support the county fair and maintain the facility for generations to come.”

Susan Bulling, in her 16th year as Events Coordinator at the Lancaster Event Center and who grew up as a 4-H'er commented on the change, “I think we're getting back to what the public would like—a nice, fun county fair like many of us grew up with.”

Key facts on the new 4-day fair plan:

- The 4-H competitions schedule will largely be the same across the first four days of the fair.
- Attractions, Pepsi Main Stage with nightly bands & beer garden, and Vendors (food, commercial indoor & outdoor) will all operate just during these four days.
- The Carnival is planned to continue to still operate on the grounds for 10 days from Thursday, August 2nd – Saturday, August 11th.
 - This is only time all year that locals can enjoy rides and is a key fundraiser for the county fair.

- The Carnival will have its own food vendors during the additional six days.
- The rest of the facility will be available to rent after the fair moves out while the carnival is operating in the front parking lot.
- Motorsports will continue to be a large part of the fair led by the long-time running Figure 8 and Demo Derby races.
 - A summer motorsports series is being considered in conjunction with the popular fair motorsports events after a successful new Motocross event before the fair this year and Fast Track Mud Drags gaining in popularity over the last two years at the end of the fair.
- Like most other county fairs in Nebraska, the Open Class Animal competitions will not be held in conjunction with the Lancaster County Super Fair starting in 2018 (other than Open Class Dressage which shares judge/other costs with the 4-H Dressage Horse Show).
 - The Ag Society is interested in supporting the re-launch of these competitions as a new Lancaster Stock Show or series of Lancaster Open Breed Regional Competitions led by breed associations. The Ag Society will hold listening sessions with associations and producers to gauge interest on this re-launch.
 - According to Jay Wilkinson, Ag Society Board Director & long-time Livestock Shows Manager, "With this change we will really be able to focus on our 4-H animal shows with over 750 entries each year by 4-H youth competitors. We look forward to working with the open class breed associations and producers from around the region if they would like to re-organize these shows another time of year with even bigger and better shows."
- The Open Class Static competition will continue by sharing space with the 4-H Static competition like most county fairs as this is how open static competitors can qualify for the State Fair.
 - "I'm all in to figure this out! This is going back to how 4-H and Open Class Static used to exhibit together prior to 2010," says Trudy Pedley, recently retired long-time Ag Society Board Director and Open Class Static Show Manager.
- The Lancaster County Super Fair will continue to offer more equine competitions than any fair in the state.
 - Kendra Ronnau, Ag Society Vice President said, "I'll be working closely with Kate Pulec from the 4-H Extension team to support her as she looks at the entire equine fair schedule and make sure it's working for our local 4-H exhibitors to provide them the widest variety of competitions by far in the state but with a less stressful schedule we hope."

The 2017 Lancaster County Super Fair had plenty to celebrate this year!

- 23% more fairgoers took advantage of the opportunity to pick up free tickets from Super Fair gate ticket sponsors which helped grow the overall fair attendance, including exhibitors & their families, to more than 130,000 over the 10 days.
- The 4-H/FFA entries remained strong with more than 700 youth competing in over 5,000 entries while open class exhibitors dropped from 793 to 675. The 4-H entries are strong across the variety of competitions including:

- Livestock 762
- Horse 1,076
- Poultry 237
- Rabbit 374
- Static 2,498
- Other Contests 314



- The Ag Society was very proud to award Lancaster County's first 150-year Aksarben Heritage Farm Family award to the Elmer E. States family in addition to two 100-year farm families.
- Area businesses supporting the Super Fair also increased with top sponsorships from:
 - Gate Ticket Sponsors: Russ's Market, SuperSaver, Casey's General Stores, West Gate Bank
 - Main Stage & Beer Garden: Pepsi, Nebraska Lottery, Froggy98, Budweiser
 - Gate Volunteers: Walmart (4 days), AllState Insurance (1 day)
 - Fun at the Farm & Kids Scavenger Hunt: Lancaster County Farm Bureau
 - Motorsports: Coors, Gana Trucking & Excavation, Ultimate Truck Off Road Center
 - Celebrity Concert: Sam's Club
 - Volunteer/Staff t-shirts: Lincoln CVB, NIFCO
 - Advertising: 96KX, Channel 8
- The Super Fair Facebook page likes grew by 70% and community members enjoyed numerous giveaways with an average reach of 6,300.
- The Lancaster Event Center & Super Fair partnership with LPD grew stronger as adjustments were made through the week to ensure that all fairgoers were there to partake of fair activities. Many fairgoers enjoyed meeting and building relationships with our great men and women in blue who maintained a relaxed, fun atmosphere for all attendees.
 - Sgt. Todd Beam, in his third year leading the Lancaster County Fair LPD detail, commented "Really the traffic flow in and out of the grounds was the best ever. The parking crew and LPD traffic control really have figured out a system that works to make attending the fair hassle-free."

ABOUT THE LANCASTER COUNTY SUPER FAIR

The Super Fair is an annual showcase of Lancaster County and surrounding 4-H and community exhibits & competitions along with dozens of free and low cost entertainment for all ages that offer engaging ways to stay connected with our ag roots for 147 years and counting. The Lancaster County Super Fair is hosted by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, a non-profit 501(c)(3) with nine volunteer, publicly elected board directors dedicated to educating youth of all ages in our community about the heritage and ongoing importance of agriculture in our local economy. The Super Fair is the annual showcase event held at the Lancaster Event Center among now 300+ other events that call this leading regional, & increasingly nationally-recognized, multi-use center home. The Lancaster Event Center is proud to support the local community and economy while hosting 500K visitors from around the country annually.

###