

2020 Southern Iowa Fair Comments (includes notes from Post-Fair Meeting 8/3/20)

Swine

- Can we add a purebred barrow class? Several other counties have that and we've had a successful purebred gilt class for a couple years. Thank you for having the production class that is for Mahaska County production hogs, not show hogs. Let's bring something back like that next year. We'd like to see a class based on feed records/interview/animal performance like the Advanced Feeder Beef class. We'd also like to see a swine carcass class – Jenny Van Zante
- With no weigh-in, I get the reasoning that lightweights and heavyweights were allowed to show but I (and others) don't think they should have been eligible for champions. Animals in some of the classes should have been market weight ready. – Jenny Van Zante
- Maybe we could look into mirroring the Iowa State Fair Swine Show – look into additional options, but try to follow ISF rules – Dustin Snakenberg
- Look into the declared weights system (like state fair) for our county fair swine and possibly look at upping the limits on weights (no Paylean) – Guthry Vroegh
- Could we utilize more space in the Pavilion? We have this big, beautiful Pavilion and only use a small corner of it for the Swine Show. The pigs see the outgate and are always trying to go to that space. – Ashlee Snakenberg
 - It is just a pig pen and we only have a max of 10 pigs out there at a time. We could look at moving it a little closer to the center. – Kenny Wanders

Beef

- Beef barn: there needs to be a time frame for the removal of show gear. The aisles were still cluttered with show gear Thursday night and it was a busy night with the general public wanting to walk through the barns. – Jenny Van Zante
- The Beef Clinic on Wednesday night was valuable, but timing it right at tie-out time was challenging for the cattle and exhibitors. – Jenny Van Zante
- Beef weigh-in: Can we bring in some Musco lights for the night since 5-7pm in December is dark outside that barn? – Jenny Van Zante
 - We have an option to put up a temporary light for December weigh-in. – Shawn Van Engelenhoven
 - We may consider going back to a Saturday morning weigh-in, since we've had some calves get loose the past couple of years. – Ashtin Harris & Amy Brainard
- There are several people fitting and handling animals that are not parents. Every year it is brought up and every year it is ignored. If the rules state only parent or other ffa/4H'er are allowed to fit for show day- Why isn't it being enforced? All it would take was stripping a title or disqualifying one year to fix it. I have several pictures of this from this year and years past. I do not see where the confusion comes from- and uncle or a friend is not a parent- therefore don't touch the animal. Similar to horse where a parent can't warm up the animal for the show- but doing it anyway and having no repercussions. It simply isn't fair. – Lisa Davis
- I wish we could just be charged a stall fee- a set price per head- and have the bulk mulch put in the barn all at once- and removed by the skid loader post fair (like the tie outs). This could be profitable for the fair grounds- and cheaper for the families. As Tree services may donate their mulch. – Lisa Davis
- Exhibitor meeting: it would be nice to have a mandatory exhibitor meeting for beef like horses do. Explain the rules- expectations and requirements for show day. This way there would be no

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discrepancy on the fit rules either. They could make it clear the penalties for not following the rules. – Lisa Davis

- The Beef Superintendents will discuss this feedback at their September meeting and figure out possible changes for 2021. PLEASE tell Superintendents and/or 4-H Staff if there is an issue at the fair, please do not wait until after the fair to submit a comment or attend the Post-Fair meeting and bring it up then. It is hard for a Superintendent to do their jobs if issues are not brought to their attention as they are happening. It is hard to take care of something now, when the fair is already over. Please be sure to bring things to our attention as they are happening. Overall, cattle numbers were up this year and the quality was improved, that is great for this project area. – Clayton Hester
- The Beef Superintendents will look into offering a required Exhibitor Meeting at the fair to go over the Dos & Don'ts, rules, etc. Some of that was covered in this year's optional Beef Showmanship Clinic that the specialty livestock club put on, which was great by the way. – Clayton Hester
- Is it possible to figure out a way to shorten the Beef Show order? There were a lot of pages this year. Also, could Beef Class numbers be changed to shorter number sets? – Clayton Hester
- The Beef Show went very smooth and I was impressed, especially with this being our first year – Ashlee Snakenberg
- We were short a stall in the upper barn and left with a not ideal situation. – Heather Angle-Gardner
- There were a lot of loose cattle at tie-outs this year, how can this be fixed? – Ashlee Snakenberg
- Shawn Van Engelenhoven agreed. There were more loose cattle at tie outs this year than in years past. Families need to make sure they are using the appropriate neck ties and tying them up correctly.
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Horse

- Some horses were allowed to come in in Monday this year. I wish they would come in every year on Monday. The barn was busy! And when the horses aren't there on Monday in the past- people are always walking through looking for them. I don't understand why they don't come the same day. It would give the public another day to see them, and another day to get adjusted. For those of us that have multiple animals- it would be easier to make one trip and not have chores in both locations. - Lisa Davis
- Our superintendents are the best! They know each exhibitor by name and check them in and make sure they don't have any questions for the week. – Lisa Davis
- Champion classes. The mule and Horse class champions are based on halter classes only but the donkey champion was averaged across all three- I would like to understand why it is not halter only. – Lisa Davis
- Loved loved the trail class outside the regular show. It moved much quicker. Great change to the show bill. However, a non local judge should be used. This judge did not follow what was told to exhibitors that she would be available from beginning to end of show, and this caused some problems. – Lisa Davis
- The horse project is very well sponsored- I wish there was a way to get their sponsors noted more in the barns all week. – Lisa Davis
- There was a confrontation between a parent and a superintendent during the show, which ended with a superintendent in tears. This should not happen and we need to have a way to address it. – Heather Angle-Gardner
- Look into Show & Go for horses – maybe poll the Horse families & see what they prefer. Safety of horses is a concern – there were several kids in the barns late at night and throughout the week that were just in there messing around – which is not safe. – Heather Angle-Gardner

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- Please update the stall fronts in the horse barn for the safety of our animals. I had one that got their head stuck underneath of the stall front and it could have been bad. – Heather Angle-Gardner

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General Livestock

- Herdsmanship: Some of the aisles were atrocious, unfortunately. Club leaders and superintendents need to encourage kids to keep up their areas. – Jenny Van Zante
 - I am going to be looking for sponsors for Herdsmanship so the exhibitors have something to compete for. Instead of a trophy, we'll look into useful prizes like pitchforks, scoops, buckets, etc. If anyone would like to be a Herdsmanship sponsor, please let me know! – Amy Brainard
- The Swine stalls got really bad at the fair. Wet bedding and heat do not mix well, exhibitors need to be keeping up with their bedding and keeping their stalls clean. – Ashlee Snakenberg
- Animal Husbandry should be taken into consideration – keep the animals watered, clean, and comfortable at the fair. – Guthry Vroegh
- For some of the shows with limits, it'd be nice to add an alternate animal—with the limit of 8 chickens or limited rabbits, it'd be nice to register an alternate in case of illness or death of the animal. Sheep/Rabbit/Chicken barn: How can we improve ventilation in that barn? – Jenny Van Zante
- It is possible to make this adjustment in FairEntry, but superintendents will need to keep an eye on the number of animals that are actually brought to the fair to stick to the limits that they have set. – Ashtin Harris
- The Sheep/Poultry/Rabbit Barn needs a lot of work. The roof has issues that need to be fixed to be able to put a cupola in. We can look into putting ceiling fans in to help with air movement. – Shawn Van Engelenhoven
- Thank you for handing out showmanship ribbons to all participants for their effort for going into the ring for these classes. – Melinda Groenendyk
- I feel we need more evening supervision for the livestock in the barns to keep any rough housing or mistreatment of the animals by fair attenders. I myself seen a group of kids (some who participate in the fair) throwing rocks at the llamas in the bucket/bottle barn. Luckily they respected my request to stop when I seen what they were doing. I had heard through out the week of kids trying to scare or hurt the animals. That is a safety concern for the animals! – Brea Lobberecht/ Ashleigh Sammons
 - We will ask the Posse to make more rounds through the barns, especially at night. We have one who stays overnight now, so that is better than in the past when they didn't stay overnight. – Shawn Van Engelenhoven
- Concern about any future Show & Go and the Friday release of animals – There isn't much for people who work to see when they get there on Saturday. Animals are gone already. Several families shared their disappointment that the animals were gone on Saturday. – Kathleen Rempe
- Livestock check-out was moved from Saturday to Friday because many of the exhibitors don't want to stay. It is hard to make everyone happy. – Shawn Van Engelenhoven
- I think it is important to have animals and exhibitors stay through Saturday. This is an opportunity to educate people about the ag industry and animals. – Ashlee Snakenberg
- It is important to educate, but when it is 110* out, exhibitors aren't going to want to stay in the hot barns with their animals just to be there for the general public. – Guthry Vroegh
- Could we have a bulletin board where all of the announcements get posted instead of having signs all over the barns? – Clayton Hester (Agreed - Amy Brainard)

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- What do people prefer for the Livestock Release Time? – Shawn Van Engelenhoven
 - Mixed responses, but most favor Friday night due to typical temperatures and being ready to enjoy the Saturday of fair without having to worry about animals on the grounds.

Livestock Stalling

- Stall assignments: If an animal is registered but then not brought to the fair, the club should not just assume that space is for their tack. Clubs need to be honest when registering their animals and all clubs should be treated in a fair manner. There should not be favoritism over one club from another when it comes to stall space or stall discrepancies. All clubs and members should be held to the same rules for how many animals in a space/pen. – Jenny Van Zante
 - FairEntry is supposed to help with this process, but clubs do need to be honest and let us know if something will not be at the fair. The deadline for FairEntry will be a couple weeks out from the fair next year, instead of a month out. We needed this year to get everything entered, checked, and ready for the fair, so we appreciated the flexibility of families and are happy people contacted us to let us know certain animals weren't coming to the fair. We were flexible with families as well, as we needed to be, since the deadline was so far out from the fair. In the future, we might not be as flexible, once everyone has more experience with FairEntry. We do not want families padding their fair entries with animals that were identified but they have no intention of exhibiting. Stalling is a big task in itself and we want to be as fair across the board as possible. – Ashtin Harris & Amy Brainard
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- Thank you when assigning stall assignments to keeping those families in mind that have kids showing in 4-H and FFA so that those clubs were next to or across from each other. Makes easier with tack and less stressful on families and animals to be in same area. Noted this in the beef barn and sheep barn for sure. – Melinda Groenendyk
- Loved tack stalls for beef and noted more tack stalls with all species. Presume some was due to what appeared lower number of animals in species but also wonder if adding Fair entry helped with this as well this year, especially with beef and sheep. – Melinda Groenendyk
- I would like to see improvements made to meat goats. Sheep have 11 tack stalls. But with meat goats I have to haul my supplies from my campsite when ever I need them – Scott Boender
- Aren't tack stalls "community" stalls? – Jerry Rempe
 - When we have adequate space, we have assigned to specific clubs/chapters in the past, but yes, they are usually community space to share for tack. – Ashtin Harris
- We plan to grow the Dairy program this year with more milking cows. We anticipate at least 4 new families joining the program. We will need to make sure we have space (with proper ventilation) for the milking cows especially. Could a lean-to be added to the back of the beef barn? – Sarah Hol
 - Would it work to use the Open Horse Barn to the north of the bigger horse barn? – Shawn Van Engelenhoven

Exhibit Hall/Static/Hort

- Bucket 'o Junk: We need to have the same judge for all the Bucket 'o Junk projects for consistency in judging. And the rule needs enforced that no extra items can be added, a plain board for on the bottom for ease of display or carrying is fine, but no extras. – Jenny Van Zante

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- Farm Crops: FFA has farm crops. Can we bring in some classes like that within Horticulture on Tuesday or Saturday judging? – Jenny Van Zante
 - We have a Crop Production class for 4-H, which could include a Bucket of Beans or Bucket of Corn, but we can look into a special class in the Horticulture contest. We'll discuss it with the Hort Superintendents. – Amy Brainard
- With livestock leaving Friday night can static exhibits also be released Friday night or earlier on Saturday? Very few people (8) were thru Saturday evening from 5p-7p while doing exhibit hall monitoring. – Melinda Groenendyk
 - Rita Antolik & I have talked about possibly seeing if 4-H & Open Static Exhibits could release on Friday when the animals release. The Fair Board will make that final call. – Amy Brainard
- 4-H Horticulture - some confusion on how to display. Page 52 of fair book - #8 at top of page says to use 4H 462 Preparing Exhibits to determine how many, how big, etc. Class #7 at bottom says different amounts and sizes than the above paper. After consulting with several experienced exhibitors and helpers in the department, it has been this way for a while. Can we clarify in a future fairbook? – Tina Marshall
 - We will work on making updates with the Horticulture Superintendents next month – Amy Brainard
- Why is the 4-H Ag, Science, Engineering & Technology judge, judging the FFA Bucket of Junk? had a bit of confusion with judge. – Kelly Pose
 - Bucket'o'Junk is actually a 4-H contest that we open a few slots up to FFA. This year there was just general confusion in the Ag, Science, and Animals building, so that will be addressed. We will specify one judge for all Bucket'o'Junk and make sure they understand which entries are FFA and which entries are 4-H. – Amy Brainard
- 4-H Club Monitors showed a lack of concern for Open Class Horticulture Judging on Wednesday between 11:00-2:00. They were being loud and inconsiderate of those around them, which made it hard for Open Class Horticulture Judging. – Eileen Blom
 - Club leaders should encourage parents to stay with monitors if they don't already. – Jenny Van Zante
- Like the new way of displaying the 4-H static exhibits! I think it would be fun to have a class in horticulture for unique shape of vegetables, fruits and flowers and have a people choice award. Karen and Diane did a great job sanitizing at the communications event, wish we could get more exhibitor's to participate. Can we move the 4-H static exhibit judging back to Saturday I know this has been brought up in the past but it may help the numbers of entries, SORRY I just had to bring it up again so sad to see the numbers drop. WE should be doing all we can to get more exhibits. – Kelly Pose
 - Agreed. If possible, could we please go back to Saturday before fair for static judging? Also agreed, Diane & Karen did a wonderful job following the Iowa 4-H Summer Best Practices during Communications Judging! – Amy Brainard
- Hard to distinct different club static projects. what will fair entry tags look like? Will they all look alike or could they potentially have club names in larger letters or with different colors to maybe tell difference? Some were looking for certain projects but without being able to get up close to projects difficult to know whose is who's when have similar projects. Any ideas how to keep same set up but differentiate clubs? – Melinda Groenendyk
- Exhibit Hall set up - I really don't mind the "by the class" set up. It has its merits, however I have two difficulties with it. It is really hard to send grandparents, family, friends to find exhibits when they are

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not grouped together by member/club. More concerning to me is, as a leader, it is impossible to see the work of my members. This has been my favorite part of the fair, seeing what each of my members has done. It gives us talking points later in the year. It gives me opportunities to challenge them on a project area as the years go on. It aids in the personal notes I write to them throughout the year. Despite several clubs attempts to mark tags, it simply does not show up. Is it possible that we can keep the table set up, but allow clubs to group together instead of the "by the class"? Please! It would really make my job as an involved leader and mentor a lot easier. – Tina Marshall

- We need to figure out a way to display the exhibits so they can be seen better. Is there a way to encourage club leaders to come in and set exhibits up for display? – Sarah Hol

- This year we changed everything up and didn't have a lot of time to put extra thought into it. We used the tables and realized they worked pretty well, but will be looking into having blocks, easels, etc., similar to what the state fair uses, to help the exhibits be more visible by the public. We will likely have more shelves to use on the pegboard next year as well. It served the purpose this year, but now that we know people liked it we will work on ways to improve it. Clubs are welcome to attach small "signs" to the exhibitor entry tags and write the exhibitors name on them. We usually see clover cut-outs stapled to entry tags so people can see the name of the exhibitor. Those are welcome and encouraged, as long as they aren't too big and cover the exhibits too much. Next year, we plan to use the FairEntry entry "tag" card that will have a barcode on it. Each exhibit will have its own barcode making check-in and ribbon placing recordings go much easier and the names will be a bit bigger than the smaller entry tags we usually use. – Amy Brainard

FairEntry

- In the future will families be able to delete an entry for a static exhibit in fair entry? Example thought would bring a baked good and week before fair knew would not be bringing it but couldn't delete the entry. Yes was able to tell ladies at check in that didn't bring but for future wondering if will be an option on static exhibits? – Melinda Groenendyk
- I like FairEntry < now if we can just remember how it was done for next year. – Kelly Pose
- It would be nice if we could get show orders out earlier. Since all of the information is now in fair entry it seems like it would be readily available after check in is complete. Electronic posting at a minimum would be nice. – Crystal Jimenez-Boender
 - We are working on it. We had no way of practicing Show Order creation before the fair, because we had to have the animal data entered and animals checked in before we could break classes and create show orders. We also ran into some hiccups with the conversion to PDFs, so we had to do some scrambling to get things fixed. Unfortunately, that pushed the posting of some show orders to only a few hours before the show. We always strive to have them out sooner, but since the system is so new to everyone, we weren't able to get that done this year. We are working to improve that process in the future and will be taking trainings throughout the year to improve our management of the system. This was a hard year to start a new system, but it was already paid for and being used prior to all of the COVID-19 shutdowns. – Ashtin Harris & Amy Brainard

Auction

- Auction: I talked to a lot of people who liked the auction in the pavilion. – Jenny Van Zante

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- Ribbon auction went okay, not as many businesses represented as in past, not sure all understood, if continue to do need to do more advertising out to our businesses in the county and nearby towns. Do have concern with those kids that have multiple species that would have gone through with say a hog, sheep and market steer and this year just one flat bid where in past all 3 animals hopefully were bid above base that they in the end would have taken home more? – Melinda Groenendyk

Fair General

- Great fair and glad to have it! – Jenny Van Zante
- I like the new ugly cake contest, Very nice variety of food vendors this year. – Kelly Pose
- When was the last time ribbon premiums had a review? I think it may be a little low? – Kelly Pose
 - We know that they are low, but we also raise our own funds to pay for 4-H & FFA premiums. Unfortunately, depending on how our fundraising goes from year to year will factor into the premium rate. This year, we didn't even raise half of what we normally raise because our letters went out the week before everything closed down from COVID-19. – Amy Brainard
- Understand ATV's not allowed on fairgrounds, also understand fairboard members would have to perform duties that they needed to do. Parking in front of the beef barn door is not one, nor is using them to bring feed and supplies to tie outs. – Melinda Groenendyk
- Thanks North Mahaska FFA for the breakfast items at the feed bunk, our kids really enjoyed the breakfast burritos. – Melinda Groenendyk
- Thanks for having a fair with all of the adjustments that had to be made. Thank you! – Melinda Groenendyk
- Thank you Shawn for being there with the skid loader Friday at 8pm and a little before as stalls started getting cleaned out and livestock loaded out to keep the pile of dirty bedding piled up so not blocking the driveways. Very much appreciated. -Was nice that livestock could go home Friday night after 8 pm when a little cooler so not hauling in hot sun during the day on Saturday. – Melinda Groenendyk
- The new ramp leading into the concession area and sale ring is great! However, sitting in the concession area for hours led me to witness several slips and slides, some intentional by rowdy kids but many accidental by both kids and adults. Either having a textured surface or some raised pieces of wood for traction would help keep that area from being so slippery. – Amanda Van Zante
- Enjoyed the fair a lot this year Parking was a problem. We bought a parking pass and had a hard time finding a place to park. Could the older equipment be limited so some of that area could be used for parking? Lots of cars is a good problem to have! – Diane DeZwarte
- We need to have all clubs take their wires down from up in the barns from their club signs as soon as the fair is over. Ringo has spent a lot of time this past week taking wire down. The wires easily catch on our boats & campers during winter storage. – Southern Iowa Fair Board
- Overall, what was the fair attendance? – Joy Prothero
 - We don't have a way to get an exact count, but based on parking and see the people on the grounds it seemed to be up from past years.
- Thank you to the Fair Board for having a fair. It was well attended and the people we spoke to were very happy to have the opportunity to show at the fair. – Jerry Rempe
- Is there a way to get a Petting Zoo back at the fair? Is that something that FFA chapters could take over? That way there will always be some animals for people to see any day of the fair. – Jerry Rempe

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- Would it be possible to move Open Bucket/Bottle check-in to Thursday and have them show on Saturday before the Grandstand event? That would bring a big crowd in for Saturday and animals would be on the grounds for the public to see. Maybe 4-H & FFA Bucket/Bottle could check out on Thursday afternoon, clean stalls, then move in the Open Bucket/Bottle? 4-H & FFA Bucket/Bottle going through the auction could be stalled in a specific place to stay on the grounds until the auction? – Ashtin Harris & Amy Brainard