Fair Preparations

Everyone was so excited about the Kenai Peninsula State Fair. But there was so much to do to get ready for it. A few workshops cropped up at the last minute that helped prepare for the fair. Here are some photos of the Sheep Shearing and Large Stock Showmanship.
Kenai State Fair

Pigs are washed, presentation boards are loaded, clothes are packed and children are in the car. These are the thoughts that raced through my head as we got ready to head to the fair! I am sure many parents had similar thoughts.

I never had been part of the fair before, so I did not know what to expect. But I knew it was going to be so amazing watching Jonathan work with his pigs in the JML auction and Matthew showing off his turkeys. I was not disappointed. It was also so spectacular watching ALL the children displaying their animals, working together and helping each other out — the older children mentoring the younger children. I will always remember the harmony I saw that happened there. The fair took on a new meaning for me this year, all because I am part of an amazing organization of hard working kids, parents and leaders striving to make the best better.

— Written by Toni Loop

This month has been the busiest month of the year for 4-H’ers! This month we had the last workshop before fair, (the swine and steer workshop) and the non-perishable check-in day for record books and non-food items.

On the 17th, we had the last fair workday, where adults and youth finished cleaning up our barns and prepared for the fair. On the 18th, there was animal check-in, the food/horticulture check-in and getting ready to have a busy three days!

The weekend was hit off by the all-stock conformation (starting at 9 and ending at noon) and large and small stock showmanship (1-7 p.m.). We also had a presentation done by Dr. Jay Fuller, the state assistant veterinarian. At 8 a.m. on Saturday, the all-stock Round Robin took place with seven kids exhibiting their high-level skill in showmanship. At noon was the Junior Market Livestock auction where the bleachers were full and the energy was high. The barbecue was wonderful and the buyers were smiling.

Sunday was full of wrapping up loose ends and writing thank-you notes. We started loading up animals at 4 p.m., cleaned the barns, waved good-bye and checked out until next year, which we are all looking forward to.

After a few days’ rest, the meat came back in and with a small group of folks and a couple of hours, all of our finished product was delivered to the processors for our buyers.

This fair went great, and thanks to Mr. Jim and Ms. Shelia, who paved the road toward this year’s fair, and to Mr. Casey Loop, who guided us down that road, and to all the other adults who put it together for us youth — we enjoyed a huge success because of your dedication, so thank you for making the best better.

— Written by Gracie Rankin
I know every one of us came away with amazing memories from this year's fair. But for me, it was more than just presenting my projects and enjoying time with my 4-H family, it was my last hurrah. As I looked around, I noticed how the fair perfectly reflected my 4-H year. My pig was huge, 350 lbs huge! It was also a huge learning experience. I farrowed 16 pigs, cared for them, fed them—maybe a little too much—and watched them grow very fast. Another pig from our litter and his 4-H’er won grand champion in the medium weight division, and I realized I had already handed down the opportunities and experiences 4-H had given me. My photography portraits that won grand champion told a story how another 4-H’er encouraged me to step outside of my comfort zone just a little, revealing a gift in me I didn’t know was there and that since has turned into a small business. I experienced the love, support, and hard work all our parents and leaders do to make 4-H possible. I am so grateful for the words of encouragement, the hours spent logging paperwork, and the care put into every meal. I have also been greatly inspired by our community and 4-H alumni who continue to support us. I hope some day I will be able to give back to 4-H all that I experienced at the fair and all I learned during my 4-H career.

— Written by Willow Haven Walaszek

Thank you, Mr. McConnell, for teaching us how to clean a gizzard at the fair. It worked!!! Written by Silas Veal

My family and I helped sell the new 4-H gear at the Ninilchik fair. The booth was located in the 4-H building. It was fun to see everyone look at the exhibits. Everyone seemed to enjoy the logo this year and our new item for sale, a raincoat! If you missed out on purchasing your 4-H gear, stop by the office on K-Beach to get yourself some.

— Written by Contessa Wolverton

Late-Night Meetings

It was late at night. I was so, so tired due to the lack of sleep from previous nights preparing for the fair. So many droopy eyes were out there. Katherine was cheering us on and getting us all pumped up for the busy days ahead. Casey was giving us last minute instructions for the following days. Holly was reminding us the barn duties. These late night meetings are one of the stepping stones in keeping the barns running smoothly.
There were so many pictures taken from the fair that I do not want everyone to get lost so I tried to group them together as best as I could.

— JML reporter

**Rabbits**

**Sheep**
Swine
Turkeys and Chickens
Family

Seeing your child or children working so hard is such a special moment. Here are some family photos.
Relaxing

So the auction is over. The barbecue is done. Competitions are completed. It is Saturday evening and Sunday morning, and it is a time of relaxing. The toll of late nights, the fast pace and the chaos is catching up on us adults. Here is what some adults did to relax.

So the fair is over. Large stock animals are headed up to the slaughtering house. The last two pictures sum up what some of us wanted to do—SLEEP!

Do not forget to look for Bubba the sheep hidden in the pledger somewhere.