

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Vicki Imperati 845-876-4000

DUTCHESS COUNTY FAIR CELEBRATES AGRICULTURE

Rhinebeck, NY.....Wendell Berry may have explained it best in his book 'Bringing It To The Table: Writings on Farming and Food'. “Why do farmers farm, given their economic adversities on top of the many frustrations and difficulties normal to farming?” And, always the answer is: “Love. They must do it for love. Farmers farm for the love of farming. They love to watch and nurture the growth of plants. They love to live in the presence of animals. They love to work outdoors. They love the weather, maybe even when it is making them miserable. They love to live where they work and work where they live”. And this year, as has been true for the last 169 years, the Dutchess County Fair celebrates, appreciates and honors the farmer... with love. The Fair opens for its six day run on August 19.

The Dutchess County Fair continues to be the second largest agricultural county Fair in New York State. Last year there were over 2,270 livestock exhibitors bringing their dairy cows, beef cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, rabbits, hogs, llamas, alpacas and horses to the liveliest spot on the fairgrounds... Livestock Hill. In other locations there are hundreds of horticultural, vegetable and field crop entries.

Cattle entries include both dairy breeds such as Holsteins, Jerseys, Guernsey, Brown Swiss and Ayrshire and the beef cattle types like Red Angus, Hereford, Simmental and Belted Galloway breeds. Both dairy and beef shows are held Tuesday through Saturday in the Livestock Pavilion. And Sunday features the Parade of Dairy Champions, the Beef and Dairy Herdsman Award as well as the 4-H Master Showmanship Awards. A complete list of livestock shows is in the Dutchess County Fair brochure and available online at www.dutchessfair.com.

The livestock judges offer commentary during the shows, explaining to spectators what

they are considering in the overall conformation of an animal, the condition of the coat, proportion of fat to muscle and overall showmanship.

Sheep are judged according to a very similar criteria with special attention paid to the condition and quality of the wool. The sheep judging takes place in the Sheep Pavilion located on the far side of the Livestock Pavilion. Breeds such as the Southdown, Dorset, Montadale, Oxford, Hampshire, Suffolk and Tunis are well represented in the sheep shows. The goat shows are also held in this location. Additionally, volunteers gather in the Sheep Pavilion and offer continuous spinning, weaving and dyeing demonstration. There is even a 'Dyeing Garden' featuring plants used to make dye for wool on the side of the building.

The 4-H remains an integral part of the Fair's livestock shows. Trends in recent years have shifted as space for raising livestock is taken into consideration and now smaller livestock have taken the lead. Young exhibitors also compete in the popular Costume classes. Both owner and animal dress up in coordinated outfits and the results are extremely comical.

Saturday night, starting at 4pm, the 4-H Livestock Auction takes place in the Livestock Pavilion. Animals in the auction are sold according to their weight on opening day of the Fair and only Dutchess County 4-H'ers can sell their animals in this auction. This auction is a great source of community support for the 4-H children.

The open poultry show is held on Wednesday in the Poultry Barn but all week long the beautiful domestic and exotic birds are on view in the Barn. They also share this space with the 4-H rabbits and cavies.

The Livestock Pavilion also hosts a Stick Pony Rodeo and a Chicken Clucking and Rooster Crowing Contest on Sunday after the 4-H Master Showmanship and Beef and Dairy Awards.

Livestock Hill, while offering the incredible beauty, vitality and scientific knowledge of the area's best farms is not the only location on the fairgrounds where outstanding animals are

cont...

page 3

on view. The Oval offers the Salute to Agriculture and Dairy Birthing Center, the vegetable and field crops exhibits as well as the magnificent horse shows. The 4-H Horse Show commences on Tuesday at 9am and an Antique Tractor Pull is held the same day at 2pm in the Horse Arena . The Local English Horse Show is held on Wednesday starting at 8:30am and a Tractor Pull begins at 1pm. Thursday and Friday have two more Open English Horse Shows beginning at 8:30am each day. On Saturday there is the Open Western Horse Show at 8:30am and a Carriage Driving Show at 10am.

Sunday, closing day of the 2014 Dutchess County Fair features a Horse Shoeing and Forging Contest at 8:30am, a Draft Horse show starting at 9:30am and a Classic Six-Horse Hitch Show at 1pm.

For more information regarding all the agricultural and other animal shows at the Dutchess County Fair, visit www.dutchessfair.com or call 845-876-4000.