



August, 2013 Food For Thought

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Why Do You Show at Fairs?**

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Greetings,

I hope your summer is going well. The rain of June and early July and then extreme heat have created challenges for many producers of plant and animal products. But farmers are accustomed to dealing with obstacles and they are a resilient lot. Still, as we purchase our food from the grocery stores, farmers markets or local farm stands, it is important to remember all of the uncertainties of weather and pests that must be dealt with in order for farmers to produce our food. When you get a chance, thank a farmer.

I started my summer in the great state of Minnesota, at the National Agriculture in the Classroom annual conference. You can see some

More than Fried Dough and Midway Rides

New Hampshire has a strong tradition of regional agricultural fairs. Starting in mid- July with the Stratham Fair and going through mid-October with the Sandwich Fair, each county is host to one of these family friendly events. See the calendar section and resource listing for specific dates.

When people think about fairs they have images of fried dough, cotton candy, corn dogs and other classic "fair food". Perhaps they have memories of a favorite Midway ride or game. But along with the carnival atmosphere of these fairs, the state, county and town fairs have always had a strong agricultural focus.

Many of the fairs originated in the late 1800's, a time when industrial practices were changing how agriculture was performed. Railroads made transportation easier and agricultural products were arriving from the grain belt of the mid west. Farming in New England was declining and the population of many small towns was falling. Where agriculture remained, machines were utilized; the latest and greatest technology of the time was showcased. Changes brought some "progress" but also left people clinging to the "old-fashioned" values. Fairs

of my photos on our Facebook page (if you haven't "Liked" us yet, please do so). As always, it was a wonderful opportunity to network with Ag in the Classroom coordinators from around the country. But it is also a conference that is attended by hundreds of classroom teachers. Most of the workshops are geared toward teachers and are packed full of activities and ideas for teaching about agriculture. Vendors sell and distribute free resource materials. Peers share ideas. Award winning educators inspire each other. Traveling workshops (aka field trips) provide an opportunity to learn about agriculture in other parts of the country.

If all of this sounds appealing and you wish you could attend in 2014; then mark your calendars. From June 24-27, 2014, the National Conference will be held in Hershey, Pennsylvania. Being on the east coast will make it more accessible to many of us in this region. With field trips to surrounding farms and of course the Hershey chocolate facilities, it will be a sweet way to end the next school year. Watch the national website for emerging details or check out what happened this year in MN (www.agclassroom.org). I'll also provide reminders throughout the year. Let me know if you have any questions about the conference.

But before we get too far ahead, let's enjoy the fleeting season of summer in New Hampshire. This is a great time of year to get out and meet the farmers in your area, gather resources for the coming year and discover some of the opportunities that lie in your own back yard. In this issue we'll feature some of the summer and fall festivals and agricultural fairs that are going on. Be sure to visit one or more of them as a fun way to do some summer staff development.

Ruth

Ruth Smith, Statewide Coordinator
NH Agriculture in the Classroom

Resources

[Find an Ag Fair Near You.](#) View a listing of all the

provided a way to share community pride and blend country fare with a modern flair during this time of transition.



The first Rochester Fair in 1874 was a classic example of that. It featured both agricultural and mechanical displays. In 1887, the first fair in Sandwich was established to sell, trade and display cattle. That year 184 teams of oxen were exhibited by area farmers. Race horses were the highlight at the first Lancaster Fair in 1870. Deerfield also started a fair during that time period (1877) with livestock exhibitions and competitions.

But from the beginning, fairs had pizzazz. The second year of the Sandwich Fair featured baby competitions and a musical band. Curiosities, antiques, and crafts were quickly added. Fairs that originated in the early part of the 20th century (Hopkinton, 1915) featured baseball games, midway rides, Vaudeville shows and music along with the agricultural displays. A highlight of the 1910 Rochester Fair was a visit from the Wright Brother's flying machine. Each fair had its own unique draw. In 1924 the Sandwich Fair listed a coon hunt on the schedule. "Girlie Shows" helped boost attendance in the 1930's when there was a national decline in attendance at agricultural fairs. By the 1950's and 60's stage shows, high wire acts and celebrity visits were common at some of the larger venues.

Throughout the history of these fairs there were ups and downs in attendance. Cultural challenges such as the Great Depression and the World Wars impacted them. But they carried

agricultural fairs in the state, by date. Links to individual fair websites provide details for what to expect at each one.

www.visitnh.gov/what-to-do/markets-and-fairs/agricultural-fairs.aspx

NH Department of Agriculture, Markets and Food. View the downloadable agricultural map with farm stands listed by region. Also see farms listed by commodity group, a farmers market directory and CSA listing.

www.agriculture.nh.gov/publications/

NH Eat Local Month

www.nheatlocal.org and

www.facebook.com/nheatlocal

Find listings of events and activities that encourage eating locally produced foods.

NHAITC Calendar

August - NH Eat Local Month
Enjoy locally produced food.

September 24-25
Belknap County School to Farm in Gilford
- contact us to register

November 8-9
NH Farm Bureau Annual Meeting
in Durham
- We're holding a silent auction. Contact us if you have a product or service you'd like to donate.



Agricultural Fairs:

Cheshire Fair, Swanzey

on. At the Belknap County Fair in 1944 they actually sold war bonds and stamps to help support the war effort. There was also a 4-H Food for Victory Fair.

A main stay to these fairs however has been an opportunity for farmers and future farmers to compare their livestock and crops with those of their peers. Many barns and farm stands are decked with blue ribbons from one or more of the fairs.



If you haven't attended an agricultural fair, now's your chance. When you go, be sure to visit the animal barns and take in one of the judging sessions or competitive events. Talk to a 4-H member to hear what they learned in preparation for their event. Listen to a farmer share stories of an award winning animal. Ask questions. Interacting with people who work with animals and crops each day is a fabulous way to learn about what is involved. Then you can treat yourself to your favorite fair food.

Why Do You Show At Fairs?

If you were to ask this question at the end of the show season the answer might be "I have no idea". Show season is long, hot, dirty, smelly, and filled with lots of travel. There are night times that are too short followed by days that are also too short to get all the work done. Ask that same question at the beginning of show season and

July 31-August 4

www.cheshirefair.com

Belknap County 4-H Fair

Belmont

August 10-11

www.bc4hfair.org

Cornish Fair, Cornish

August 16-18

www.cornishnhfair.com

Lancaster Fair, Lancaster

August 28-September 2

www.lancasterfair.com

Hopkinton State Fair

Contoocook

August 29-September 2

www.hsfair.org

Hillsborough County Agricultural Fair

New Boston

September 6-8

www.hcafair.com

Rochester Fair, Rochester

September 13-22

www.rochesterfair.com

Deerfield Fair, Deerfield

September 26-29

www.deerfieldfair.com

Sandwich Fair, Sandwich

October 12-14

www.thesandwichfair.com

Late Blight Alert

LATE BLIGHT FOUND IN MASS.

Late blight was identified on tomatoes in Franklin County, Massachusetts in early July. Franklin

you'll get a totally different answer. "It's fun, challenging and exciting. It's just what we do!" By the way, show season for most of us is year-round.

Preparing and showing an animal at a local, state or national show is possibly the best way to bring up a child. It teaches patience, responsibility and a great work ethic. Youth learn how to win and lose gracefully, how to make friends for life, the value of a dollar and the list goes on.

It doesn't matter what species of animal your family shows, it is still a family thing. In today's world that in and of itself is important. The whole family can be involved in one way or another. There is enough work, fun and pride to go around and everyone from the youngest sibling to the more life-experienced grandparents can participate.

The point of showing used to be to compare animals to figure out who had the best breeding purposes to increase milk yield, meat, wool or speed. Today it is so much more than that.

Two youth organizations, 4-H and FFA, give young people an opportunity to raise animals and show them at fairs and shows all over the country. All of these young people work with, take care of, train and love the various animals they work with. They also educate the public about those same animals and agriculture in general.



How many youth do you know of who get up every day before school to feed their animals? That's math, science,

County borders Cheshire County in New Hampshire. Cloudy, rainy conditions are ideal for spread of spores. Tomato and potato growers should take action. Here are some recommendations for home and school gardeners.



At this point in the season, if symptoms begin appearing on tomato or potato plants and you are positive it is late blight, follow these steps:

1. Remove plants.
2. Place in a plastic bag.
3. Seal bag and discard in trash OR completely bury plants deep enough underground so plants will decompose and will not re-sprout.

DO NOT put the plants in a compost pile, as spores will still spread from this debris.

If you are not sure whether it is late blight, e-mail photos to either the UNH Cooperative Extension Education Center, Cheryl Smith cheryl.smith@unh.edu, or Becky Sideman. becky.sideman@unh.edu

Various fungicides are available but for organic production (recommended for school gardens), ONLY copper-based formulations are effective.

For more details, images, and management options, visit Cornell's Long Island Horticultural Research & Extension Center.

http://www.longislandhort.cornell.edu/vegpath/photos/lateblight_tomato.htm#images%3E

Contacts

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time, resources and financial management all before they even get to school.

Learning to show animals is all about taking care of something other than yourself and putting it first, learning to get along with others, taking constructive criticism on how you and your animal can improve. That's social science at its best. Seeing young people grow up doing something they love and passing along their knowledge and techniques to younger youth doing the same thing I'm sure has some fancy title, but I just call it cool. You'll see it at every 4-H or FFA sponsored show around the state and nation.

A few decades ago one of my children, who grew up showing, was part of a state delegation of 4-Hers that was asked a question from a bunch of people connected with troubled or at risk youth. They asked why they weren't in trouble with the police. The response these people got startled them. All the youth said first they didn't have time to get in trouble, and second they knew that their 4-H and FFA leaders and family would discipline them long before the police ever had to get to them. The nice thing is, today it is no different than it was back then.

If you really want to see some very special young people, check out a fair this summer or fall and ask them about their animals. You will see some of the most dedicated and knowledgeable youth around.

Help us win \$5000

There's still time to vote

NH Ag in the Classroom is participating in "Grappone Cares", a fund raising opportunity for local charities.

If NHAITC receives the most votes on the Grappone Cares Facebook page we will receive \$5000 to put toward our agriculture education programming for

295 Sheep Davis Road
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Deb Robie, Grafton County Coordinator
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students across New Hampshire.

To vote go to www.grappone.com/grappone-cares-contest.htm and "Like" Grappone. Then look for the "Vote Here" bar on the right of their page. Scroll through the organizations and when you find NH Agriculture in the Classroom, click the vote box. Also share this with your friends.

You can vote every 24 hours until August 2. So, as they say, vote early and often.

Thanks.

P.S. If you haven't "Liked" us on Facebook please do so. Click the icon to the left.