

An American Tradition

Well folks its late summer and what does that mean? FAIR TIME! The 137th edition of Cache County Fair and Rodeo is August 11th -13th. The Fair is always full of diverse events, rodeos, concerts, food booths, vendors and of course the many 4-H and FFA projects. For many people, including myself, fair time is the best time of year... next to Christmas.

In 1807, Elkanah Watson of Pittsfield, Massachusetts held sheep shearing demonstrations. By the fall of 1811 it had evolved into the Berkshire County Fair. County Fairs quickly became a great opportunity for farm and ranch families to gather, talk, exhibit their animals and canned goods and enjoy some friendly competition. It also became a great showcase to share rural success with the public. Today, County Fairs are great places for friends to come together, visit, share and learn.

For many people the county fair is a family tradition; something they prepare all year for. For me, growing up in a small farming community in Southern Idaho, the County Fair was the best part of the summer. We worked all year to have a project ready for the fair. Between lambing and calving our projects out, to feeding and working with them all summer long, to finally being ready at the Fair on show day. As a product of 4-H and FFA, I've enjoyed the opportunity of learning valuable life lessons like interacting with people and businesses and showing off my exhibit that I worked several months with. It's quite a process that many kids and parents don't take lightly.

In addition to the livestock, dairy, equine, swine and poultry exhibits at the County Fair, there are many 4-H club exhibits, such as photography, cake decorating, leatherwork, science projects, robotic displays and a host of others. Along with the 4-H and FFA kids, older community members bring items such as vegetables, flowers, baked goods, canned items, quilts, photos, art displays and many other exhibits that they have carefully created.

Being a Utah State Summer Intern at the Cache County Extension office, this is my first year to attend the Cache County Fair and Rodeo. Having looked around the beautiful, shady Cache County Fairgrounds, I can hardly wait to be involved with the activities here. Many Cache County kids are working very hard every day to have their livestock exhibits ready for the County Fair. Anyone driving across the valley on early mornings or late evenings has likely seen boys and girls leading or driving their animals, all in preparation for the happy event. In addition to exhibiting their projects, most will have an opportunity to sell that animal at the Junior Livestock Auction which will begin at 9 a.m. on Saturday, August 13th in the Cache Arena. This auction is an annual event that provides community members an opportunity to invest in 4-H and FFA youth who have worked very hard to exhibit a project at the Fair. The generosity of community members and businesses give those youth a way to pay for future education,

church missions and a variety of experiences that help young people to understand and contribute to life.

Some of this year's concert highlights are Mile Marker 6, Redhead Express, Mark Gibbons and many others. We also have the fun family carnival where children can enjoy many thrilling rides, and the elephants are coming back again. Fair goers will enjoy the wonderful opportunity to learn about, feed and even ride the elephants. Thursday through Saturday is the PRCA Rodeo at 8:00 p.m. All seats are reserved this year so hurry down to the Cache County Administration building, Macey's Food and Drug, IFA Country Store or online at cachecounty.org/fair to purchase tickets.

And of course one of my favorite things about fair time is the fair food. So don't pass up an opportunity to try a great fair burger, ice cream cone, snow cone or my ultimate favorite, the Elephant Ears (large scone)! The entire Fair book is available at www.cachecounty.org/fair . There is no charge to get into the Fair itself. So don't hesitate to come down to the Cache County Fair and Rodeo this year and enjoy the many festivities and fair food that is offered. Hope to see you there!

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