

For Immediate Release: 4//24/2020, 4:45 pm
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PRESS RELEASE

Lancaster County Agricultural Society votes to focus 2020 Super Fair solely on 4-H/FFA youth participation

The Lancaster County Agricultural Society voted in its regular monthly board meeting on Thursday, April 16th to focus this year's 150th Lancaster County Super Fair solely on preparing the fairgrounds to support Nebraska Extension's efforts to deliver the best experience possible for the 4-H/FFA youth exhibitor participation while following the latest health guidelines that may be in effect later in the summer.

The public 150th celebration planned at the 2020 Lancaster County Super Fair has been postponed to 2021 (see details below). This will free up additional indoor and outdoor spaces that may be used to allow the approximately 800 4-H/FFA exhibitors to spread out with their 5,000 entries to operate more safely during the scheduled 4-H/FFA Days from July 30 – August 2, 2020.

BACKGROUND. With the uncertainty of the next few months during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Agricultural Society discussed at length whether to continue planning and investing in a 150th community celebration in 2020, not knowing if the public will be allowed to attend or feel safe to gather at that time. Other major factors were estimates of lower

attendance revenues leaving costs that could not be covered by fair reserve funds, and the desire to fully celebrate the fair's 150th anniversary together as a community in 2021. The Agricultural Society, like parents with kids getting married or graduating in 2020, wants to include all Lancaster County families in the ultimate celebration of the fair's 150-year history as health guidelines hopefully allow in 2021.

Overall, the Agricultural Society also took into consideration that COVID-19 creates unpredictable circumstances surrounding event planning. Last-minute changes to health guidelines will still be possible after gatherings begin to be allowed which becomes more difficult for the remaining smaller staff at the fairgrounds to be able to adjust. As well, the Board wanted to allow the Nebraska Extension team the maximum planning time possible to be prepared to offer the 4-H/FFA participation in whatever format that might be possible.

President Kendra Ronnau said, "With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting public gatherings this year, the Agricultural Society Board wanted our Lancaster County 4-H/FFA youth to be the single focus of this year's 150th Lancaster County Super Fair."

LOOKING FORWARD. The plan is for the full public celebration of the 150th Lancaster County fair scheduled to run over 10 days from July 30-August 8, 2020 to be postponed until the 2021 Super Fair. This means the outdoor fair events such as the Heart of America midway & carnival, food vendors, Froggy 98 Music & Entertainment Series on the Pepsi Main Stage, and Motor Mania events will not occur during the 2020 Super Fair. Indoors, numerous fairgoer participation such as Open Static, Open Livestock and the annual Lancaster County Farm Bureau Pedal Tractor Pull, Big Wheel Races & Fun at the Farm zone will be postponed as well as the commercial vendor booths & Family Fun Zone in the Multipurpose Arena.

Over the coming weeks, the Lancaster County Agricultural Society Board will continue to support the work of the Nebraska Extension in Lancaster County to determine how the annual 4-H/FFA participation can go forward safely as scheduled July 30 to August 2, 2020. In the event a traditional 4-H/FFA county fair experience cannot be held in person, alternative plans are being considered by the Nebraska Extension team.

Since 1870, the core of Lancaster County Fair, renamed the Lancaster County Super Fair in 2010, has been centered on supporting local youth preparing over the entire year to showcase their learning, passion and talents in agriculture. These projects range from dozens of species of livestock and horse shows to thousands of static exhibits such as horticulture, photography, science, clothing and textiles and much more. The Lancaster County Agricultural Society Board looks forward to providing the Lancaster Event Center fairgrounds as the venue for our local youth to enjoy this opportunity this summer as possible, with an eye to protecting the fairgrounds for generations to come.

UPDATE ON OTHER ACTIVITIES AT THE LANCASTER EVENT CENTER FAIRGROUNDS.

The annual Super Fair, the only event solely organized annually by the Agricultural Society itself, caps off a busy summer schedule at the Lancaster Event Center fairgrounds that was on track to grow 35% in 2020 until shows were put on hold mid-March. Numerous horse & livestock shows including the top 10 Quarter Horse show in the USA, the Cornhusker Classic in June, the National High School Finals Rodeo in July and other community events on the fully booked schedule will be decided on a case by case basis by each show's organizer and governing body based on each show's unique characteristics, financial backing, distance of travel and ability to modify to latest health guidelines under the latest direction from local health authorities.

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ABOUT LANCASTER EVENT CENTER FAIRGROUNDS

The Lancaster Event Center is the county fairgrounds located on the east side of Lincoln, Nebraska and known as the Midwest's premier multi-use facility and home of the Lancaster County Super Fair with over 320 other events annually, contributing over \$40M in economic impact to the area. Lancaster Event Center was on track before COVID pandemic occurred in mid-March 2020 to grow 35% in 2020 with the opening of \$7 million in grounds improvements funded by a Lancaster County Visitors Improvement Grant (lodging tax) and the booking of two international events in the first 45 days: the National High School Finals Rodeo (NHSFR) in mid-July (see NHSFRLincoln.org for more info) and the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) International Convention & RV Rally combined estimate of another \$24-30M in economic impact.

Key features of the LEC fairgrounds include 400,000 square feet across five inter-connected buildings, full catering and food/beverage service, multiple advertising/naming sponsorship opportunities, 200-site campground growing to 1,284 sites with water/electric hookups by July 2020, a new 3,300-person covered grandstand with 400x600' outdoor multi-use arena, ample outdoor livestock pens & horse stalls all set on 160-acre grassy fairgrounds with ample, convenient parking adjacent to natural and retail amenities. LEC is located minutes from I-80 Waverly exit and other major highways while being just 15 minutes from downtown Lincoln attractions.

Opened in 2001 by the Lancaster County Agricultural Society, the Lancaster Event Center (LEC) is a public facility that operates as a public, independent county-level political subdivision and 501(c)(3) non-profit. The Agricultural Society is celebrating 150 years for its county fair in 2020 in its mission under Nebraska State Law to be a key contributor to Lancaster County's youth, culture and economy by providing a professional, friendly and fun experience at the LEC while striving to engage the community in the unique agricultural heritage of Lancaster County for years to come. For additional information, visit LancasterEventCenter.org or contact the media contact above.