

Dear Livestock Exhibiting Families and Buyers,

We wanted to take a few minutes and let you know about the changes to the Livestock Sale this coming Fair. I apologize for not getting it out before it hit Facebook. The decision was just announced at Fair Board last night. I believe being proactive and giving everyone the same and correct information is the best policy.

As you have heard from the 4-H Extension Office and on Facebook the Livestock Sale will be in two areas, with the cattle and hogs being in the Shipley Arena and the sheep, goats, poultry in a tent. I want to give you some background information on why the decision was made and more insight into how this will work. Much more information will be coming as the Fair gets closer. We hope that we can all work together as the 4-H and FFA Community to make this work for the benefit of the exhibitors.

Why did we have to make the change?

- For years the buyers have expressed concern about the Livestock Sale going past 11:00/midnight. This past year with the sale going to 2:00 AM very few buyers were still in the arena to support the kids later in the sale.
- All sale decisions must be based on the support of the Buyers.
- We did not have enough volunteers.
- Parents have expressed their displeasure with the sale lasting into the wee hours of the morning.
- Our numbers keep growing and growing. This year we tagged 200 head of cattle for over 140 exhibitors. Again, a big increase from last year. This means we have a potential of 140 head of cattle in the sale.
- We expect numbers to increase across the board in pigs, sheep and goats.
- More opportunity was given to poultry exhibitors so we will have more poultry in the sale.

Options:

MOVE THE SALE TO SATURDAY

- As many of you are aware, for the last couple years the Sale Committee has thought about moving the Sale to Saturday. This is not a viable option at this time for many reasons. The first being 50% of the Buyers said they would support a Saturday sale and 50% said they did not want the sale to be moved to Saturday.
- Moving the sale to Saturday would not reduce the length of the sale.
- Our biggest income event for the Fair is the Demo Derby. We could not move the demo derby as it needs to be the final event of the Fair due to the debris that is left behind from the crashed up cars. We could not park vehicles in the

Buck Miller arena nor have any event in the Arena following the demo derby and we cannot afford to not have the demo derby.

- Moving the Sale to Saturday would have been a big unknown as to how that would have impacted the Sale.

ONLY ALLOW EXHIBITORS TO SELL ONE ANIMAL

- The numbers do not support this. The large majority of exhibitors only sell one species. Only 75 exhibitors sold 2 species, 15 exhibitors sold 3 species, and 3 exhibitors sold 4 species.
- An animal goes across the sale ring every 1 minute 30 seconds. That means if we limit kids to two animals, we save 27 minutes. We could say only one species and that could save a little over 2 hours.
- This may not have impacted some exhibitors, but a big impact on others. We also do not want to discourage kids from having opportunities to do the most they can. We also know some senior exhibitors show more species in their last year to support their college funds.

ONLY ALLOW EXHIBITORS TO SELL IF THEY PLACE IN THE TOP FEW PLACINGS

- This was an option. How I did not support this option because with the Swine Department running breeds, we have some classes with 3-4 hogs while other classes have 10 or 11 hogs depending on where the weights divide. The last place cross may have been better than the 4th place Berk or York, but will not be sold due to the number of animals in their particular class.
- My personal thought on this is that many of the same exhibitors would be given the opportunity to sell year after year, while the same exhibitors would not.

RAISE WEIGHT AND RATE OF GAIN REQUIREMENTS

- We already know how popular ROG is. So, we really did not visit this idea long.

ONLINE SALE

- Another option was to have some animals go through the sale ring on Friday night and the remainder to be sold online on Monday evening.
- Some Buyers expressed that they were not good with technology and would not entertain the thought of buying online, while some other Buyers were more comfortable with the idea.
- The Online would have been a big unknown as to how that would have impacted the Sale.

HERE'S SOME MORE INFORMATION YOU DID NOT GET ON FACEBOOK

- The Sale Tent for the smaller animals will be located in close proximity to the Sale Ring in Shipley, just outside Shipley. It will be easy for Buyers to move quickly between the two sale areas.
- We are already working on the technology to bring online Cow Buyer to both areas so if a Buyer is sitting in Shipley they can also have the sale on their phone watching what's going on in the sheep and goat sale.
- By our estimate, the sheep and goat ring should conclude between 8:00/8:30 PM and the beef and swine sale should conclude around 11:00/11:30.
- We will have big screens in both sale areas.
- The Superintendents and the Sale Committee will work together to assure a exhibitors have enough time between sale animals that they and their parents can get to both areas.
- We will have a picture area and photographers in both areas.
- All Grands and Reserves will sell in the Shipley Arena Champion line up.

SUPPORT FOR SUCCESS

- We recognize change is hard. No matter what solution we would have chosen would be a big change with many unknowns. The glaring truth was we could not kick this problem down the road another year and a decision for change had to be made. We heard loud and clear that 2:00 AM was just too late and we risked losing a lot of Buyer support. Two large Buyers were not present this past year and we want to retain all the support we can.
- The Fair Board, the Superintendent and the Sale Committee have been discussing this for years. We are asking for you to be open minded and support this change.
- To make this successful, we will need more hands available on Friday to set up the two areas. Please make plans to be available to help on Friday afternoon.
- Hogs not in the sale will have to be out of the arena by Thursday night. The hog's area will be condensed down moving sale hogs to a smaller area (floor space) but still in individual pens for those not housed together. We're going to need some help with this.
- Make sure your children write well composed Buyers letters to Buyers and bring in new buyers. Parents need to network and get new buyers interested in supporting the Sale. The same already existing Buyers are inundated with far too many letters.

A COUPLE OTHER PIECES OF INFORMATION

- **Yes, the commission is going back to 6%. That means your child will have \$10.00 more per \$1,000 taken from their sale check.**
- For many, many years Maryland Fairs have received funding from the Maryland Agricultural Fair Board. The funding came from unclaimed winnings at the horse betting tracks. This has drastically changed as times have changed. Now, those who bet on the horse races do so online and their winnings are deposited to their accounts. The pot of unclaimed winnings has dried up. Typical is for the Carroll County 4-H & FFA Fair to be provided with \$35K in grants, that we will no longer have. We may get an extremely reduced amount or none at all. We do not know at this time. This is the money that paid the exhibitors premiums. The Fair will need to make up this funding. I sent out a template for Fair Board members and families to write letters to their Maryland Legislators explaining why we needed this funding and how important it is to farm and fair families that the Fairs be funded. Andy Cashman personally spends a lot of time in Annapolis lobbying for Fair funding in Maryland. He is passionate about this. However, with recent cuts in the budget, it is looking like our funding request will go unfulfilled.
- In the last several years we lost the volunteers that ran the family style kitchen in Burns Hall, and we are always dependent on the weather to cooperate for our events since they are all outdoor. The Fair Board will be running many fundraisers to fill the hole in funding. Many of the fundraisers will involve the Clubs, the exhibitors and their families. Your Club Leader and Tribune will keep you informed.
- Please volunteer. We never have enough volunteers in the Red Concession building or at events. The money brought in at the Red Concession stand is 100 % ours. We already lost the kitchen in Burns Hall. We cannot risk the Red Concession Stand.
- Come to Fair Board meetings. In the early 2000's there would be 60-80 people at Fair Board meetings. Now, it is typical to have only 35-40. Of the 35-40 most are grandparents, while others do not yet have children in 4-H yet. Maybe 15% of the active Fair Board members have children in 4-H or FFA at this time. Please consider getting involved.

We apologize for the length of this email, but felt it was important to share clear accurate information in this day and age of social media misinformation.

Thank you for your support,

Vicki Wagner & the Livestock Sale Committee