

Santa Cruz County Fair Livestock Department
Meeting Notes – March 3, 2021 via Zoom

Attendance:

Board Members Loretta Estrada, Stephanie Fontana

Fair CEO: David Kegebein

Department Leadership : Cynthia Mazzei-Bartlebaugh, Jessica Bartlebaugh, Dominique Borrego, James Bricker, Kathleen Bricker, Jodi Carkner, Erin Hayes, Kathryn Hill, Diana Hoover, Kevin Hurley, Julie Katawicz, Erin Larrus, Kyle Middleton, Danny Naranjo, Kyle Plaskett, Yvonne Sowersby

Public: Jessica Ayala, Phillip Carranco, Jody Kolbach, Jeanette Moules

Meeting started at 7:03 pm.

CEO Report: On March 3, 2021, things are looking more optimistic according to the news, but if you look at what various other states and counties are doing, there are still a lot of issues and questions to be answered. The mass gathering business, of which the fair is a part, is faced with a lot of challenges.

Dave discussed the Livestock Organization Chart that was distributed today via email. With the start of the new year and with new leaders on the fair board (Stephanie Fontana is President, Jody Belgard is Vice President), Stephanie and Loretta have been appointed to be the livestock board committee. Things that will be taken to the board for approval will include items like the entry guide which includes policy and rule changes. This arrangement will provide an opportunity for public input.

Dave remarked that as we roll into the new year, we all have a certain level of optimism, but we are thinking at this point that it will be difficult to have a normal fair (like 2019). Attendance limits are almost a certainty. Ohio just announced they are opening up their fairs at 20% capacity. Texas is rolling back all restrictions. California is taking a more cautious approach, with “normal” being a long way down the road. For our fair, 1/3 of attendants are volunteers and participants. At 20% capacity, we would have to figure out which volunteers would get to come to the fair and which ones don't. Without paid attendees, we can't make it viable.

Based on the huge success of the Holiday Lights event, we will probably have a drive-thru fair with fair food and some exhibits. We could possibly have one-day livestock shows where exhibitors bring their animal for the day and return for the auction. In a worst-case scenario, we could start to see huge outbreaks as other states open up. It is hard to see how it will play out. Nothing is clearly defined at this point.

We'll send out an advisory email to our exhibitors that will tell them to purchase animals at their own risk. We did have a successful auction last year and there was demand from our buyer community. We could do some in-person judging, maybe, and on-line judging. We'll survey the exhibitors.

Fair Board Committee: Stephanie Fontana is excited to be working with livestock again. She thanked the committee for volunteering and stepping up for our community. She looks forward to a positive year in 2021. Loretta Estrada has been reading the minutes from 2019 and 2020 and has really enjoyed them. She remarked that if we look back, a lot has happened in the last year. She hopes we can look forward to a livestock show for the kids this year, improving on what we did last year. Asked about awards/buckles. Loretta has all the faith in the world in this committee, stating “Move forward and good luck with what you decide.”

Attendee Comments:

In general, the attendees were pleased with the 2020 virtual livestock show and auction. Having the live auctioneer there made a difference in getting bids up for the exhibitors. The exhibitors were flexible and followed the instructions for getting their photos, videos and animals ready for the fair.

The department learned a lot last year. The department is optimistic that we could have a live show and auction this year. One-day shows with an auction at the later date is preferable given the information we have now from county and state. For now, an auction dinner doesn't appear to be an option. In the red tier, food would have to be pre-packaged and social distancing would have to be observed. It was thought that a return to traditional awards (buckles) would be a good idea.

Questions/comments from the group:

Q: Are there any restrictions on having the shows on the fairgrounds? A (Dave): yes but it's just too early to tell what they will be in September.

Q: Should we be looking for in-person judges now? A (Dave): Let's wait another month to see what the state and county do. If it looks like the vaccinations are widely administered, we could start looking for judges.

Q: Are the ribbons on hand? A (Dave): Ribbons were ordered last year before the shutdown. We might need some tabs, though. Yvonne will check the stock.

Q: Are we going to limit the number of animals and are we going to require preregistration this year? Some of the kids missed the deadline last year. Kathryn said that we don't want to limit the number of animals this year – we did so last year because we were uncertain about what we could handle. The only hard limits are on extended area (Santa Clara and San Mateo County) exhibitors. Dave said we will send out a letter asking potential exhibitors about their plans for this year. Letters will go out to all 2019 exhibitors and 2020 exhibitors.

C: With regard to legal matters, we are supposed to post the meeting dates on a public site. We need policies and procedures for volunteering.

C: There were some comments about the online/live auction:

It would be nice to see the pictures of the animals during the live auction. Kyle Middleton explained that you could see the pop-up of the zoom session and look at the lots, with pictures, at the same time.

Some were not able to register as buyers. Kathryn Hill said that buyer registration was available during the auction, even at the last minute.

It would be nice to have the auctioneer talk up the exhibitors.

Could we make payments available to buyers who need time to pay for their purchases and so that exhibitors get their checks? Cynthia Mazzei-Bartlebaugh reported that all exhibitors received their checks as soon as we received their thank you letters. One check was held for a thank you letter until December.

C: Stephanie Fontana asked for pictures for the 2020 fair scrapbook. Please send to info@santacruzcountyfair.com. Kyle M. has a couple of pictures of the weigh-in. Jessica B has auction pictures and will forward them to Stephanie.

C: Dave – reported that the Foundation's annual crab feed drive-thru is this weekend. Ticket sales were just slightly lower than last year. The Fund-A-Need category this year is portable livestock pens for the swine barn.

Announcements:

Racing will start next Friday night with no fans. Hoping to have 25 race nights. A few horse shows are scheduled. The Flea market recently set a new record for total attendance and total vendors. Weather has been great. The crowd is very cooperative. Things are going well. So far, the fairgrounds are still alive & well.

Loretta said the crab feed could use help in the Harvest building at 9 am on Thursday and Friday, and 8 am on Saturday to help get crab feed dinner together.

There will be a vaccine clinic on Saturday in the Crosetti building. The County of Santa Cruz, Dominican Hospital, Farm Bureau & the Strawberry Commission are partnering to vaccinate farm workers.

A schedule of meetings will be posted on the fairgrounds website. We should have some idea what the level of interest is for this year by the next meeting at the end of March.

Meeting ended at 8:00 pm

Respectfully submitted, Kathryn Hill

DRAFT