

## Fair Officials Pleased with Attendance and Exhibits

Written by Nemaha County Herald  
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Nemaha County Fair representatives said they were pleased with how the 2012 fair went. The fair was Thursday-Sunday, July 12-15.

"We had a good turnout of people. I didn't hear any complaints from anyone. We had some good events. I thought we had a nice number of exhibits," said Gary Behrends, president, Nemaha County Agricultural Society.

"Overall, I was pleased. I thought it went pretty smooth. The number of exhibits was probably right where we've been," said Kristi Nutsch-Fulton, 4-H Extension assistant. It was her fourth Nemaha County Fair. She came to the county in June 2009.

"We filled up the (4-H) Building nicely. We had more horticulture and more general area exhibits. We needed more space," Nutsch-Fulton said.

### Increases in Some Areas

She said some livestock areas had increased entries while others were down.

"Each project goes through a cycle," Nutsch-Fulton said.

Bev Beasterfield, office manager, said static exhibits were up 27 entries and Clover Kid exhibits were up slightly. Clover Kids provide age-appropriate activities for children ages 5 to 7.

### Few Heat Problems, Commercial Building Air Conditioning Worked Well

Exhibitors and spectators contended with daytime temperatures in the mid and upper 90s with warm nights. However, officials did not recall many problems because of the heat.

Behrends said livestock exhibitors handled the heat well.

"(The exhibitors) made sure the livestock had water and fans to keep them cool. Anything can be challenging for livestock in unfamiliar surroundings," he said.

"The clubs worked together to provide water for livestock and fans on them. Fortunately, we didn't lose any animals to the heat. We felt good about that," Nutsch-Fulton said.

Behrends said he was not aware of any problems people had with the heat.

The air conditioning in the commercial building was well-received, Behrends said. The building housed business and organizational exhibitors.

"It gave everyone another cool spot to hang out in," he said.

There was a large attendance in the building following the Friday night, July 13, fair parade.

Behrends said he thought fair attendance was better than in 2011.

"We would like to see more people. We had terrible heat last year. It was not quite as bad this year. (The fair board) tries to come up with ideas to improve attendance and get people to come to the fair," Behrends said.

### Legionnaires Pleased With Beer Garden

Dick Stich, commander, American Legion Post 23, Auburn, said there was a good turnout for the beer garden and tribute band Saturday night, July 14. Stich said that Legionnaires were there until 1 a.m. July 15.

"A lot of people came in. People really enjoyed the band. They were dancing on the grass before it was over. More came in as the evening progressed. After 11 p.m. (July 14) there were still a lot of people who came through the gate. The band was very good," Stich said.

The band played songs of Bob Seger, Bon Jovi and Guns'n'Roses.

Stich said he was also pleased with the parade. Stich said attendance at the July 13 beer garden was not as good last year because of the heat. Inside business was pretty good but outside business was slow, Stich said.

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### Parade

Casie Allen of the Auburn Jaycees said parade entries were down from last year. Behrends said he saw part of the July 13 parade but not the July 14 parade. A lot of people lined the parade route to watch the first night but fewer people watched the second night. Behrends said he was unsure whether two nights of parades was worth the time. The Agricultural Society needed time to consider and will reassess the issue, Behrends said. A decision will be made during the winter to allow people to plan for the 2013 fair, Behrends said.

### Some Contests Before and After Fair

A suggestion presented to fair officials was carried out this year. All Nemaha County static exhibits which will be taken to the Nebraska State Fair were shown in one place in the 4-H Building.

"We thought we'd try it and see. We haven't received any comments on whether people liked it or not. That way, people would be able to see them, particularly if they don't go to Grand Island," Nutsch-Fulton said.

Several fair-related contests were conducted before the fair. Shooting sports contests are after the fair. Many of those contests involve 4-H'ers from multiple counties, Nutsch-Fulton said. She said participation was up in the cat and small animal show. Six participated this year, compared to two or three last year.

"The kids brought several different animals, including a snake, lizard and gecko," she said. There were not as many entries in the fashion, music and theater arts contest, another multi-county contest, Nutsch-Fulton said.

"Pawnee County was host for the contest. It fell on our pre-fair judging day. The kids had the opportunity to participate in both. Some chose not to. That probably hurt our numbers. It was a scheduling thing we couldn't avoid," she said.

The 4-H horticulture and wildlife judging contests were well-attended, Nutsch-Fulton said. The contests, involving participants from Nemaha and Johnson counties, were in June at Johnson-Brock Public School.

Because of the early fair dates, the shooting sports contests were scheduled after the fair. Those are also joint contests with Johnson County, she said.

"Last year, participation was down. I hope the kids who signed up participate," Nutsch-Fulton said.

One Nemaha County 4-H'er, Sheila Murphy, left the night of July 14 to compete in the state 4-H horse show at Grand Island. Nutsch-Fulton said Murphy received a purple ribbon in showmanship and a blue ribbon in horsemanship at the fair.

"She represented the county well. I'm proud of her," Nutsch-Fulton said.

### Thoughts on Early Fair Dates

While Behrends said he had mixed feelings about the earlier fair dates, he said that for the most part it was manageable. Before last year, the fair was the last week in July, and was Sunday-Wednesday.

The earlier dates created a challenge for some exhibitors, especially horticulture and garden exhibitors. The products may have not reached maturity. Behrends also said the earlier dates created challenges for families because baseball and softball season was still going on.

Nutsch-Fulton said she had heard good and bad comments about the earlier fair dates.

"The livestock exhibitors may have a harder time getting ready. However, some like having it earlier. They have time before school starts. The early dates give us a little breathing room before State Fair," she said.

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### State Fair

There are 31 Nemaha County 4-H exhibits heading to the Nebraska State Fair, down from last year, Beasterfield said.

Nutsch-Fulton said the decline was attributed to a couple of new regulations. Static exhibits must receive a purple ribbon to qualify for State Fair. Also, beginning projects are no longer eligible for State Fair, she said.

2012 is the third year of the Nebraska State Fair at Grand Island, after more than a century in Lincoln. Nutsch-Fulton said she heard quite a few families attend State Fair.

“It has not hurt livestock exhibits. The (exhibitors) enjoy the new facilities. The 4-H Building is much nicer. Everything’s all under one roof. You don’t have to navigate stairs, carrying projects up and down,” she said.

State Fair is Friday, Aug. 24-Monday, Sept. 3.