

## Yuma County Fair Board Meeting

August 16, 2021

### Yuma Fairgrounds Concession Building

A post-fair August meeting was called to consider some changes to the standard fair schedule and timing while ideas were fresh in everyone's mind and to have adequate time to prepare for any potential changes in the Yuma County Fair schedule.

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by President Dave Blach. In attendance were Yuma County Commissioners Scott Weaver, Trent Bushner; Fair Board members D Blach, Harold Blackham, Micah Seyler, Darcy Stallings, Jed Gleghorn, BJ Mekelburg, Robin Schneider, Michelle Smith; numerous 4-H and FFA staff and sponsors; 4-H project Superintendents and 4-H Club Leaders. (See attached roll call)

A synopsis of the purpose for the meeting was given by D Blach explaining conversations and analysis of the 2020, 2021 fairs and general trends the Commissioners, Fair Board and interested parties are noticing with the Yuma County Fair. First concern was with the attendance at the Tuesday night concert and what could/should be done to improve attendance and thwart the loss of money the county is putting into the night show each year. Everyone is concerned with the numbers dwindling in the past few years with attendance at the fair in general, the night show/concert, rodeos, and exhibit numbers overall. The belief is several factors are affecting the downward trend but changing of the schedule may help correct it. Some discussion ensued about what was the cause for poor attendance at some events and things that need improvement and/or change. The 2021 YC Fair was later than usual on the calendar due to the "1st full weekend in August" causing fair to start on Saturday, August 7. It was recognized that despite the calendar, it would be advantageous to stay in a similar schedule to the other fairs in the region for 2022, i.e., Logan Co. July 28 – August 7, Washington Co. July 25-30, and Yuma Co. Aug. 6-10 (original schedule).

Other immediate concerns voiced were:

- night show/concert on Tuesday having dwindling numbers and dropping approximately 200 tickets each year recently despite adding the Beer Garden,
- rodeo ticket sales low for Tuesday afternoon rodeo but much better for Wednesday evening performance,
- numbers for livestock were average for most species but down substantially for beef, Livestock Sale had a record year and positive experience with the Beer Garden on Monday evening,
- numbers of projects/exhibits in the Exhibit Building were lower and the heat made it uncomfortable inside,

Following a show of hands to see how many club leaders, superintendents, event committee members and Fair Board members were represented, Blach broke the crowd into 3 work groups to consider an alternate fair schedule which would alleviate some of the current problems. Each group presented ideas for any schedule changes:

- Group 1: Recommended the Fair be moved up to a Wednesday through Sunday or Monday schedule so the Horse and Swine shows would be Wednesday; Sheep, Goat, Poultry on Thursday; Market Beef and Dairy with Night Show concert on Friday evening; Saturday for Parade and Jr Livestock Sale; Sunday to hold to County Events and PRCA rodeo. Concerns were voiced over keeping the ministerial show, gymkhana and Ranch Horse Show, routing rodeo contestants with Logan Co, as well as limited time for Livestock Sale preparations and sending animals off to packers on a weekend.

- Group 2: Suggested changing the fair to start on Friday night with a “kick-off concert” and begin the fair on Saturday of the first weekend in August, whether the month starts on Saturday or Sunday. The remainder of the schedule would follow similar as past years (Sunday – Wednesday) but would add more public events on Tuesday, possibly changing the County Events to that day and move the PRCA rodeo to Tuesday evening. This group had concerns over fair kids, especially Horse and Swine, would not have a good opportunity to go to the concert as they would be preparing to go to fair.
- Group 3: Based a lot of their schedule on the Livestock Sale and the 4-H kids. They also proposed beginning the fair on Wednesday and running it through Sunday/Monday. Proposed schedule was Wednesday-Horse, Dairy and Swine shows, Ranch Rodeo; Thursday-Sheep, Goat shows, Horse Races, Draft Horse Pull, Crops, Poultry, Open Class exhibit check-in; Friday- Jr. Exhibitor breakfast, Beef, Poultry, Ranch Horse, Bucket Calf shows, Round Robin and night show/concert; Saturday-Parade, BBQ, PRCA rodeo and Livestock Sale; Sunday-Ministerial Day, Senior Day, rodeo slack, County Events and PRCA evening Rodeo. The group cited having the sale and rodeo on the same day would give you good attendance at both and felt strongly the sale needs to be on the weekend and some felt the sale needs to be in the evening.

All groups were in favor of changing the night show/concert. Gleghorn mentioned he felt a Sunday and possibly Monday PRCA rodeos would work for routing contestants. However, he stated it is too difficult to have the County Events and the rodeo on the same day. It was suggested to have the Parade, County Events and Livestock Sale on Saturday. There was discussion about changing too much all at once if things do not go well then you never know what did and did not work. Others disagreed that only changing one or two things would not gain us the necessary improvements overall. After much discussion surrounding the various schedules and positive/negatives for the proposed changes a show of hands for those wanting a complete change of days for the fair showed support for the new schedule with a mid-week start and finish on the weekend.

The Commissioners gave a report regarding failing ticket sales in the last few years. Bushner warned availability and cost for an artist on a weekend concert may be a concern. He suggested a Saturday afternoon Livestock Sale to combine with a Saturday night show. He asked for a show of hands for those wanting an old but popular act for the concert versus a new upcoming artist. The older, popular artist received the most support from the group. He also stated we may need/want to think “outside the box” for entertainment in lieu of a concert, i.e. bull riding, stock car races, variety of artists, etc.

There was discussion about some of the scheduling of the events leading up to the fair and considering overall the purpose for making the drastic changes, i.e., what is our goal(s). Finally, there was a motion by M Seyler, second by J Gleghorn to adopt a Wednesday, August 3rd-Monday, August 8<sup>th</sup> for 2022 Yuma County Fair. The motion passed with 6 votes in favor and 1 abstaining. The general meeting was paused for a recess by Blach and allowing anyone who was not interested in talking about specific improvements to individual shows (superintendents) to leave. After a brief recess, a second portion of the meeting was re-opened.

## 9pm – meeting extension

### Superintendent Needs/Wants/Pros/Cons

#### Sheep/Goats - Holly /CJ Leonhardt

- 2021 show ran well. If we can get the new schedule going, they would be happy. Sheep/Goats do not need to be the “red-headed stepchild” and show in the heat of the day.
- Possible coolers if needed.
- Complaint- Sale needs to rotate all the champions then the first place. Steers and pigs keep people in the stands. However, Fair Board voted to rotate all animals every year.
- Incentive to push the children to work harder.
- Positive,
- Central location for spring weigh in or do nominations and not a physical weigh-in. Mostly a criticism because of the errors in Scrapie tags in 2021
- It was proposed to possible nominate or spring weigh-in as many animals as you want and only still bring 4 to fair. (Need to re-address in September/October)

#### Rabbits – Stuart & Joni Turvey/ Tonya Smith

- Possible idea, allow the child to sell at the market sale.
- Need to evaluate having the rabbit show next year in 2022, as a lot of other fairs had a rabbit show and they felt Yuma County missed out.

#### Poultry – Stuart & Joni Turvey

- Went super well and smooth
- The barn is way too hot, need some sort of fan or port-a-cool, we did lose a bird this year as they got to over-heated.
- Judge was one of the best they have ever had. (This judge talked to the kids and about their life)
- Ducks were extremely calm on the ground (cages) and keeps the barn cleaner. The extra area from moving the produce to Home Ec building has helped them a bunch.

#### Hogs - Curt Lapp

- Line up went much better
- Weighing off the trailers went well this year. Had some down time while they waited for pigs that came at the end.
- Judge was surprisingly good, seemed to talk to the kids during the show.

#### Horse - Ryan Noble

- Commend Jed for all the updates and improvements made to the north side of the arena.
- Great comments about the new stand covers.
- Flat beds that come in, might want to wait for them to come in till after the horse show.

- Could use another 4/6 stalls. Stall area needs more stalls, both covered and/or outside. We are getting tight.
- Need to evaluate the horse section of the fair book, there was changes made for 2020 that really helped, some things were overlooked this year.
- Decent judges this year, somehow the ball got dropped on getting judges.
- Doing away with Open Ranch Horse Show. It is supposed to be about the kids. If we had a separate Open Ranch Show, might have more contestants.

#### Home Ec/General Projects - Sharon Blackham, Michelle Smith, Robin Schneider

- Consistency across the board about check out with other animals.
- Why can't the Home Ec building be open during more times for viewing?
- Close off the Open Class judging to superintendents and judges only, or limit public to those viewing the "judging" and not viewing the exhibits
- Fine Arts- need to limit entries to 5 per child only 3 entries per medium.
- Need to find a way to cool the Home Ec building
- Quilts, if we leave the doors open there is so much dust, possible port-a-cool and fans to assist with this issue

#### Beef - Dave Blach

- We must get the weight limits changed to industry weights. Proof of industry trends will be brought to the September meeting to be discussed and voted on
- Concerned that the beef numbers are dropping very consistently
- Catch-a-Calf option during the PRCA rodeo or at the beginning of project
- Spreading out the beef more in the pen assignments

#### County Events/Rodeo - Jed Gleghorn

- Numbers are average
- Problem is parking, but security was great this year, stopped the people that do not need to come in.
- Set rule on what time people need to leave and stick to it. People were able to come in the with a concert ticket, not come and park in there.
- On Wednesday need to get County Event people out and the Rodeo contestants in. Need to figure out this flow better.
- Need to get the 4-H kids moved out. 80% of the horse kids stay thru the whole fair.
- We need to have a way to allow people up to the arena with a vehicle if needed. They need to tell us so we can accommodate this. Some of the problem is with the flatbed trailers parked up close to the arena during the horse show and not waiting to move them in closer to the rodeo.
- Placing a VIP view area. Possibly use the old trailer and sell rights to the area (donors). 40x40 to place a viewing platform which would eliminate the flat bed trailers. And allow more bleachers on the north side of the arena. This could also create some more handicap spaces.
- Commissioners are watching some large aluminum bleachers that are on Big Iron right now in Nebraska.
- Thank you to the commissioners for the covers over the stands on the north side of the arena.
- Commissioners are looking at increasing the price for the north side of the arena seating and creating more area.
- Control this year as far as security was better than it ever has been.
- Put bleachers on the corners, possible??

### Questions to the Superintendents

- If we are concerned about the attendance, do we need to kill the Facebook live showing? Majority says no, as our older generation really likes being able to view the events from home.
- How to get the kids in the county to start wanting to show animals/Home Ec
- What can we do to get kids interested in fair? Have we asked the kids what they want?
- We need more volunteers. We have an 80/20 rule kind of working now, where this 20% of the group is giving all and 80% are not helping at all.
- Possible “fair bucks” to give to volunteers to help them want to help the fair
- We did get the ribbon premium fund pledged/promised.
- One thing the Commissioners are look at this year, making sure the money will go to the people/area that it is intended to go to. So that checks do not go to the Commissioners with no idea who the money is supposed to go to. Tracking donations and income vs expense.
- Need to bump the Round Robin scholarship fund to \$500 at least. College is expensive.
- 2 new tables that are in the fair office, were donated by Ace Hardware.
- Do not just think inside our county for sponsor money, think creatively.

### Commissioners

- They think that we are at least 4-5 months ahead of the norm which is amazing.
- Budget meetings begin in September, they want to separate all the sections of fair. To all of us to monitor the sections and re-evaluate as needed.
- Need to start looking at cleaning crews NOW before the first of the year.

J Gleghorn moved to approve the minutes from July Meeting and for the Fair 2021 minutes. seconded by M Seyler. Motion passed.

Meeting adjourned at 10:30 pm by President Dave Blach. Next meeting set for Sept 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm at the Yuma County Fair Grounds Concession Building.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Smith and Robin Schneider – Co Secretary