

## 2009 Berkeley County Youth Fair

The 2009 Berkeley County Youth Fair will conclude tomorrow and I would like to reflect on it. First I want to say Thank You to the Berkeley County Youth Fair Board and all the volunteers who put in many hours of hard work to make the 2009 Fair a big success. The fair is a year round effort for the Berkeley County Youth Fair Board and its members.

Many improvements were made around the fair grounds to make them more functional and accessible to participants as well as fair goers. How many can you name?

A special Thank You goes out to Jim Stuckey the Fair Board President for all of his efforts to make sure the fair was a success. I saw Jim at the fairgrounds at many different times before, during and after the fair. Be sure to say Thank you to Jim for all of his support and efforts on behalf of the Berkeley County Youth Fair.

This year we celebrated the 62nd Annual Berkeley County Youth Fair and the youth of Berkeley County represented us well. Congratulations go out to all the youth who participated and especially to the youth who had animals at the fair for the week. In my book you all deserve blue ribbons for your efforts in raising animals and having them at the fair.

This year the fair's theme is celebrating 50 years of Crowning Memories! That's 50 years of having a Miss Berkeley County Youth Fair Queen. The first Miss Berkeley County Youth Fair Queen, Miss Youth Fair 1960 Charlotte (Thurston) Shade was in attendance and welcomed the 50th Miss Berkeley County Youth Fair 2009, Alexis Smallwood who happens to be a member of the Arden 4-H Club where Charlotte Shade is the Organizational Leader. Mrs. Shade is also the co-Chairperson with Mrs. Barby Frankenberry for the Miss Youth Fair Contest which they have been chairing for 31 years. Way to go Charlotte and Barby. Congratulations Alexis, have a wonderful year!

What the typical fair goer does not see is what happens behind the scenes. On show day the species being shown is given priority at the wash rack. When you have 100 hogs being shown starting at 8:00 a.m. you need to get an early start washing. Some of the youth were there by 5:00 am to feed, water, wash and put the finishing touches on animals. This doesn't count everything done to get the animals to the fair to begin with. It takes a lot of planning and they learn time management, goal setting, responsibility, and decision making skills in the process (to name just a few).

First, youth need to decide what animal they want to show earlier in the year when they start by getting project books. Take beef animals for an example. Once it's decided to take a beef project they have to decide whether they want to take a Beef Heifer/Cow, Feeder Calf or Market steer project or a combination. If they pick a Market Steer they must purchase the animal by the deadline set for check in for the Market Steer which was December 1st, 2008 for the 2009 Fair and then feed it to weigh at least 950 pounds by fair check in to be eligible to sell the animal at the fair. This requires calculating rations(feed) to make sure the animal will weigh the right amount and be properly finished by show time.

Youth who participate in livestock projects learn how to identify beef breeds, parts of the animals and the ideal confirmation of the animals in order to help them make their selections.

Breeding stock (Females of the various beef breeds... We do not show bulls at the Youth Fair) needed to be owned by May 1 and preregistered by May 11th. Breeding stock is shown by class according to the animal's age. The feeder calf needed to be preregistered by May 11th and broken to halter and have been grass fed prior to show and weigh between 350 and 650 pounds. (Hopefully the feeder calf at this year's fair will come back next year as a Market Steer.)

Once the animal is acquired they need to take care of it by providing it with clean, fresh water at all times, feed it to meet the animal's requirements, check it to make sure it is healthy, give preventative treatments for external parasites, clean and brush the animal, give them exercise and train them to lead.

Closer to fair time you need to groom the steer for the show. This includes clipping the hair and trimming feet. One of the best ways to learn how to properly groom an animal is to watch what other people do to prepare their animals for show.

Once the animal is ready for the day of the show it should be washed early in the day so that it is dry by show time. The animal should be fitted and ready for the show. Raising any animal to be shown at the fair takes a lot of effort.

Unfortunately there is only one Grand Champion Market Steer, Goat, Hog and Lamb at the Berkeley County Youth Fair that is based on the individual judge's decision on the day of the show.

I enjoy working with the youth of Berkeley County and giving time and effort to help make the Berkeley County Youth Fair what it is. The Berkeley County Youth Fair is a showcase for our youth to demonstrate what they learned by working on their projects throughout the year. The fair is the culmination of the year's activities and the youth are all winners who share a small part of it with us.

I salute all of the individuals who volunteer their time, whether it be parking cars, working the gates, checking in exhibits, judging exhibits, carrying ribbons and awards, preparing and serving food, painting, building pens, moving tables and chairs, etc. and the most important part of the fair, our young people. For one week in August we all come together to share, to learn, to compete, to enjoy and work together for the good of our young people.

If you haven't come out to the fair you are missing a lot. There are various farm animals in the different bars as well as some new fair babies in the goat barn. There is good fair food and samples of fresh locally grown produce in the commercial exhibit area. If you've never tasted a locally grown peach, plum or nectarine here's your chance. There is a lot to see and do at the 2009 Berkeley County Youth Fair.

The Berkeley County Youth Fair has a rich history and traditions that go back 62 years with many memories. We do it for the youth. Here's hoping for another 62 years and many more of history and traditions that we can long remember. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of it. A special THANK YOU to all the people who volunteer hours of service to make the Berkeley County Youth Fair a GREAT FAIR!

### **West Virginia Gypsy Moth Suppression Program**

The Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is a cooperative regional suppression program between landowners, the County Commissions in the generally infested counties, The West Virginia (WVU) Cooperative Extension Service, WVDA, and the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USDA-FS). Aerial treatments will be done in the generally infested area on a demand basis only to minimize the damage to forests and reduce the impact of the gypsy moth in future years. Treatments will not be done with the intent of eradicating the pest. Landowners in the 34 participating counties of West Virginia that have had problems with the gypsy moth may sign up for the program any time between now and the end of August at the West Virginia University (WVU) Extension Service county office, or through the WVDA offices at: Charleston (304) 558-2212, Elkins (304/637-0290), New Creek (304)788-1066, or Morgantown (304) 285-3133. The completed applications must be submitted by August 31, 2009. Brochures about the gypsy moth and the 2010 CSCL Program are also available from Extension agents or they can be downloaded from the WVDA website at [www.wvagriculture.org](http://www.wvagriculture.org). For more information, contact Gary Gibson, Director or S. Clark Haynes, WVDA, Assistant Division Director of the Plant Industries Division in Charleston, at 304-558-2212 or Quentin "Butch" Sayers, WVDA, Gypsy Moth Program Manager, at 304-788-1066. Additional information and assistance may also be obtained through you local WVDA offices located at: Charleston (304) 558-2212, Elkins (304) 637-0290, Morgantown (304) 285-3133, and New Creek (304)788-1066. Or on the WVDA New Creek Web site at <http://wvdanewcreek.home.comcast.net>

### ***Garden Tips***

- Watch for downy mildew
- Control broadleaf lawn weeds
- Take note of new varieties
- Come visit the Berkeley County Youth Fair, see the exhibits and visit the Master Gardener booth in the Exhibit hall

***Until next time ...Happy Gardening and Farming!***