

July 8, 2016

## SEEKING PORK BUYERS

Last year at the Saline County Fair we had some pigs in a special contest that included rate of gain. The pigs gained really well in 100 days, in fact too well. They gained so well, Smithfield could not accept five of the Saline County Fair pigs because they weighed over 350 pounds! Fortunately on short notice, local buyers were lined up for home freezer meat purchase. The purchase price was the same as what the other youth received at Smithfield. Would you like to buy some pork for your freezer after the Saline County Fair this year? It could be a whole hog, one half hog or even a three way split. I am seeking names for a potential list of buyers by Thursday, July 14. Please call our office to be placed on a list at 402-821-2151.

We don't know if we will have any heavy weight hogs this year with the heat wave and all, but in case we do have some heavy weights, they make for some great freezer meat, locally grown and for a good cause. Last year Straight from the Farm (Sheldon Kohout) and Blue River Meats handled the processing. Please let me know if you would like to be on our Saline County Fair buyer list. By being on the list you might get a call on short notice the weekend of the Saline County Fair to confirm. If you don't receive a call then none was available.

The swine show this year is Friday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>. A new change for us is the Saline County Ag Society transformed the sheep and goat barn into a new, brighter white, show arena. Come out and support our youth at the junior show events.

An article in the Journal of Extension said the greatest motivator for participating in a county fair is "having fun" but youth participating in a county fair is much more than that. Youth who participate in a fair also learn independence, receive feedback, mastery and gain positive relationships with caring adults.

The county fair experience allows youth to balance their desire to have fun with the responsibilities of preparing and caring for livestock and static exhibits for exhibition all under a time structure.

Youth have deadlines, like show times, that they need to meet. Their efforts are linked to their success with ribbons and placing. Sometimes learning the world is not always fair depending on the judge that day. These experiences all build independence.

In the heat of competition sometimes things get out of whack but other times you see good sportsmanship. When you see a youth going for champion and they lose, but they shake the hand of the winner and the judge besides them anyway, what a tribute to that youth. County fair competition is not about who wins grand champion, or who gets a blue ribbon, it is about learning about how your effort and skill has paid off or skills gained through the process.

Each year youth will return, growing and learning the skills necessary to have a successful project. Eventually, they will be in the role as a mentor, rather than the mentee and we experienced this earlier this year at the county level. We had two former 4-H and current FFA members who put on a clinic to help younger 4-H members throughout the county. They were Emilye Vales and Megan Homolka. So these members gave back to their community at large.



Finally, it all is not possible unless you have the volunteers and parents helping everyone be successful. It should be no surprise that it takes caring adults to volunteer to make a fair happen and help youth gain important life skills from the fair experience.

The Saline County Fair is slated for July 19<sup>th</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>. More information on the fair and schedule can be found at: <http://www.salinecountyfair.org/>

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