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CLASSIFICATION COMMITTEE REPORT

NOVEMBER • 2022

Overview summary: Fair season this year was almost back to normal. A Major problem was the need for some fairs to cancel poultry and/or rabbits because of widespread disease. This was more of a problem in fairs in the eastern part of the state than in the more western regions. All 4-H fairs were guided by UConn extension not to have poultry.

Ledyard Fair was not held this year, and may not be held next year either, as they still have not been able to find a suitable new location.

All Grange Fairs in the brochure were held this year, and two others did not submit materials in time to be included in the ACF brochure but were inspected anyway. Norfield Grange, which used to be a member of the association, held a fair on Sunday, September 11th. I sent someone down to check it out, but there were problems. Redding Grange, which had turned in their Charter a few years ago, has been reorganized, and held a fair on Sunday, October 23rd. Bob Charbonneau and I both attended, and hope to bring them back into the Association in a year or two.

I started the season with a committee of five people to do inspections, but lost two of them, one [Gordon Gibson] to illness, and one to change in job obligations. As a result, there were several fairs that did not get inspected. I hope to be back to full strength for next fair season, as I have had, since then, two volunteers to fill the vacant positions.

I was asked in late September to prepare background material to be used in a radio interview about our fairs. What follows is extracted from that report and is included herein as it summarizes much of what we saw on our inspections:

"There is a tremendous range of size for our fairs. Some of the smaller Grange fairs have competitive entries only for flowers, fruits and vegetables, and home arts, such as baking, sewing and needlework, and canning, with a total number of entries barely exceeding 100, although they do have other educational and agricultural exhibits.

"In direct contrast, some of the major fairs have thousands of competitive entries in over a dozen categories, including beef and dairy cattle, sheep, goats, swine, poultry, rabbits, photography, hobbies and collections, and art and other crafts, as well as competitive horse, pony, and oxen pulls. Durham Fair, for instance, had over 9000 competitive entries this year [including over 500 entries just in canning], and even our smallest major fair had over 1000 entries.

"Some of these fairs are notable for one or two particular categories, year after year. For instance, this year Bethlehem Fair had over 380 entries just in the Baking department and over 350 entries in Flowers, while Berlin Fair had over 800 entries in Hobbies and Crafts.

"Durham Fair and Goshen Fair are noted for their very large numbers of beef and dairy cattle, usually around or exceeding 200 head.

"This was a good year for entries in the largest pumpkin contest, with several fairs having pumpkins exceeding 1200 pounds. The largest I saw tipped the scales at 1532 lbs."

I saw greater effort this year to make sure that the Midway section of fairs had a greater number of rides suitable for little kids.

Not included in that publicity release was the fact that some of our fairs had very poor showing in both vegetables and flowers, only some of which can be attributed to drought conditions. I realize that fairs are captive to what people want to exhibit, but greater effort perhaps should be extended to encourage more exhibitors in areas that are deficient.

In closing I thank the other members of my committee for their help.

Charles Wm. Dimmick, Chair
Rules and Classification Committee
November 5, 2022