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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

East Texas State Fair Earns International Recognition for Agriculture Program

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The East Texas State Fair has received international recognition for its agricultural education efforts, earning 3rd place in the Agricultural Awards from the International Association of Fairs and Expositions (IAFE).

The honor highlights the Fair's Ag Education initiative, which includes free school tours for local students and the AgVenture exhibit, presented by Hiland Dairy. AgVenture features hands-on stations designed to teach students about livestock, farming, natural resources, and food production.

The Fair offers free school tours for 4th and 5th grade students, held Monday through Friday of Fair week. In 2025, more than 1,200 students from Tyler ISD, Chapel Hill ISD, and Whitehouse ISD participated.

During the school tours, students rotate through stations led by industry experts in poultry, beekeeping, and agricultural sciences, as well as educators from Smith County AgriLife Extension Services and local 4-H and FFA leaders. The curriculum introduces students to the role agriculture plays in East Texas and helps them understand where their food comes from.

In addition to the on-site education program, the Fair provides free student admission tickets Monday through Wednesday of the Fair. Tickets are distributed to every school in Smith County and are also available online, ensuring students have access to the Fair's educational and cultural experiences.

East Texas State Fair President & CEO Cody Rosenbalm said the recognition reflects the region's commitment to agricultural literacy. *"Agriculture is at the heart of East Texas, and educating the next generation is one of our most important responsibilities," Rosenbalm said. "This award celebrates the hard work of our volunteers, educators, and partners who make this program possible."*

Skyler Shively, Smith County Extension Agent, who helps coordinate the Ag Education Committee, said the tours continue to grow in value for students and teachers. *"Our goal is to give every child a meaningful, hands-on experience with agriculture," Skyler said. "These stations allow students to engage directly with experts, ask questions, and see real-world applications of what they learn in the classroom."*

The IAFE recognition places the East Texas State Fair among leading fairs across the United States and Canada honored for excellence in agricultural education.

Planning for the 2026 East Texas State Fair is already underway, with an ongoing focus on expanding student outreach and agricultural learning opportunities.

About the East Texas State Fair

The East Texas State Fair unites the community in a celebration of heritage, agriculture, and family-friendly entertainment while fostering the growth of future leaders. Through engaging experiences and educational initiatives, the fair remains committed to enriching East Texas and supporting its next generation.

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