



WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT AND REACH | November 12, 2021

Prepared by:



Community Attributes Inc. tells data-rich stories about communities
that are important to decision makers.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

About Washington Agricultural Fairs

Fairs have evolved over time from religious or merchant gatherings into an industry that brings thousands together to enjoy entertainment, exchange goods and services, learn and connect with agriculture, and develop innovative ideas and technology. The 69 agricultural fairs in Washington state are both social events that bring communities together and foster friendships, and agricultural competitions that showcase rural ideas of farm life, hard work, and self-

sufficiency. Washington state has 38 area and county fairs, 19 community fairs, and 12 youth shows¹. Half of these are in eight counties – Pierce, Yakima, Snohomish, Stevens, Cowlitz, Whitman, Grant, and Spokane.

Washington's agricultural fairs provide industrial, manufacturing, and agricultural exhibits, demonstrations, and competitions with a special emphasis placed on education and youth development programs. The range of entertainment during Washington's fairs is

diverse, with activities for all ages. Outside of fair season, fairgrounds are an important community resource, with hundreds of events held on fairgrounds throughout the year which represent an additional revenue stream for at least one third of all agricultural fairs in Washington. At times, fairgrounds are also used for public service activities, as evacuation centers during natural disasters, temporary emergency homeless shelters, or vaccination sites.



This study found that in 2019²:

- More than **3.3 million** people attended Washington's agricultural fairs to view the latest trends in farming equipment, exhibit livestock and produce, enjoy the thrills of amusements, rides, music, and vendors.
- **68,000 exhibitors** from across Washington and out-of-state participated in Washington's fairs and shared their skills with others, connected with the public, and advertised for their businesses.
- **5,600 volunteers** gave more than **136,000 hours** of time to the community³, representing an estimated value of **\$4.5 million**⁴.

Social, Educational and Cultural Impacts

Through the activities and opportunities offered, Washington's agricultural fairs bring people together, particularly youth, and build social capital, provide education, and support a thriving agricultural community statewide. To better understand these non-monetary benefits, interviews were conducted with key stakeholders such as fair boards members, fair participants, local businesses, and organizations impacted by the fairs. This study discusses several major community benefits and give examples of how they are facilitated by the state's fairs.

- **Providing education.** Fairs promote education through a variety of methods. Agriculture, horticulture, and tourism

are a key component to all agricultural fairs. However, education is not limited to agriculture. Youth and open exhibits and programs such as 4-H and FFA provide the opportunity for fair participants to learn new skills by exposure to many different topics in science, history, technology and more. Some fairs now offer STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities, exhibits, and programming for kids.

- **Fostering community involvement and volunteerism.** Fairs encourage community support and unity through their reliance on volunteers, as opportunities for community organizations to gather, and their role as a community gathering space. They allow residents to give back and provide a social outlet to connect with old friends and make new ones.
- **Connecting to agriculture and local producers.** Fairs are crucial for creating connections to the agricultural industry, and for providing engagement opportunities for the agricultural community. Youth participants return as producers, adult mentors, volunteers on fair boards, or as judges in youth programs. Fairs are also the best opportunity for agricultural producers to interact directly with consumers. This is a huge opportunity to shift the public's perspective of where food comes from and encourage them to support food production at the source.

Economic and Fiscal Impacts

Fairs have a significant role in local economies across Washington state. They help generate jobs, create community buildings, and bring visitors to the area. There are numerous benefits to organizers, vendors and exhibitors, service providers, and visitors. The economic benefit does not stop with just those directly involved in the fairs, secondary benefits are created as fair revenue circulates within the local economy.

This study revealed that the combined activities at agricultural fairs statewide in 2019 contributed:

- An estimated **\$397 million** in business revenue to the state economy.
- Around **3,200 jobs** statewide.
- Around **\$152 million** in labor income (including benefits) in Washington state.
- An estimated **\$10 million** in state sales, business and occupation, and other taxes statewide.

The total economic contribution represents direct economic impacts from Washington agricultural fairs operations, food and commercial vendors, carnival operators and non-local visitors, as well as spending supported through business-to-business transactions (indirect impacts) and household income expenditures (induced impacts).

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INTRODUCTION

Background and Purpose

Washington state has a rich agricultural heritage and fairs are a big part of that heritage with great entertainment and learning opportunities that benefit the entire family. There are 69 youth, community, county, and area fairs in Washington state showcasing arts, crafts, food, science, technology, home arts, animals, history, and more.

Fairs provide an enormous return on investment in economic, social, cultural, educational, and other terms. Fairs draw people and their dollars from outside the region, supporting jobs and economic activity at a local and regional level. Fairs are an educational opportunity for youth through livestock, 4-H programs, and more. These programs also celebrate, support, and promote Washington's vibrant agricultural sector, providing farmers an opportunity to connect their activities with the community. Children and people of all ages enter artwork, baked goods, photography, and other homemade products at fairs in pursuit of coveted blue ribbons. Many non-profit and charity-based organizations raise substantial portions of their annual budgets through fundraising booths and activities at fairs. Fairgrounds are even used as staging sites and rescue locations during forest fires, floods, and other emergencies.

Economic changes, including changes to agricultural production and consumer behavior when it comes to spending of discretionary time and money, and demographic changes, have created challenges for community institutions such as fairs. Local and statewide decision makers are increasingly interested in economic-impact assessments to communicate to legislators and others the importance of fairs and their wide-reaching impacts. This report aims to: 1) quantify the economic contributions of Washington's many fairs to the regional and state economy; 2) assess and tell the story of the broader social, cultural, and educational impacts of the fairs in local and regional communities; 3) develop a baseline for assessing economic impact of fairs overtime and a methodology that is reproducible for future years; 4) provide an important tool that fairs can use to influence how local and statewide decision makers make budget allocations.

Methods

This analysis began with a comprehensive data gathering effort, including a webinar with fair organizations to provide guidance on data collection and extensive individual outreach.

Estimated direct impacts among fair-based operations draw on multiple sources, including data from Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) funding applications, additional data available from fair organizers on employment, revenues, wages and event attendees, any existing economic impact studies, employment and wage records from the Washington State Employment Security Department, gross business income from the Washington State Department of Revenue, existing tourism industry research and other sources. Given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on fairs in 2020, the most recent data available for this study that is representative of a normal year of operations was 2019. Statewide and regional economic impacts were computed through use of the Washington State Input-Output Model.

Organization of Report

The remainder of this report is organized as follows:

- **About Washington agricultural fairs.** An overview of the network of agricultural fairs in Washington state, including a brief history, the different types of fairs, activities, attendance, exhibits, and volunteer activity.
- **Social, educational, and cultural impact and reach of Washington agricultural fairs.** A discussion of the social, educational, and cultural reach and impact of agricultural fairs in Washington on communities throughout the state.
- **Direct impacts of Washington agricultural fairs.** An assessment of the jobs, income and business revenues generated by activity at the fairs, including among vendors, fair organizations operations and visitor spending.
- **Economic and fiscal impacts of Washington agricultural fairs.** Estimated regional and statewide economic and fiscal benefits from agricultural fairs in Washington, including additional jobs, labor income, revenues, and taxes supported through business-to-business transactions (indirect) and household income expenditures (induced).



ABOUT WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

This section provides an overview of the network of agricultural fairs in Washington state, including a brief history, the different types of fairs and their geographic distribution, fair and fairgrounds activities, and attendance.

Brief History of Washington Agricultural Fairs

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW 15.76.110) defines an agricultural fair as an event “intended to promote agriculture and support rural economic development by including a balanced variety of exhibits of livestock and agricultural products, as well as related arts and manufactures; including products of the farm home and educational contests, displays, and demonstrations designed to train youth and to promote the welfare of farm people and rural living.”

Modern day agricultural fairs evolved from religious or merchant gatherings dating back to the Roman empire.⁵ These events typically included a combination of games, competitions, food, and other festivities. As fairs took hold in the United States in the 19th century, they began to focus more on agriculture, competition, and education.⁶ The tradition of trade continues today through innovation, auctions, and sales, and combining education about animal and food production with the marketplace. Likewise, fairs’ religious roots continue in the spirit of community engagement and participation of local churches and other service and community organizations.

The early days of American fairs were focused on agriculture, animal husbandry, and commerce and trade, and this framework still provides the backbone of many of today’s fairs.⁷ Periodic gatherings brought merchants and farmers from afar to trade and sell goods, and activities and entertainment helped draw in crowds. By the early 19th century, agricultural societies and county or local governments began to organize and facilitate fairs.⁸ By the end of the century, many fairs included competitions, exhibits, and communal celebrations.⁹ Around this same time, both 4-H and Future Farmers of America (FFA) were founded to advance practical and hands on agricultural learning for the nation’s youth and to solidify the formal education and innovation to secure the future of agriculture, industry, and manufacturing in rural communities.^{10,11} By the turn of the century, American fairs were cemented as communal gathering places that solidify the connection between agriculture, education, and commerce.

Types of Fairs

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) manages the Fairs Program which provides almost \$2 million every year in financial assistance to agricultural fairs and youth shows throughout Washington state. There are 67 participating fairs in the program from several categories defined as follows by the Revised Code of Washington (RCW 15.76.120):

- **Area fairs.** These fairs serve an area larger than one county and are not under county commissioner jurisdiction. Area fairs have both open and junior participation and an extensive diversification of classes, displays, and exhibits. Approximately 13% of the fairs in Washington state are area fairs.
- **County fairs.** Serve single counties but county commissioners of two or more counties can sponsor a county fair together. County fairs have both open and junior participation, but a smaller diversification of classes, displays, and exhibits than area fairs. Approximately 42%, the most of all fairs, are county fairs.
- **Community fairs.** These fairs serve areas smaller than a county and have either or both open or junior classes, displays, or exhibits. More than one community fair can be organized in a county. About 28% of fairs are community fairs.
- **Youth shows and fairs.** Serve three or more counties and are approved under the authority of Washington State University or the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The purpose of youth fairs is to educate and train youth in rural areas in matters of rural living. There are 17 youth shows and fairs in Washington, about 17% of all fairs.

Outside of the WSDA Fairs Program, the Washington State Fair and the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show do not receive funding from WSDA. For the Washington State Fair, this includes the 20-day September fair, and the four-day Spring Fair in Puyallup in April.¹² This study presents data collected from the 67 fairs participating in WSDA's Fairs Program and the Washington State Fair. Only attendance data was available for the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show and is presented in this study.

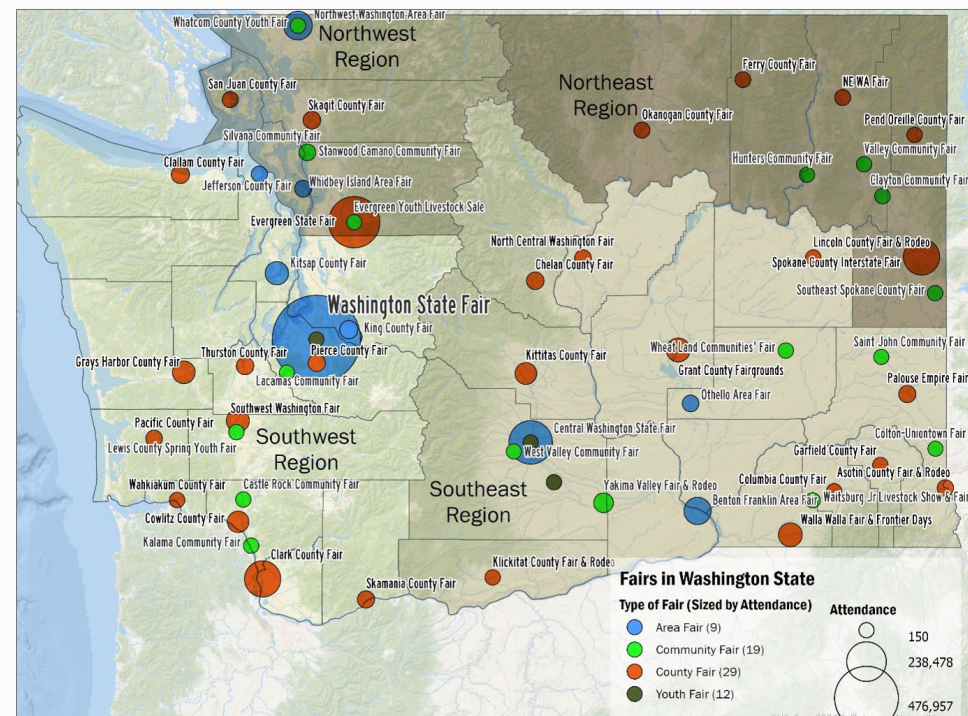
Exhibit 1 shows the geographic distribution of agricultural fairs throughout Washington state. Half of the total number of agricultural fairs in Washington state are in eight counties – Pierce, Yakima, Snohomish, Stevens, Cowlitz, Whitman, Grant, and Spokane. Of all counties in Washington state, Pierce County has the most fairs, with the Washington State Fair, one county fair, one community fair, and five youth fairs (some of these youth fairs take place within the Washington State Fair). It is followed by Yakima and Snohomish counties with five fairs each.

For the purposes of this study, Washington state is divided into four regions: Southeast, Southwest, Northwest, and Northeast.

In **Exhibit 2**, the Washington State Fair is categorized as an area fair, and the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show is included as a community fair, based on Washington code classifications. Of the 69 agricultural fairs in Washington state, 36% are in the Southeast Region, and another 33% in the Southwest Region of the state. There are no area fairs in the Northeast Region.

Outside of the WSDA Fairs Program, the Washington State Fair and the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show do not receive funding from WSDA. For the Washington State Fair, this includes the 20-day September fair, and the four-day Spring Fair in Puyallup in April.¹² This study presents data collected from the 67 fairs participating in WSDA's Fairs Program and the Washington State Fair. Only attendance data was available for the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show and is presented in this study.

Exhibit 1. Washington Agricultural Fairs Location



Source: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Washington State Fairs Association, 2015; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 2. Washington Agricultural Fairs by Region and Type of Fair

Region	Area	County	Community	Youth	Total
Southeast	3	11	7	4	25
Southwest	4	10	4	5	23
Northwest	2	3	4	2	11
Northeast	-	5	4	1	10
Total	9	29	19	12	69

Source: Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: The Southeast Region includes Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Klickitat, Lincoln, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima counties. The Southwest Region includes Clallam, Jefferson, Grays Harbor, Lewis, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Cowlitz, Clark, Skamania, King, Pierce, Kitsap, Mason, and Thurston counties. The Northeast Region includes Okanogan, Ferry, Stevens, Pend Oreille, and Spokane counties. The Northwest Region includes Island, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom counties.

Fair and Fairground Activities

Agricultural fairs throughout Washington state provide industrial, manufacturing, and agricultural exhibits, demonstrations, and competitions with a special emphasis placed on education and youth development programs. The range of entertainment during Washington's fairs is diverse, with activities for all ages including horse racing, chariot racing, circus and high wire acts, carnival rides, firework displays, concerts, animal shows, petting farms and others. Food has also long been an attraction at fairs, with some well-known flagship offerings, such as the Washington State Fair's Fisher Scones which have been a fair staple for more than 100 years.

A summary of fairs layout, events and activities is provided below, informed by data collected from Washington's agricultural fairs.

Midway. Fairgrounds are often anchored by a midway thoroughfare running through the center of the fair. Carnivals, games, vendors, and other attractions run alongside the midway and it helps with wayfinding within the fair and guides visitors from event to arena to food court.

Convention Centers. During the fair, a convention center houses a variety of large-scale events or exhibits. Outside of the fair, events like festivals and trade shows may be held at fairground convention centers. Other year-round activities include conventions, private or community events, concerts, and weddings.

Livestock Shows and Exhibits. All fairs include youth livestock shows and exhibits and three-quarters of fairs include an open class exhibit competition for adults. Live animal and livestock sale events are housed in pavilions, halls, or barns. Exhibits and events are typically divided by type of animal and housed accordingly. Buildings are managed by volunteers and keep to their own schedules of activities.

Grandstands. Grandstands are large open-air venues in fairgrounds that may be used for rodeos, car or truck shows, concert series, or other events. According to information provided by fairs, 44% of Washington fairs feature a rodeo – 7% include a kids or pee wee rodeo – and 26% host a demolition derby or monster truck show. Roughly 57% feature live music or concert series. These performances may be held in the grandstands or at smaller stages and venues throughout the grounds.

Carnival. About 41% of all fairs feature a carnival which includes rides and games. Carnival events are distinguished from other entertainment and games at fairs because they are put on by carnival providers who travel from fair to fair. Fairs without a paid carnival provider still host a variety of games, competitions, and entertainment.

Vendors and Booths. Fairs include local and travelling food vendors, which may be clustered together or dispersed throughout the fair or along the Midway. Political groups, community organizations, and private businesses may also host informational booths. Many community organizations and non-profits host meals, events, or other activities. For example, 19

local non-profit organizations fundraise at the Central Washington State Fair in Yakima. One, the Yakima Valley Dairywomen, raises money for two scholarships and programs to educate the public about the dairy industry.¹³

Parade. While most 4-H and FFA programs include parades of champions, 34% of all fairs include a community parade. These parades are held off-site, include floats and community organizations, and Royalty or Grand Marshals.

Miscellaneous events and activities. At least seven fairs (about 10%) host a church or worship service on Sunday mornings. A small number of fairs schedule a dedicated Latino Day or have a designated stage for Latino performers and events. At least three fairs have designated STEM spaces for kids.

Fairgrounds Activities and Uses

Outside of fair season, fairgrounds are an important community resource, as a place for industry expositions, community and cultural events, meetings, symposiums, private events such as weddings and quinceañera parties, and a host of other activities that serve local cultural needs. Hundreds of events are held on fairgrounds throughout the year during the non-fair time and represent an additional revenue stream for at least one third of agricultural fairs in Washington.

Fairgrounds are also used for public service activities. Many counties across the state operationalized fairground parking lots and convention centers as temporary or semi-

permanent COVID-19 vaccination sites. The layout that moves thousands of visitors into and out of the fair and sheer size of many fairground campuses made them efficient drive-thru mass vaccination sites and medical professionals were able to pool vaccine resources at centrally located landmark sites.

The Lewis County Fairgrounds were transformed into a temporary emergency homeless shelter in response to COVID-19 in April of 2020.¹⁴ During the 2020 Evans Canyon Fire in Yakima County, the State Fair Park opened its campgrounds, RV park, and stables to residents and animals fleeing the fire.¹⁵ In times of other emergencies, fairgrounds may be designated as evacuation sites for people and animals. The Evergreen State Fairgrounds offers shelter for large animals during times of severe flooding.¹⁶

Fairs Attendance

Fairs have a long tradition in Washington state and attract large numbers of visitors each year from across the state. People go to fairs to view the latest trends in farming equipment, exhibit livestock and produce, enjoy the thrills of amusements, rides, music, and vendors offering sweet and rich treats. Particularly in rural communities, a fairground is the central activity site, and the fair event serves as the annual gathering for families and friends to spend a few days together having fun.

In total, more than 3.3 million people attended Washington's agricultural fairs in 2019. County fairs attracted nearly 1.5 million people, while more than 1.1 million attended the Washington State Fair. Community fairs and youth shows received about 60,000 attendees, just under 2% of total agricultural fairs attendance. **(Exhibit 3)**

The 23 fairs located in the Southwest Region accounted for about 53% of statewide fair attendance. Among these are the Washington State Fair and the Clark County Fair, which together account for 1.3 million of the 1.8 million (74%) attendees in the Southwest Region. The 25 fairs in the Southeast Region saw the next highest 2019 attendance with

747,000 attendees. Central Washington State Fair and Benton Franklin Fair and Rodeo are the largest fairs in this region in terms of attendance and together represent more than half of the Southeast Region's total fair attendees.

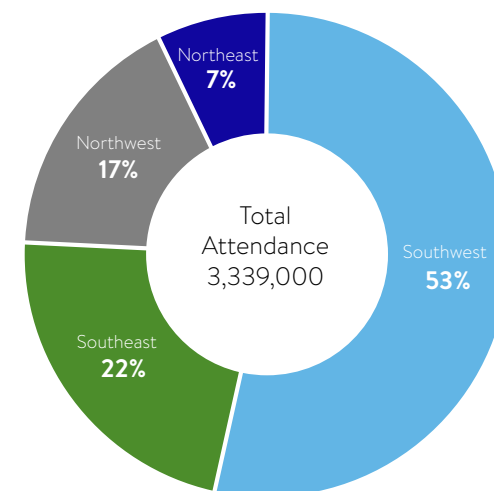
The Northwest Region's 11 fairs received 563,000 attendees in 2019, with the majority attending Evergreen State Fair and Northwest Washington Fair. The 10 fairs comprising the Northeast Region received roughly 246,000 attendees, of which 207,000 attended Spokane County Interstate Fair. **(Exhibit 4)**

Exhibit 3. Washington Agricultural Fairs Attendance by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Attendance, 2019
County	1,477,000
WSF	1,116,000
Area	686,000
Community	53,000
Youth	7,000
Total	3,339,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Washington State Fairs Association, 2015; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.
Note: 2015 attendance data published by the Washington State Fairs Association was utilized for 11 of the 69 WA fairs where 2019 data was unavailable.

Exhibit 4. Washington Agricultural Fairs Attendance by Region, 2019



Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Washington State Fairs Association, 2015; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 5 shows all agricultural fairs in Washington state with more than 100,000 attendees in 2019. These fairs received 72% of total Washington agricultural fairs attendees in 2019.

Exhibits and Exhibitors

People attending fairs can see a variety of displays – animals, plants, arts, home crafts and more. These exhibits are brought to the fair and shown by people who have worked on them all year to learn new skills or improve existing skills. At fairs, exhibitors can share what they learned with others, connect with the public, and advertise for their business.

In 2019, 68,000 exhibitors from all across Washington and out-of-state participated in Washington’s fairs (**Exhibit 6**). County fairs accounted for the largest proportion of exhibitors, averaging more than 1,400 exhibitors per fair. Community fairs and youth shows each averaged about 300 exhibitors per event.

About 70% of exhibitors were youth participants. Exhibits serve as a showcase of the talents of youth in the community by providing a means of education, exhibit, and competition of the various livestock and non-livestock projects the youth are involved in. The fairs provide space for 4-H and FFA youth and others to participate in agricultural shows. Youth fairs had the highest participation from 4-H and FFA youth in 2019. County and area fairs



Exhibit 5. Washington Largest Agricultural Fairs by Attendance, 2019

Fair	Region	Type of Fair	Attendance, 2019
Washington State Fair	Southwest	Area	1,116,000
Evergreen State Fair	Northwest	County	356,000
Central Washington State Fair	Southeast	Area	278,000
Clark County Fair	Southwest	County	208,000
Spokane County Interstate Fair	Northeast	County	207,000
Northwest Washington Fair	Northwest	Area	134,000
Benton Franklin Fair and Rodeo	Southeast	Area	119,000
Others	-		921,000
Total			3,339,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Washington State Fairs Association, 2015; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: 2015 attendance data published by the Washington State Fairs Association was utilized for 10 of the 69 WA fairs where 2019 data was unavailable.

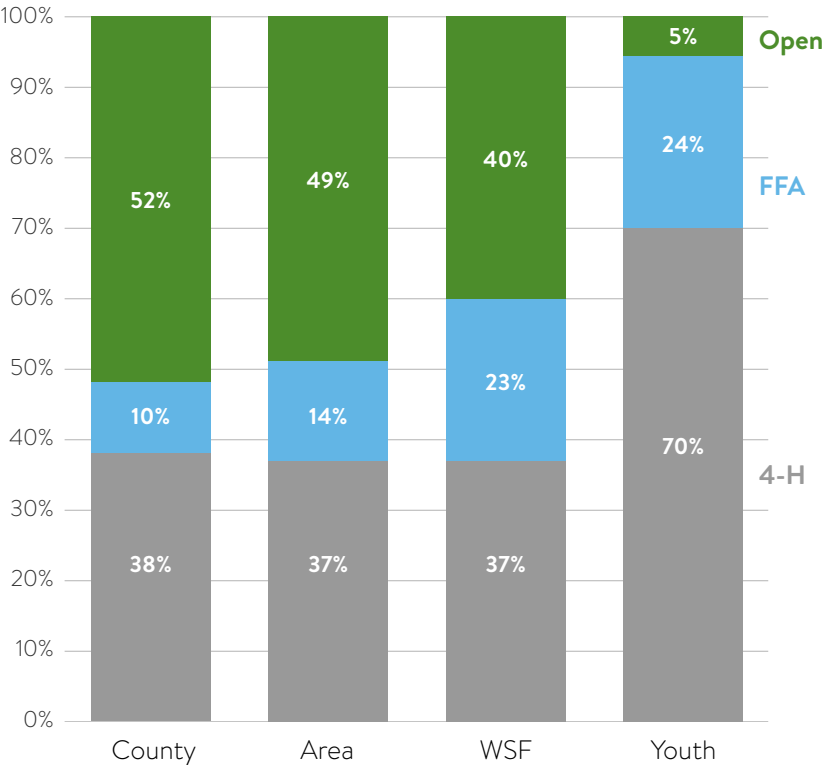
Exhibit 6. Washington Agricultural Fairs Exhibitors by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Youth	Adult	Total
County	26,900	13,900	40,900
Area	7,300	3,700	10,900
Community	5,400	1,000	6,400
WSF	4,200	1,900	6,100
Youth	3,700	-	3,700
Total	47,500	20,500	68,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: The breakdown by youth and adult was not available for the Washington State Fair and was estimated based on the average shares of youth and adult for all county, area, and community fairs. Totals in the table may not sum due to rounding.

Exhibit 7. Washington Agricultural Fairs Youth Exhibitors by Type of Fair, 2019



Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: The breakdown by type of youth exhibitor was not available for community fairs. Fairs also offer opportunities for youth and adults that do not participate in 4-H or FFA to share their arts, home crafts and skills. Entries that are not 4-H are called Open Class.

Exhibit 8. Washington Agricultural Fairs Exhibits by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Live	Still Life	Total
County	64,100	108,100	172,200
Area	17,000	27,400	44,400
Community	7,800	15,900	23,700
WSF	2,700	13,700	16,400
Youth	3,800	7,000	10,800
Total	95,400	172,100	267,500

Source: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021

had similar proportions of 4-H and FFA exhibitors of total 2019 exhibitors. (Exhibit 7)

More than 260,000 exhibits were presented in 2019 at Washington’s agricultural fairs. Nearly 36% of these were animal exhibits, while the remaining 64% were still life exhibits (Exhibit 8). County and area fairs had the highest share of live exhibits, at 37% of total, compared to only 16% for the Washington State Fair. County and area fairs averaged more than 5,800 exhibits per fair, while community fairs and youth shows averaged about 1,300 and 900 exhibits, respectively.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of what makes Washington’s agricultural fairs an exciting and educational experience for visitors. There are a variety of jobs that require the help of volunteers such as greeting guests, assisting with fair events, and grounds maintenance. All volunteers are ambassadors of the fairs and provide customer service to exhibitors, vendors, and patrons. Roughly 35% of agricultural fairs in Washington state rely only on volunteers to put on their annual events. The other fairs also depend on help from volunteers, in addition to their regular and seasonal staff, to make the fairs a success for everyone. In 2019, 5,600 volunteers gave more than 136,000 hours of time to the community¹⁷, representing an estimated value of \$4.5 million based on the value of volunteer time in Washington state in 2019.¹⁸





SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND CULTURAL IMPACTS OF WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

This section examines the various social, educational, and cultural impacts of fairs through an analysis of youth activities, community organizations, educational opportunities, and other activities. This data was collected for each fair through outreach to fair management, additional research, and interviews with stakeholders. Many organizations and entities participate in hosting fairs across the state. Vignettes describe these organizations and activities from the perspective of volunteers and members.

This study found that agricultural fairs provide the following non-monetary benefits to the local community, discussed in more detail below, including examples of how they are facilitated by the fairs:

- Providing education through a variety of methods.
- Fostering community involvement and volunteerism.
- Connecting to agriculture and local producers.
- Other social impacts such as bringing communities together, maintaining tradition and identity for local communities.

Providing Education

The Washington State Fairs Association calls its fairs “Washington’s largest classroom” and utilizes the same education standards and goals as the nation’s public school system.¹⁹ The tradition of education and empowering youth runs to the earliest days of American fairs, and it remains one of the most unifying aspects of modern Washington fairs.

Fairs promote education through a variety of methods. Agriculture, horticulture, and tourism are a key component to all agricultural fairs. There are lessons to be learned about everything from how livestock is raised to the production of hay and grain, vegetables, fruits and nuts to perfecting baked and canned goods.

Education is not limited to agriculture. Youth and open exhibits and programs provide the

opportunity for fair participants to learn new skills by exposure to many different topics in science, history, technology and more.

Youth participating in 4-H and other agricultural shows also learn the value of hard work, and important soft skills such as leadership, organization, and teamwork. Furthermore, programming like 4-H and FFA can be strong preventative programs that give local youth a positive outlet to build healthy relationships with peers and adults. One interviewed stakeholder highlighted that throughout their time working with their county’s 4-H program, not one participant has been in juvenile detention.

Washington State University Cooperative Extension

The Cooperative Extension program is a partnership between the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, land-grant universities, and county governments. As Washington’s only land-grant university, Washington State University operates and manages Extension through a series of youth, community and economic development, agriculture and production, and food and nutrition programs. Most notably, Extension manages and facilitates the 4-H Youth Development program. It is considered the “front door” to the University and is the primary mechanism through which the partnerships that comprise Extension act in local communities.²⁰ Extension works with local agents to help “farmers grow crops, homeowners plan and maintain their home, and youth learn skills to become tomorrow’s leaders.”²¹ In turn, researchers at the University level use these interactions and engagement to inform future research needs, solve problems, and evaluate their teaching programs.²²



LEWIS COUNTY YOUTH SPRING FAIR EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Lewis County Youth Spring Fair takes place the first weekend of May each year. This is a well-anticipated set of dates by youth and adults alike throughout the community. The fair is open to any and all youth entrants, with no participation in 4-H or FFA required to show your animal or still life exhibit. Additionally, the Youth Fair sets no geographical boundaries on those who can enter, and welcomes participants from all over the state, and in some cases from out of state.

Throughout the weekend long event, there are constant opportunities for learning. The root of these opportunities is derived through the nature of the show. Any child who is eager to learn about an animal can join. Owning an animal is not a necessary pre-requisite for this. Children are able to borrow animals from family or friends for the weekend show in order to gain a better understanding of how to properly care for their animal. Ashley Hamilton, a third-generation fair attendee and rabbit superintendent shared that in one case, a young participant entered with a stuffed

animal because they were so eager to learn and be a part of the fair.

Learning opportunities for the participants do not stop at gaining mastery over their species. Valuable leadership skills are gained by older participants, who are utilized by superintendents to help teach the younger and newer participants. Additionally, presentation and social skills are obtained throughout the event by answering questions from fairgoers as they walk through animal barns soaking in the full experience of the Lewis County Youth Spring Fair. The cat and dog barns receive an abundance of fairgoers with questions, curious as to how they can better care for their own cat or dog. This provides the youth participants with an opportunity to not only speak publicly, but confidently to a new and unfamiliar audience.

One activity that helps build upon these skills is a judging contest. In this activity the youth participants are the judges and are asked to choose an item that will be most useful to them for an assigned task. For example, four pencils with varying degrees of sharpness and

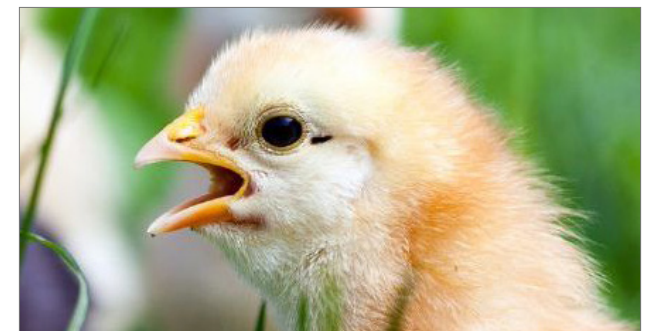
erasers will be set in front of the children. They will then be asked to choose the pencil that would serve them best in a long exam. With this choice, they must explain their reasoning clearly, helping the contestants with their verbal reasoning skills and public speaking. Ashley likes to conduct this contest with her participants because she feels that it gives them a great advantage later in life.

Beyond the educational aspects of the fair comes the social opportunities. The Chehalis community boasts some very strong sports programs but also possesses many home-schooled students. While sports are an extracurricular option for the home-schooled population, Ashley feels that being a “fair kid” comes with a great sense of community and comradery and provides a more open opportunity to socialize for home-schooled students. Growing up showing rabbits, Ashley looks back fondly at the relationships she fostered during the fair and remembers looking forward to fair events every year because it was an opportunity to see friends she otherwise might not have seen throughout the year.

4-H Program

WSU Extension’s most tangible contribution to the state’s fairs is through its administration of the 4-H Youth Development program, whose mission is to “[develop] young people to become productive citizens who are engaged in positive change, meeting the needs of a diverse and changing society.”²³ The 4-H

program offers youth the opportunity to build skills in partnership with caring adults through hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture, and civic engagement,²⁴ with the ultimate goal to “develop the next generation of workforce-ready professionals in a variety of career pathways.”²⁵



KITTITAS COUNTY FAIR 4-H PROGRAM

Community and belonging. These words, their ideals, and their wide-ranging impacts can be felt in every aspect of the Kittitas County Fair 4-H Program.

It starts at the organizational level. A plethora of community organizations, partners, and stakeholders come together to run the fair. Most stakeholders wear a variety of hats – volunteering for multiple organizations, events, and programs throughout the fair. Putting on the Kittitas County Fair is a process so seamless, with partners so dedicated, that the public views it as one entity, rather than as a series of events. There is a strong sense of volunteerism that starts at the very top.

This tangible sense of community and belonging continues at the program level. After nearly 100 years of 4-H in Kittitas County, the program has cemented a special combination of education and youth-adult partnerships. 4-H, at its root, teaches kids about leadership, agrarian values, and

tradition – how to raise animals, market their efforts, and speak in front of and engage with the public. At its heart, it is about building relationships – with peers and adult mentors.

The youth-adult partnerships model what participating in the community can look like. More than 80% of surveyed 4-H participants in 2019 said they feel that 4-H is a place where adults care about them. 90% of kids said they like helping people in their community and 95% responded that 4-H inspired them to volunteer in their community. These relationships create a cycle of community involvement. Kids who participate in 4-H and feel the effects of these relationships become adults who come back to the fair to mentor the next generation of 4-H youth or join any number of organizations.

4-H also fosters an understanding and appreciation of agrarian traditions and evolving food systems. Climate change, buy

local campaigns, and education around food sovereignty are pushing producers to look for new methods of producing foods. It's critical that consumers understand where their food comes from and the pressures producers face to bring food to their table.

“I always joke that local is the new organic,” said Brittany Pearson, the Kittitas County 4-H Program Manager. “Seeing locally raised products and seeing that we have local producers shifts people’s mindsets of where food comes from and encourages them to buy local.”

As participants in the Kittitas County 4-H Program, local youth learn this through practical experience. They set goals. They learn from their mistakes. They plan for the future. And at some point down the road, they pay it forward by helping the next generation do the same.



WASHINGTON STATE 4-H FAIR YOUTH IMPACTS

The Washington State 4-H Fair takes place late in the summer during the Washington State Fair. Each year, the 4-H Fair acts as a showcase for participants to present the hard work they expended throughout the year on a project of their choosing. Jennifer Leach, who has been with the fair since 1988, feels this year-end event is very important aspect of the 4-H Youth Development program.

While 4-H is often associated with exhibitors showing animals, the program goes far beyond that. Jennifer stressed that 4-H is ultimately a prevention program. By engaging youth and providing a safe and fun environment to socialize and learn, 4-H helps develop resilient and successful kids. The Washington State 4-H Fair especially

embodies this environment. The 4-H fair provides an opportunity for participants to bond with a positive adult role model, their program leader, while learning a plethora of useful skills for the present and future. Additionally, it represents a place where participants can socialize with their peers and meet others from all over the state of Washington who share similar interests.

The fair also provides an opportunity for 4-H participants to be recognized for their work. The fair is near the end of the 4-H calendar year and works as a culminating event that allows participants to receive positive feedback for a job well done. Additionally, constructive feedback is given while each

exhibit is judged, providing a learning opportunity to improve in the future. Feeling a “sense of achievement” is crucial aspect of the event and the youth development impact it naturally carries.

By creating fun activities that also help teach participants, 4-H helps bond children to school. Jennifer noted, a satisfaction derived from learning and being rewarded for hard work helps aide her goal of prevention when working with her 4-H programs. Jennifer has focused her work with the Washington State Extension and 4-H youth development to communities impacted by poverty and has dedicated her life to helping foster strong resilient kids through their 4-H involvement.



WAITSBURG JUNIOR LIVESTOCK SHOW

The Waitsburg Junior Livestock Show is a one-day preview show for students before they participate in two other local fairs – the Walla Walla County Fair and the Columbia County Fair. Collectively, these three fairs are so important to the community and youth that it is school board policy to start the school year after the Walla Walla County Fair to encourage participation without missing school.

“They love the fair,” said Nicole Abel, agriculture educator and FFA advisor, “It’s the highlight of the year for most of these kids. It’s a chance to hang out with friends and family in a positive setting.”

Through the livestock show, local youth learn how to take care of animals, run a business, and manage their finances. They

also learn how to be contributing members of their community, that their community is there for them, and how to engage with the public and older generations.

“The older generation is looking to them to be the next generation in charge,” said Abel. “We show that older generation that they’re responsible.”

The fairs bring the community together. Programs or events with kids draw the biggest crowds and local businesses support the kids’ year-round efforts at the livestock sale.

“There’s a working relationship between businesses and customers and you see those during the sale,” said Abel. “You also see the family members coming out to support their kids and family friends.”

Youth participants also learn how to advocate for the agricultural industry.

“People become so detached from their food source, it’s a really good way to bring everyone back around and see what goes into our food supply,” said Abel.

Abel likes to listen to people as they walk through the barns. There’s an excitement and curiosity about the animals, and it’s an opportunity for the kids to educate the public about their own work and the industry that they’re a part of. For many of the kids, agriculture is the way of life that they understand. But at the fair, they interact with people who don’t have the same experience. Both the youth and the public come away from the fair having learned something and built a connection.



National FFA Organization

The National FFA Organization (FFA) is an intracurricular student organization that prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education.²⁶ FFA is one prong of the three-component model for agricultural education developed in partnership by nine organizations, led by the U.S. Department of Education.²⁷ The other two prongs are contextual learning through classroom or laboratory instruction and work-based

learning through supervised agricultural experience (SAE) programs; FFA fulfills the component of engagement through student leadership organizations.²⁸ FFA programs include service engagement, dealer programs which allows businesses to mentor and sponsor their local FFA chapter, and a robust education and advocacy campaign that takes members to lobby their members of Congress in Washington, D.C.

NORTHEAST WASHINGTON FAIR KID CITY AND PERFORMING ARTS

The Northeast Washington Fair, running out of Colville, Washington every August, boasts the second-in-the-state performing arts program held at the fair. For the first two days of the fair, kids audition on Spencer Stage, centrally located along the main thorough way of the fairgrounds. Judges give out blue ribbons to kids who will advance to the championships, but they also give advice or encouragement. They coach kids on how to work the stage. They rally around kids who get stage fright or forget the words.

Further into the fair, spread out beneath half of the grandstand, is Kid City. Kid City boasts a grocery store, barber shop, medical clinic, library, bank, post office, restaurant, school, court room, church, community garden, and more, all built at kid level. There are pedal police cars and fire trucks. Last year, Kid City focused on energy. There was a working dam with a wheel kids could spin to control the flow of water and a solar panel that powered lights. At every building and exhibit, posters teach kids about life skills.

A treasure hunt of trivia takes kids to every pavilion and building on the fair grounds. In the horse stalls, kids learn how to measure horses in hands and convert that to feet. While they may be motivated by the promise of a free ice cream cone if they finish the treasure hunt, they happily boast about their newly gleaned knowledge when they return.

The crux of what makes it all work is the combination of fun and educational activities. A light comes on in a kid's eye when they walk

off Spencer Stage, or they light up fixtures using solar power, or pedal a fire truck out of a scaled model of a fire house. They learn commitment and perseverance, cooperation and confidence. They're values they can put into action in a way that is unique to the Northeast Washington Fair.

And the kids take these values with them after the fair ends. After the performing arts championship, winners and losers muse about what they will perform next year. Adults who participated years ago volunteer to judge and build the confidence in a new generation. One student proudly boasted she wanted to become a music teacher because of her experience in the talent show.

Sandy Everson, the founder and organizer of the performing arts program and Kid City, describes the impact of these events as, "the connection of people to people." Watching people do something they're passionate about – whether it's line dancing, building an exhibit, or teaching someone how to spin – inspires those people to consider sharing what they're passionate about with others too.

The fair is instrumental in building relationships throughout the community that last year-round, to the point that when the fair was cancelled in 2020 as a result of the pandemic, local businesses opened their doors in August to display decorated Christmas trees made by children throughout the region. It's a win-win for kids and the community.

STEM Programming

Some fairs now offer STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) activities, exhibits, and programming for kids. The Central Washington State Fair has a dedicated STEM building that is organized in partnership with local schools and groups.²⁹ Activities include Straw Rockets, Engineering Challenges, Giant Games, the opportunity to work with a 3-D printer, and a shadow wall.

Playing STEM-related games and competing in challenges help kids with STEM-related studies in school. But the goal is larger than that.

"Right now in Washington State in the next 5 years there's going to be 740,000 new jobs is what they tell us and the great majority of those jobs are going to require some STEM capabilities," said Mark Cheney, a member of the STEM network and facilitator of the STEM building.

Fostering Community Involvement and Volunteerism

Fairs encourage community support and unity through their reliance on volunteers, as opportunities for community organizations to gather, and their role as a community gathering space. They allow residents to give back and provide a social outlet to connect with old friends and make new ones.

Volunteers are essential to planning, organizing, and running fairs across the state. Volunteer opportunities do not require membership in an organization, but community

and social groups have a strong presence at their local fairs. Fair boards, the governing and organizing local body for fairs, are typically comprised of volunteers. Non-profits, trade associations, and other entities provide services for fairs as a contractor, a vendor, sponsors, and other forms of involvement.

Groups like Rotary International or a local Grange provide services at the fair and in turn use the fairs as a fundraising opportunity. Money raised at the fair funds community programming and events throughout the year, some of which may even be held at the fairgrounds. Community organizations

also put funds raised through fair activities into scholarships for local youth to study agriculture-related fields.

This section outlines some of the many community organizations that help organize fairs, activities, and provide essential services.

NORTHWEST WASHINGTON FAIR

“The fair is a circle of funds going into the fair but then going right back into the community.”

Debbie Vander Veen, a founding board member of the Northwest Washington Area Fair Foundation, described the cycle of fundraising money between local non-profit organizations and the fair. Organizations like the Lions Club and Kiwanis charge visitors to park or run a food booth. The fair offers a unique atmosphere for members of these organizations to interact with new people, take on leadership roles, and for the organization itself to promote its values and mission to thousands of people. The money these groups raise is immediately put into scholarships, sponsoring leadership opportunities for youth, or investing in community projects.

But it also speaks to the life cycle of volunteers and participants at the fair. Youth spend the year raising animals or making exhibits to show at the fair. They teach younger youth and explain their work to adults and visitors, developing leadership skills. They may receive a scholarship from a local non-profit or the Fair Foundation to study an agriculture-related field. When they become

adults, they find ways to give back to their community.

“We’re finding more and more that those youth that were involved are now leading in board positions or leadership positions in fair boards or non-profits,” said Vander Veen. “The fair trains the future leaders of our communities. That’s a really fun thing to see.”

The Northwest Washington Fair has five core values that it applies to every event and activity at the fair: community, youth, agriculture, entertainment, education. The impact of this ethos is tangible in how it brings the community together.

“It bonds everyone together,” said Vander Veen. “It helps citizens see the needs of other people. And it helps people find their self-purpose – people see a place for them in their community and that they’re wanted. And they’re asked back and it ends up becoming a tradition.”

Traditions like the quilt and sewing department. People come to learn about new techniques and share their old traditions with the new generation. They go home and they try new things with fabrics, design, and

techniques. Then they show what they worked on all year at next year’s fair.

“The fair is the best teaching place that we have for the public to come and learn,” Vander Veen continued. “People there are open and teaching and talking to them. It’s a perfect place to learn, expand a hobby, and then go share it with those who didn’t come to the fair.”

Traditions like the birth process for cows and calves. Vander Veen volunteers there and explains the delivery and post-delivery processes to visitors. She explains what a calf and cow will do throughout the process and why. The guests then watch the cow and calf do just that.

“We know what their needs are,” Vander Veen said. “We stress the care and responsibility we take to care for the animals. The guests are so impressed.”

And the cycle begins again. Visitors share with friends and family the things they learned about, conversations they had, and animals they saw. They try the new sewing technique and pattern they saw. And next year, they return to the fair to do it all over again.



Washington State Grange

The Grange is a fraternal non-profit organization rooted in agriculture and dedicated to improving Washingtonians' quality of life through the spirit of community service and legislative action.³⁰ Grange chapters host a variety of community events and provide services ranging from grants and scholarships to best practices. Grange chapters that participate in their local fairs do so as vendors – particularly food – that fundraise for Grange activities throughout the year and scholarships. Grange chapters also have a strong presence as exhibitors. Grange exhibitors won top honors in categories like overall display, arrangement, and posters at the 2019 Washington State Fair.³¹ The Junior Fairs Program provides opportunities and assistance to youth to participate in a variety of divisions at their local fairs, including Clark County Fair and Grays Harbor County Fair.³² Grange members also volunteer in a variety of roles, not limited to Grange food or activity booths, giving “hours and hours before, during, and after the fair to represent the Grange to the public and to raise money for various endeavors.”³³

Washington Cattlemen's Association

The National Cattlemen's Beef Association is the marketing organization and trade association for America's cattle farmers and ranchers.³⁴ The Washington Cattlemen's Association (WCA) provides assistance and advocates on issues ranging from environmental issues, animal health, food safety, water rights, and disaster/drought relief.³⁵ At fairs across the state, the WCA rallies members to support youth livestock sales and hosts alumni events to engage former youth participants in livestock showing.³⁶ In some counties, WCA chapters stepped in to host livestock sales for local youth in the midst of fair cancellations due to the pandemic.

Rotary International

Rotary International is a community development and service non-profit organization with chapters across the world.³⁷ Washington chapters are usually involved in their local fairs through fundraising and volunteerism. Many provide a staple of fair food (elephant ears) and fundraise through managing parking at the fair.³⁸ Yakima-based Rotary clubs lead Operation Harvest, the

area's largest annual food drive. In 2020, Rotary volunteers collected food at the Fair Food Fest, the COVID-related alternative event to the Central Washington State Fair.³⁹ In an homage to its first community project of finding a suitable location for the Kittitas County Fair and Ellensburg Rodeo, the Ellensburg Noon Rotary Club recently installed pavers in a main pedestrian thoroughfare.⁴⁰

Fair Superintendents

Superintendents are volunteers who are nominated and elected to serve and run youth and open class division activities.⁴¹ They manage exhibit entries and the barn space, select judges, and act as emcee during the calling of classes. Stakeholders indicate that many superintendents were youth participants who want to continue giving back to the fair. As the Southwest Washington Fair Board puts it: “You are the backbone of the fair. Your commitment to your departments helps the Fair to fulfill our aims and purposes of showcasing Southwest Washington and its agricultural and industrial heritage and displaying the accomplishments of our youth and members and our regional community.”⁴²

Community Contributions

VOLUNTEER OR YOUTH MEALS

Approximately 30% of the fairs across the state include a community meal hosted by the Fair Board or community organizations for volunteers, youth participants, or other groups at the fair. For example, the Pacific County Fair hosts a Cowboy Breakfast every day for participants in the youth market sale.

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Washington State Fair Foundation awards more than \$120,000 annually to students living in Washington.⁴³ The 12 different scholarship programs offered the State Fair's Blue Ribbon Scholarship Program award money to students based off where they grow up, areas of study, and general merit. The Northwest Washington Fair Foundation fundraises for scholarships, free gate admission for disadvantaged groups, and for a future educational center and museum.⁴⁴

Organizations like the Washington Cattlemen's Association and the Washington State Grange also offer scholarships to students who are studying agricultural-related fields in the state of Washington.

Connecting to Agriculture and Local Producers

Harkening back to the earliest days of American fairs, tradition is a central tenet of many. One stakeholder defined this tradition as the "agrarian values of rural communities."



A consistent theme from stakeholders is that fairs are creating the future of the agricultural industry, fairs, and community engagement. Youth participants return as producers, adult mentors, volunteers on fair boards, or as judges in youth programs.

Fairs are also the best opportunity for agricultural producers to interact directly with consumers. This is a huge opportunity to shift the public's perspective of where food comes from and encourage them to support food production at the source.

This section outlines consistent themes and examples from stakeholder interviews that show the importance of fairs in maintaining the connection from local producers to both the public and their peers.

Interviewed stakeholders describe their local fairs as essential opportunities for local agricultural producers to advocate for the agricultural industry. Fairs are a unique opportunity for the general public to see agricultural processes in action and communicate directly with the producers to ask questions and learn about the work and care that goes into growing food or raising animals. Furthermore, fairs mobilize youth as the industry's spokespeople, which gets youth active in the industry and engaged with the community. This relationship building is crucial in fostering a better understanding of the industry which, beyond educating the public, also plays an important role in local, state, and federal policies.

“Well in the end it plays a role with policies and politics,” Nicole Abel, of the Waitsburg Junior Livestock Show, described the importance of this relationship. “When you understand the process from the ground level, it helps you make laws and policies that are realistic. And it also holds everyone else accountable. Ag needs to be accountable for their practices. It goes both ways. As someone not from the area, it helps them understand, historically, what the community values. In Waitsburg, wheat and dry land farming is our number one farming practice and commodities. Come harvest, that takes priority. When you’re busy trying to get to your job in town, you need to slow down and take a step back and realize what’s going on around you.”

The agricultural industry has been in flux for decades. Small family-run farms have diminished and much of the work done by these local businesses has gone to larger farms. The fair reminds people of the importance of these small, family-run operations and the amount of innovation and science that goes into their efforts while instilling these values and knowledge in the young generations that are the future of the industry and local fairs. Many stakeholders believe that an educated public will lead to a smarter consumer – one who understands the importance of buying and supporting local producers. “It’s extremely important, like a ten out of ten [for consumers to understand where their food products come from],” said Debbie Vander Veen, agricultural producer and long-time volunteer at the Northwest Washington Fair. “They need to know where their products come from so they feel more secure in purchasing those products.

I like to know where my food is coming from, where it’s been, how it was processed, the ingredients, and care taken to make it. It’s very important for them to know.”

Fairs are also crucial for educating the public about how the industry is changing and reacting to the impacts of climate change and to the concept of food sovereignty. The methods of producing food are changing as a result of climate change, consolidation, and innovation, and fairs provide the best opportunity for producers to communicate these changes to the industry directly to the consumer. More than one stakeholder described the new perspective or interest on a visitor’s face as they explain a certain process or the science behind raising animals or producing a crop. This type of interaction is almost entirely unique to local fairs.

Other Social Impacts

Fairs provide a range of communal activities and shared experiences for the community that also market the fair to a broader audience. These include additional social events like parades or ambassador programs that market the fair to the broader public and allow participants to showcase themselves and their experiences at the fair. Other events like open class exhibits allow adults to build and showcase new skill and share information and build connections with a variety of community members.

Ambassador programs like Rodeo Royalty or Grand Marshals mobilizes residents with close ties to agriculture and the fair as ambassadors

of the fair. Winning the title of Rodeo Queen or Grand Marshal also recognizes both the contributions of the titleholder to the fair and their community as well as the importance of their role in the agricultural industry to the local community and greater region.

This section outlines some of the events that are either related to or hosted by fairs, and the impact on participants and the community.

Community Parade

Thirty-four percent of fairs include an off-site parade through a downtown space featuring community organizations, locally made floats, and youth participants. A fair parade connects the fairground activities, events, and visitors – usually held on the outskirts of town or in unincorporated land – to the downtown commercial core.

Open Class Exhibits

The open class exhibit divisions provide adults and youth not affiliated with 4-H or FFA the opportunity to showcase their skills, hard work, and interests in front of friends, family, and their community. All are welcome to enter an exhibit, and prizes are awarded to the top entries. Exhibits include a range of divisions. The Home arts division includes culinary and textile exhibits like baking, preserved foods, sewing, quilting, knitting and more. There is a focus on art and craftsmanship with divisions like hobbies and crafts, fine arts, and photography. Agriculture and horticulture exhibits showcase elaborately designed and built displays of local produce. These exhibits are a physical representation of the time and work put in by youth, farmers, ranchers, and other producers.

Fair Court, Rodeo Royalty, Grand Marshal, and Ambassadors Programs

Local youth compete for an opportunity for young men and women to be spokespersons for the fair and rodeo, the western way of life, and their community.⁴⁵ The program provides scholarships to its participants and teaches teamwork, organizational, public speaking, community service, and relationship building skills. Forty-five percent of fairs in Washington include a Fair Royalty, Fair Ambassador, or Rodeo Queen program.

Makenzie Zessin was crowned the 2021 Walla Walla Fair and Frontier Days Queen.⁴⁶ Makenzie attends Washington State University

and is majoring in Animal Sciences and is in the Honors College. An accompanying scholarship will help her pursue a veterinary degree.

Lexy Hibbs was the 2020 and 2021 Queen of the Benton Franklin Fair. She traveled throughout the Pacific Northwest, Nevada, and Colorado promoting the fair and rodeo.⁴⁷ Lexy, like many of the 2020 Queens or Ambassadors, held her title over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic when the 2020 fair was cancelled.

Fair Grand Marshals are community members who are chosen to be the leader of Washington fair parades. Marshals are

sometimes individuals, pairs, or even couples who typically have a long connection to the fair and community. The Whidbey Island Fair chose Gary Gabelein, a long time fair volunteer, one-time youth participant, and fair float driver.⁴⁸ The Benton Franklin Fair chose to honor frontline healthcare workers as the 2021 Grand Marshal.⁴⁹

Cowboy Church

At least 10% of fairs host a nondenominational church service, often called Cowboy Church, on Sundays.

NORTHWEST WASHINGTON FAIR

Seeing picnic tables full of reuniting visitors under the large fir trees is a common site at the Northwest Washington Area Fair. The fair, which is held annually in Lynden, Washington, caters to a large region rather than a single county or community. Ron Polinder, a former board member of the fair feels this is just one of the many unique qualities of the fair. With the fairgrounds located just 10 minutes from the Canadian border, Canadian farmers are often among the visitors that come to enjoy a day at the fair.

Perhaps the most unique aspect of the Northwest Washington Fair is the large display of draft horses. Draft horses are large horses bred for hard tasks and farm labor such as plowing. The fair has around

eight six-horse hitches which is hard to see anywhere else in the country. Additionally, the fair sponsors a plowing match each spring, providing another opportunity for the draft horses to be exhibited.

Accompanying the draft horse exhibits is a focus on agricultural learning. Ron noted the Fair's board always agreed on the importance of agricultural learning opportunities being presented at the fair and feels that the local FFA and 4-H chapters contributed greatly in providing these opportunities. The fair is currently working on a "Farming for Life" exhibit which aims to teach adults and children about the nature of agriculture in the region, which Ron continues to have a part in. This includes profiling local industries such as dairy, raspberry, blackberry,

blueberry, and potato to name a few. Should the Fair be able to raise enough funds, they would like to have school children come from nearby cities to view the exhibit and learn where their food comes from, thus extending the reach of the exhibit outside of only being seen during the week of the fair.

While Ron feels the landscape of Lynden is changing, with notably fewer small dairy farms from when he grew up, he feels agricultural education has never been more important to show community members the importance of where their food comes from and how productive even the smallest piece of land can be when treated properly. Each year for a week in Lynden, the Northwest Washington Area Fair strives to provide this agricultural education.

DIRECT IMPACTS OF WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

Fairs have a significant role in local and regional economies across the state. Fairs can help generate jobs and bring visitors to an area. They are a source of revenue not only for the fair organizations that run them, but also for local businesses and communities, as well as for vendors and exhibitors that sell goods and promote their business at their local fairgrounds. Statewide agricultural fairs generate direct economic impacts from several distinct sources:

- **Fairs Operations.** Operating revenues and resulting expenditures of the fair organizations' operations.
- **Vendors and Concessions.** Revenues of food and commercial vendors and carnival operators at the fair.
- **Visitor Spending.** Spending of visitors outside the fair gates. Visitors traveling to the fair spend money in the area on lodging, transportation, food and drinks, shopping, and other recreational activities.

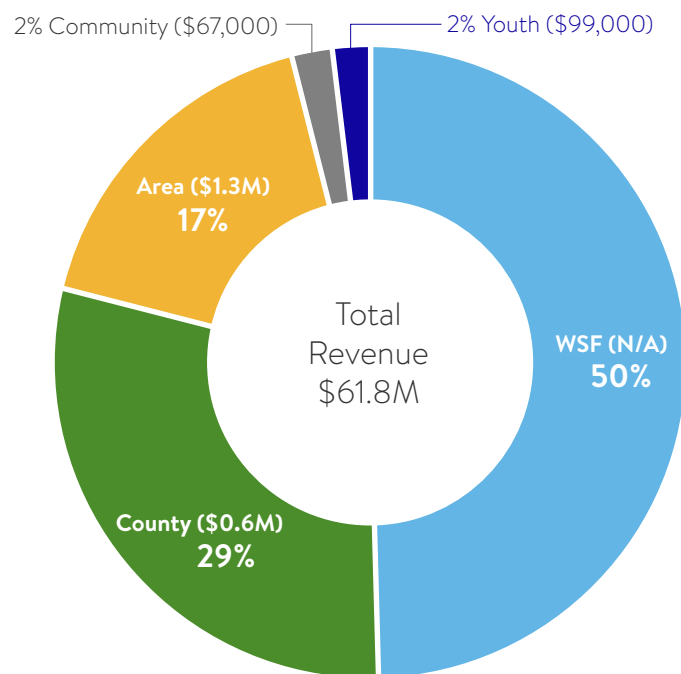


Fairs Operations

Fairs generate revenues, jobs, and wages through their operations. This section of the report summarizes the direct effects of fairs in traditional financial measurements which are significant.

Agricultural fairs in Washington state earned nearly \$62 million in revenue from operating the fairs in 2019. The Washington State Fair recorded the most revenues, having generated more than \$30 million or 50% of total revenues during their two annual events (September and April Fairs). County and area fairs generated the next highest revenues with about \$18.1 million (29%) and \$10.6 million (17%), respectively. The remaining 4% represents community and youth fairs, which together account for \$2.4 million. Outside of the Washington State Fair, area fairs have the highest average

Exhibit 9. Washington Agricultural Fairs Revenue Share and Average Revenue by Type of Fair, 2019



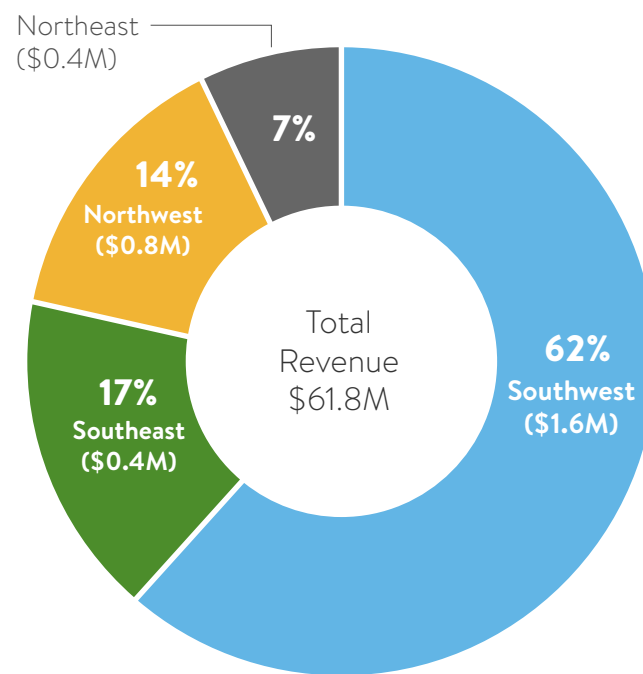
Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

revenue at \$1.3 million, followed by county fairs with an average of roughly \$624,000 for the 29 county fairs. **(Exhibit 9)**

The Southwest Region contributed nearly \$38 million (62%) to the total revenues in 2019. The Washington State Fair falls within the Southwest Region which is driving the regions large proportion of revenues and high average. When the Washington State Fair is excluded, the Southwest Region's average revenue is roughly \$350,000 and the Southeast Region accounts for the most revenues, followed by the Northwest Region. **(Exhibit 10)**

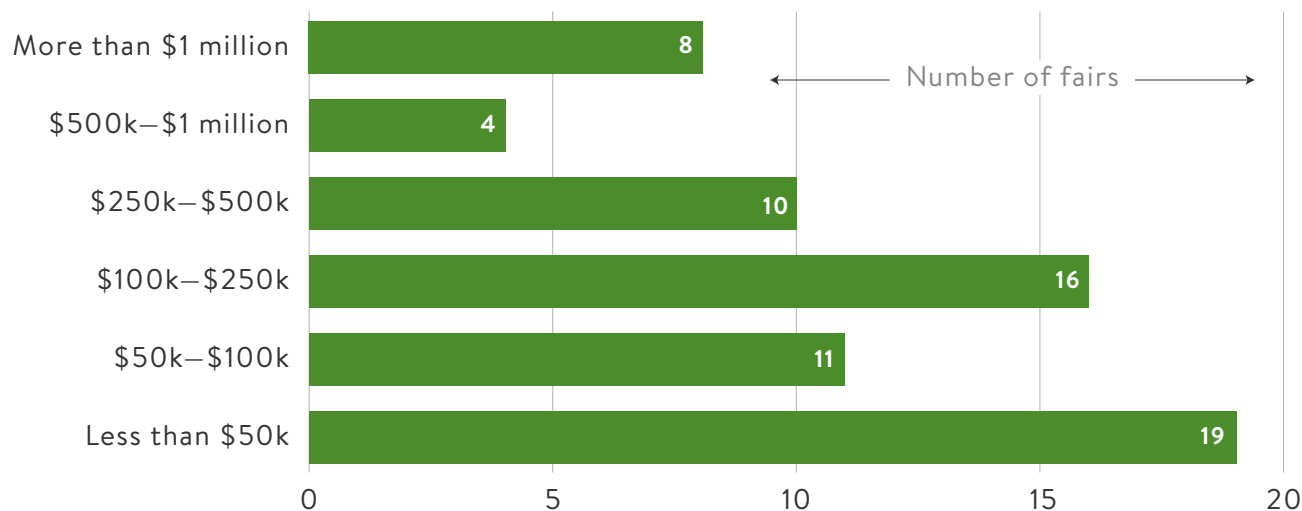
More than a quarter (28%) of all 68 agricultural fairs⁵⁰ in Washington state analyzed for this study earned revenues below \$50,000 in 2019.

Exhibit 10. Washington Agricultural Fairs Revenue Share and Average Revenue by Region, 2019



Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 11. Washington Agricultural Fairs by Revenue Size Category, 2019



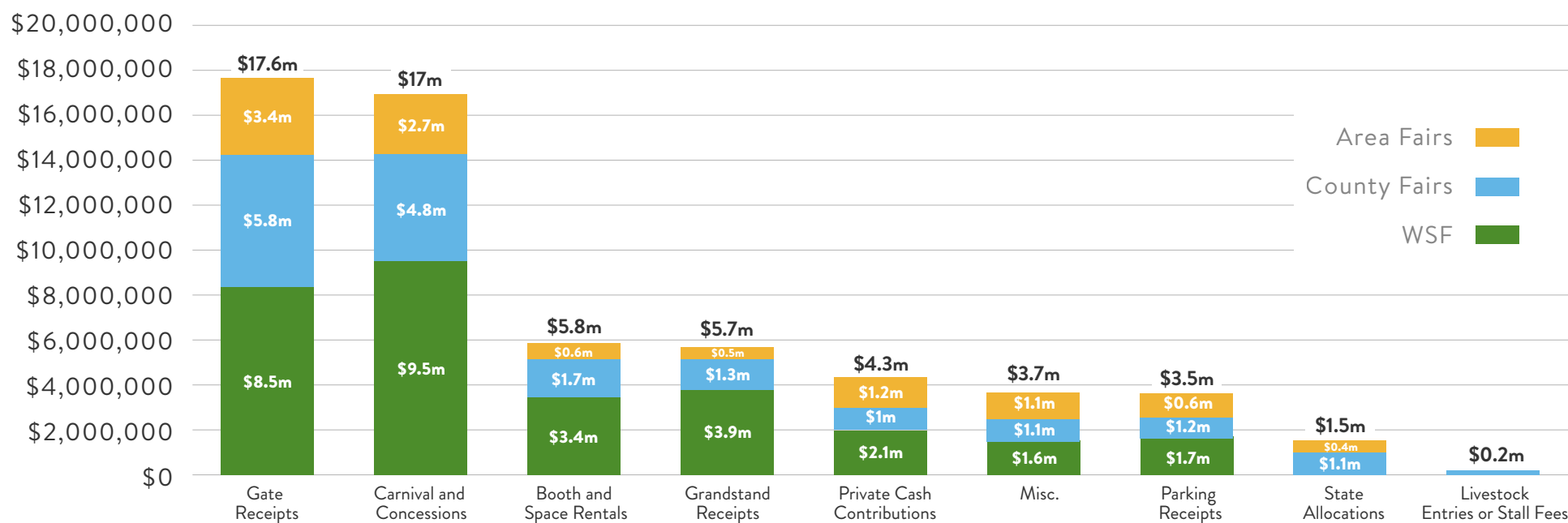
Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

These were all community and youth fairs. Another 54% or 37 fairs earned revenues between \$50,000 and \$500,000. Less than one fifth of fairs had revenues higher than \$500,000, most of them area, county, the Washington State Fair, and one youth fair.

(Exhibit 11)

Fair revenues include income from a variety of sources. Gate receipts and revenues derived from carnival and concession sales comprised a large portion of state, county, and area fairs' revenues⁵¹. These two revenue categories accounted for two thirds of total revenue for these three types of fairs in 2019. For area and county fairs, gate receipts and carnival and concession revenues account for 57% and 59% respectively of total revenues. (Exhibit 12).

Exhibit 12. Washington Agricultural Fairs Revenue by Source (County, Area, and WSF), 2019



Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: Revenues by source were not available for community fairs and youth shows and are not included in this exhibit.

Agricultural fairs in Washington state directly generated 410 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs and paid \$13.9 million in wages and benefits in 2019. Washington State Fair provided 39% of total jobs and paid 50% of total labor income, followed by county fairs with 34% of jobs and labor income **(Exhibit 13)**.

Similar to the revenue figures, fairs located in the Southwest Region generated the most jobs (200) and wages (\$8.5 million), followed by the Southeast Region. Fairs that were held in the Southeast Region directly supported 90 jobs and more than \$2 million in labor income **(Exhibit 14)**.

Exhibit 13. Washington Agricultural Fairs Revenue, Employment (FTEs), and Labor Income by Type of Fair, 2019

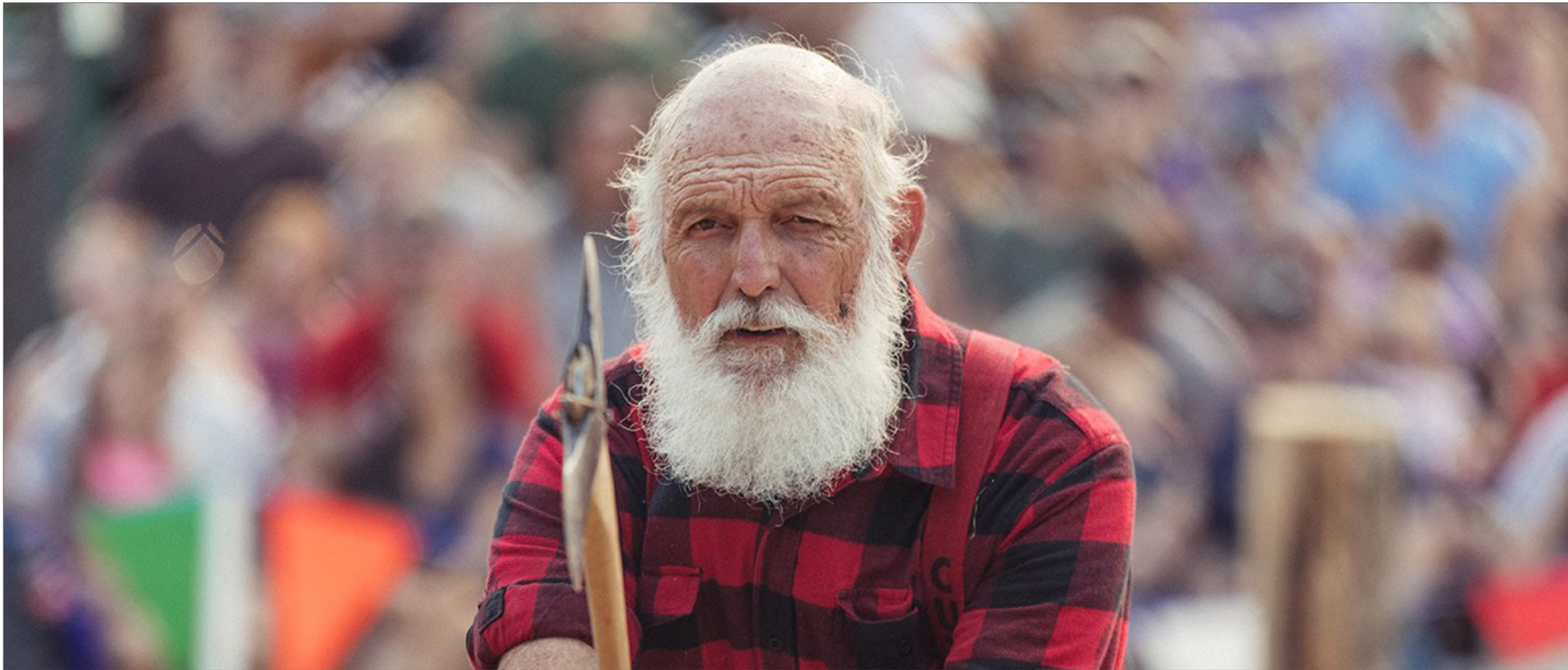
Type of Fair	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
WSF	\$30,614,000	160	\$6,987,000
County	\$18,105,000	140	\$4,716,000
Area	\$10,658,000	100	\$2,051,000
Youth	\$1,185,000	10	\$125,000
Community	\$1,210,000	1	\$34,000
Total	\$61,772,000	410	\$13,914,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.
Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

Exhibit 14. Washington Agricultural Fairs Revenue, Employment (FTEs), and Labor Income by Region, 2019

Region	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
Southwest	\$38,218,000	200	\$8,488,000
Southeast	\$10,308,000	90	\$2,082,000
Northwest	\$8,912,000	80	\$2,355,000
Northeast	\$4,335,000	40	\$989,000
Total	\$61,772,000	410	\$13,914,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.
Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.



Vendors and Concessions

Fair vendors earned \$82.8 million in net revenue (excluding the fairs' share of vendor revenue) from selling their goods and products at agricultural fairs throughout Washington in 2019. The total net revenue includes revenues generated by food and beverage, commercial, and carnival vendors. Vendor activities at Washington's fairs directly supported 930 jobs and more than \$44 million in wages and benefits across Washington state (**Exhibit 15**).

No vendor revenues, employment, or wages are reported for youth shows given the nature of the events. In many cases the events are held as part of a local fair, for which vendor impacts would have already been captured. In other cases, youth shows reported not having any vendors at their event and thus no revenues, employment, or labor income would be supported.

Exhibit 15. Washington Agricultural Fairs Net Vendor Revenues, Employment (FTEs), and Labor Income by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
County	\$35,850,000	430	\$22,425,000
WSF	\$30,616,000	310	\$12,018,000
Area	\$15,339,000	180	\$9,025,000
Community	\$1,038,000	20	\$691,000
Total	\$82,843,000	930	\$44,160,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: Business revenues are the sum of net food revenues (gross less share retained by fair), net carnival vendor revenues (gross less share retained by fair), and gross commercial vendor revenues. The share of gross food revenues and carnival vendors is captured in fair operations revenues and is therefore excluded to avoid double-counting. Fairs typically do not retain a share of commercial vendor revenue. Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

Exhibit 16 presents total supported vendor revenues, jobs, and wages by region. The 23 fairs located in the Southwest Region of Washington, again being driven by the Washington State Fair, accounted for the highest proportion of estimated vendor revenues (\$45.1 million), jobs (570), and labor income (\$30.6 million). The Southeast Region's fairs supported the next highest levels with \$17.2 million in revenues, an estimated 160 jobs and roughly \$6.1 million in labor income.

Visitor Spending

Fairs are a great tourism opportunity, attracting visitors to an area who will stay for a day or more while they attend the fair and add new money into the economy. When people go to fairs, they support local businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, and retail stores, and have a significant effect on the local economy.

Visitor impacts were computed by estimating the total number of non-local visitors that attended each fair in 2019. Local visitor spending is not included in the economic impact because it is assumed that the spending would have happened regardless of the fair. Non-local visitors are fair attendees whose place of residence is outside the county where the fair they are attending is located. Out-of-county attendance estimates were informed by data provided by individual fairs in addition to previous studies.

It was estimated that in 2019, more than 1.2 million non-local visitors attended Washington state's fairs. Based on research by Dean Runyan Associates on travel impacts by county and data provided by the fairs, the average day trip non-local visitor to the fair spent an estimated \$34 per day outside of the fair, while an overnight visitor spent approximately \$98 during their stay in 2019.

Exhibit 16. Washington Agricultural Fairs Net Vendor Revenues, Employment (FTEs), and Labor Income by Type of Region, 2019

Region	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
Southwest	\$45,111,000	570	\$30,638,000
Southeast	\$17,167,000	160	\$6,099,000
Northwest	\$15,080,000	150	\$5,471,000
Northeast	\$5,486,000	60	\$1,952,000
Total	\$82,843,000	930	\$44,160,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Note: Business revenues are the sum of net food revenues (gross less share retained by fair), net carnival vendor revenues (gross less share retained by fair), and gross commercial vendor revenues. The share of gross food revenues and carnival vendors is captured in fair operations revenues and is therefore excluded to avoid double-counting. Fairs typically do not retain a share of commercial vendor revenue. Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.



Exhibit 17 presents direct visitor spending impacts by type of fair. Nearly \$75 million in estimated business revenues were generated as a result of out-of-county visitors attending Washington's fairs. These revenues helped support an estimated 690 jobs and more than \$24 million in labor income in 2019. Visitors attending the Washington State Fair are estimated to have generated nearly \$44 million in business revenues (59% of total revenues) which supported about 400 jobs

(58%) and more than \$14 million in labor income (59%). Visitor impacts generated by Washington's county and area fairs represented about 38% of total business revenues, supported jobs, and supported labor income. Community fair and youth show visitors were responsible for generating the remaining 3% to 4% of business revenues (\$2.2 million), supported jobs (30), and supported wages (\$712,000).

Visitor impacts by region are presented in **Exhibit 18**. The 47 fairs located in the southern regions of Washington accounted for 87% of revenues, supported jobs, and supported labor income generated by visitor spending. The 21 fairs located in the northern regions accounted for the remaining 13% of revenues (\$10 million), jobs (90), and labor income (\$3.2 million).

Exhibit 17. Washington Agricultural Fairs Visitor Impacts by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
WSF	\$43,770,000	400	\$14,144,000
County	\$21,236,000	190	\$6,869,000
Area	\$7,421,000	70	\$2,406,000
Community	\$1,735,000	20	\$556,000
Youth	\$485,000	10	\$156,000
Total	\$74,647,000	690	\$24,132,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Dean Runyan Associates, 2017; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 18. Washington Agricultural Fairs Visitor Impacts by Region, 2019

Region	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
Southwest	\$52,766,000	500	\$17,052,000
Southeast	\$11,842,000	100	\$3,900,000
Northwest	\$6,982,000	60	\$2,197,000
Northeast	\$3,057,000	30	\$983,000
Total	\$74,647,000	690	\$24,132,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Dean Runyan Associates, 2017; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Total Direct Impacts

Exhibit 19 and **Exhibit 20** present total direct impacts for Washington's agricultural fairs in 2019. In 2019, an estimated \$219 million in business revenues were generated statewide as a result of Washington's fairs. With these revenues, it is estimated that about 2,000 jobs and more than \$82 million in labor income were supported by the fairs. County and area fairs contributed about 50% of supported revenues, 60% of supported jobs, and 58% of supported labor income. Community fairs and youth shows were responsible for about 2% to 3% of all supported revenues, jobs, and labor income in 2019 (Exhibit 19).

Exhibit 20 presents direct estimates by region. The 23 fairs located in the Southwest Region again led the way in revenues (\$136 million), jobs (1,300), and labor income (\$56 million) generated. The fairs held in the northern regions were responsible for supporting nearly \$44 million in business revenues, 300 jobs, and \$14 million in labor income.

Direct impacts by category are presented in **Exhibit 21**. Vendor operations at Washington state's fairs supported the most revenues, jobs, and labor income. In total, vendor operations supported nearly \$83 million (38%) in business revenues, approximately 900 jobs (45%), and more than \$44 million in labor income (54%). Visitor spending supported nearly \$75 million (34%) in business revenues, while fair operations supported about \$61 million (28%). Visitor spending also supported about 700 jobs across the state and \$24 million in labor income; and fair operations supported 400 jobs and nearly \$14 million in labor income.

Exhibit 19. Washington Agricultural Fairs Direct Impact by Type of Fair, 2019

Type of Fair	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
WSF	\$105,000,000	850	\$33,149,000
County	\$73,556,000	800	\$32,748,000
Area	\$35,044,000	400	\$14,745,000
Community	\$3,983,000	30	\$1,281,000
Youth	\$1,670,000	10	\$281,000
Total	\$219,263,000	2,000	\$82,204,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 20. Washington Agricultural Fairs Direct Impact by Region, 2019

Region	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
Southwest	\$136,095,000	1,300	\$56,178,000
Southeast	\$39,316,000	400	\$12,081,000
Northwest	\$30,974,000	200	\$10,023,000
Northeast	\$12,878,000	100	\$3,924,000
Total	\$219,263,000	2,000	\$82,204,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021.

Exhibit 21. Washington Agricultural Fairs Direct Impacts by Category, 2019

Source of Impact	Business Revenue	Jobs	Labor Income
Fair Operations	\$61,772,000	400	\$13,913,000
Vendor Operations	\$82,844,000	900	\$44,160,000
Visitor Spending	\$74,647,000	700	\$24,131,000
Total	\$219,263,000	2,000	\$82,204,000

Sources: Washington agricultural fairs, 2021; Washington State Department of Agriculture, 2021; Community Attributes Inc., 2021



ECONOMIC AND FISCAL IMPACTS OF WASHINGTON AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

The total economic impact of Washington agricultural fairs represents the sum of direct, indirect, and induced effects:

- **Direct Impacts** are the economic benefits resulting from spending and operations of Washington's fairs, vendor and exhibitor activity at the fairs, and the spending of visitors who attend the fairs.
- **Indirect Impacts** capture the economic benefits in each fair's supply chain as a

result of procurement of goods and services for organizing fairs and the supply chain benefits of vendors, visitors and 4-H exhibitors.

- **Induced Impacts** are generated by employees of the fairs, vendors and business activities supported by visitor spending as well as by businesses in the supply chain spending their earnings, for example, on household goods and services.

The tables below summarize the total economic impacts in terms of jobs, total compensation, and business revenues within Washington state. Aggregate economic impacts across the state totaled more than \$390 million in business revenues in 2019. Statewide, Washington's agricultural fairs supported 3,200 jobs and more than \$150 million in labor income (including benefits) in Washington state.

Exhibit 22 presents total economic impacts by type of fair. County and area fairs supported a total of \$206 million in business revenues, 1,800 jobs, and \$85 million in labor income statewide. This slightly outpaced the Washington State Fair which supported more than \$180 million in business revenues, 1,500 jobs, and nearly \$64 million in labor income. In total, the 30 community fairs and youth shows analyzed in this study supported nearly \$10 million in business revenues, 60 jobs, and more than \$3 million in labor income throughout the state.

The southern regions of Washington state accounted for about 80% of total business revenues, jobs, and labor income supported by fairs. This amounted to more than \$320 million in business revenues. Accompanying this were 2,600 supported jobs and more than \$125 million in supported labor income. The northern regions supported about \$76 million in business revenues, 500 jobs, and \$27 million in labor income (**Exhibit 23**).

Exhibit 22. Total Economic Impacts of Washington Agricultural Fairs by Type of Fair, Washington, 2019

Type of Fair	Business Revenues (millions 2019\$)	Jobs	Labor Income (millions 2019\$)
WSF	\$180.9	1,500	\$63.7
County	\$140.0	1,100	\$58.4
Area	\$66.3	700	\$26.6
Community	\$6.9	50	\$2.4
Youth	\$2.7	10	\$0.7
Total	\$396.8	3,200	\$151.8

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2018; Washington State Department of Revenue, 2018; Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018; Community Attributes Inc., 2018.

Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

Vendors and concessionaires supported the largest proportion of Washington agricultural fairs' total economic impacts. Vendors and concessionaires supported approximately 42% of total business revenues, 44% of supported jobs, and 50% of supported labor income. Visitor spending supported the next highest proportions, supporting between 31% to 34% of total economic impacts. Fair operations supported the remaining 28% (\$110 million) of business revenues, 22% (700) of jobs, and 20% (\$30 million) of labor income (**Exhibit 24**).

Exhibit 25 presents the statewide impacts broken out by direct, indirect, and induced effects. The indirect impacts of Washington's fairs, which are generated through supply chains and business-to-business interactions, supported nearly \$63 million in business revenues in 2019. Accompanying these business revenues were 300 supported jobs, and more than \$20 million in supported labor income.

The induced impacts, which are generated through consumer spending of wages earned as a result of Washington's fairs, supported nearly \$150 million in additional business revenues, about 900 jobs, and roughly \$49 million in labor income.

The economic impacts of Washington's agricultural fairs support the generation of state taxes. Fair and vendor operations and visitor activities all help generate tax revenues statewide. Tax impacts include business and occupation taxes, sales taxes, use taxes, and various other state taxes. The direct, indirect, and induced economic activities related to Washington's agricultural fairs generated an estimated \$10 million in taxes (**Exhibit 26**). About \$7.9 million, or 79%, is represented by sales and use taxes. Vendor and concessionaire activities at Washington's agricultural fairs generated the largest proportion of taxes, generating more than \$4 million in total taxes.

Exhibit 23. Total Economic Impacts of Washington Agricultural Fairs by Region, 2019

Region	Business Revenues (millions 2019\$)	Jobs	Labor Income (millions 2019\$)
Southwest	\$253.0	2,000	\$101.9
Southeast	\$67.7	600	\$23.3
Northwest	\$54.0	400	\$19.1
Northeast	\$22.1	100	\$7.6
Total	\$396.8	3,200	\$151.8

Sources: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2018; Washington State Department of Revenue, 2018; Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018; Community Attributes Inc., 2018.

Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

Exhibit 24. Total Economic Impacts of Washington Agricultural Fairs by Source, Washington, 2019

Source of Impact	Business Revenues (millions 2019\$)	Jobs	Labor Income (millions 2019\$)
Fair Operations	\$109.8	700	\$30.3
Vendors and Concessions	\$165.6	1,400	\$76.4
Visitor Spending	\$121.4	1,100	\$45.2
Total	\$396.8	3,200	\$151.8

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2018; Washington State Department of Revenue, 2018; Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018; Community Attributes Inc., 2018.

Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

Exhibit 25. Total Economic Impacts of Washington Agricultural Fairs, Washington, 2019

	Business Revenues (millions 2019\$)	Jobs	Labor Income (millions 2019\$)
Direct	\$185.3	2,000	\$82.2
Indirect	\$62.8	300	\$20.4
Induced	\$148.6	900	\$49.2
Total	\$396.8	3,200	\$151.8

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2018; Washington State Department of Revenue, 2018; Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018; Community Attributes Inc., 2018.

Note: The direct business revenues differ from those presented above in Exhibit 19 due to a gross margins adjustment made to retail sectors within the Input Output model.

Exhibit 26. Total Fiscal Impacts of Washington Agricultural Fairs, 2019 (millions 2019\$)

	Direct	Secondary	Total
B&O	\$0.8	\$0.8	\$1.6
Sales & Use Taxes	\$5.9	\$2.0	\$7.9
Other	\$0.1	\$0.3	\$0.4
Total	\$6.8	\$3.2	\$10.0

Source: Washington State Employment Security Department, 2018; Washington State Department of Revenue, 2018; Washington State Office of Financial Management, 2018; Community Attributes Inc., 2018.

Note: Totals in the table may not sum up due to rounding.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has multiple components: an overview of the network of fairs in Washington state, including a brief history, the different types, activities, and attendance; an analysis of direct impacts of fairs operations, vendors activity at the fair and visitor spending; an analysis of the total economic impact of the state's agricultural fairs on Washington's economy; and an assessment of the social, educational, and cultural reach of fairs in Washington state.

This report indicates that Washington's fairs are important contributors to Washington's economy. The combined activities at agricultural fairs in 2019 contributed an estimated \$397 million in business revenue to the state economy, supporting 3,200 jobs and roughly \$152 million in labor income statewide. Beyond their monetary economic impact, agricultural fairs make significant social, educational, and cultural contributions to the state. Fairs provide education in agriculture, horticulture, science, history, technology and more, foster community involvement and volunteerism, create connections to agriculture and local producers and have many other beneficial social impacts.

The economic impact assessment in this study provides important metrics that can be used to help local and statewide decision makers learn more about the effects fairs have on their local community, and the regional and statewide economy. This is increasingly important as community institutions like fairs have been facing challenges due to economic changes, including how agricultural goods are produced and how and where people spend their discretionary time and money, and demographic changes.

FOOTNOTES

1. This includes the Washington State Fair and the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show which do not receive funding from WSDA. However, based on Washington code classifications, the Washington State Fair would be categorized as an area fair and the Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show would be a community fair.
2. This study analyzed data collected from 68 of Washington's 69 fairs. The Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show was not included due to lack of available data.
3. The number of volunteers and volunteer hours is based on data received from 40 of the 68 fairs.
4. Value of volunteer time in Washington state is estimated at \$33.02 per hour by Independent Sector, in partnership with the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland. The value is measured based on hourly earnings released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
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15. "Fairgrounds, hotels a temporary home for those fleeing Evans Canyon Fire," Yakima Herald, September 2020.
16. "Evergreen State Fairgrounds offering shelter for large animals during flooding," Q13 Fox Seattle, February 2020.
17. The number of volunteers and volunteer hours is based on data received from 40 of the 69 fairs.
18. Value of volunteer time in Washington state is estimated at \$33.02 per hour by Independent Sector, in partnership with the Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland. The value is measured based on hourly earnings released by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).
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47. "2020 and 2021 Queen Lexy Hibbs," Benton Franklin Fair, n.d.
48. "Longtime fair volunteer, community member chosen as this year's grand marshal," South Whidbey Record, July 2021.
49. "Grand Marshal 1978-2021," Benton Franklin Fair, n.d.
50. The Columbia Basin Junior Livestock Show was not included due to lack of available data.
51. Data on revenues by source was not available for community fairs and youth shows.