



Michigan State Fair Celebrates 100 Years in Detroit

The Michigan State Fair celebrated its 100th year in Detroit this summer. Like most state fairs, having the fair in a large metropolitan area provides the opportunity to educate consumers about the importance of agriculture and its products.

On-site agriculture education takes place in many spots at the fair: in the animal barns, during shows, in casual conversations between farmers and spectators, and at the various commodity displays set up in the agriculture building.

One of the best agricultural educational experiences during the State Fair is the Miracle of Life exhibit. The exhibit's popularity attracts many people and has earned praise from Michigan's Governor.

During her remarks at the Governor's Luncheon on Wednesday, August 17, Governor Jennifer Granholm read excerpts from a letter sent to the State Fair by a woman that took her two sons to the fair. The woman noted the Miracle of Life exhibit was her favorite attraction because she enjoyed an informative chat with a Monroe County farmer about agriculture and witnessed a calf birth. She observed that the birth united everyone watching, regardless of where they came from. All in all, the writer and Governor Granholm agreed the

exhibit inspires a true sense of community.

"The Miracle of Life exhibit carries on the State Fair's rich agricultural history by capturing the nostalgia of visiting a farm and witnessing a farm animal being born, while still promoting and educating fairgoers about modern agriculture," says Deb Schmucker, Michigan Farm Bureau Promotion and Education manager and Miracle of Life co-coordinator. "Families can't seem to get enough of it, which is why the Miracle of Life exhibit has remained one of the most popular State Fair attractions year after year."

Since its introduction in 1992, the Miracle of Life exhibit has been home to nearly 4,000 animal births.

MMPA's "Daisy," the large fiberglass cow on a trailer, helped attract State Fair visitors to the exhibit by wearing a large Miracle of Life sign over her back.

Fairgoers also learned about agriculture as they toured the show animal barns and saw various commodity displays in the agriculture building. Dairy products are prominently highlighted during the State Fair through displays and giveaways sponsored by the United Dairy Industry of Michigan.



This year's butter cow and calf celebrated the 100th anniversary of the State Fair in Detroit. The pair were sculpted with butter from the MMPA Constantine plant.

The butter cow and calf, also sponsored by UDIM, was sculpted with over 400 lbs. of butter produced at MMPA's Constantine dairy plant. This year's sculpture captured the excitement of the State Fair's 100th anniversary in Detroit.

The MMPA Constantine plant took top honors with their butter entry, which was chosen as the 2005 Michigan State Fair Grand Champion Creamery Butter. The butter sold for \$1,300 to GreenStone Farm Credit Services during the Youth Livestock Auction. Proceeds from the butter sale go to the Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund.

This year's auction generated sales totaling about \$130,000, and raised about \$20,000 for the Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships and educational awards for a large number of the youth who exhibit livestock at the Michigan State Fair.

Held annually, the auction features prize steers, hogs and

lambs raised and exhibited by 4-H and FFA members across the state. The revenue generated helps the youngsters raise money for college and other needs. Proceeds above a sales cap support the Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund.

MFB Livestock and Dairy Specialist Ernie Birchmeier said the Youth Livestock Auction is an exceptional way for business and industry in Michigan to support some of the state's finest youth and make an investment in the future of Michigan's agriculture industry.

"The dollars that are invested go a long way in rewarding these young people and investing in their future education and careers," says Birchmeier, who also chairs the Michigan Youth Livestock Scholar-

ship Fund Board. "On behalf of the Michigan Youth Livestock Scholarship Fund Board, I'd like to thank all the 2005 buyers for their generosity, and I look forward to working with them again in the future."

MMPA is traditionally a buyer at the auction.



UDIM volunteers handed out thousands of samples of drinkable yogurt in the Agriculture building.



MMPA Constantine took top butter honors. New Michigan Department of Agriculture Director Mitch Irwin, left, helped with the sale. A representative from GreenStone Farm Credit Services purchased the butter. Sally Stephenson and Fred Shoup, right, represented the Constantine plant at the sale.



New to the Miracle of Life exhibit were goats and their kids. Visitors got to view "kidding," the term for birthing in goats.