

THE FARM NEWS

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Farm Day draws thousands of Kern County students

By Michelle Gamblin

Freezing winds and cloudy skies didn't keep nearly 3,100 second, third and fourth graders from Farm Day in the City, held at the Kern County Fairgrounds on March 27 and March 28. Now in its 22nd year, the event continues to bring out Kern's students to learn about the importance of agriculture.

Every public and private school in the county is notified in late September to help teachers plan ahead for the springtime event. Reservations for either of the two days are taken throughout the school year, sometimes right up to Farm Day.

Once the schools have made their reservations, each teacher is sent a letter of what to expect when their classes arrive at the fairgrounds along with a map and other helpful information. "It's sort of an on-going process once we send out the fliers to the schools, said event co-chair and Farm Bureau director, Betsy Hunter. There are many teachers who look forward to bringing their classes on this field trip year after year."

When the students, teachers and chaperones arrive at the fairgrounds, they are welcome to guide themselves to all areas the exhibits are being held such as the sales pavilion, sheep show ring, barn areas and one of the large indoor exhibit buildings. Classes typically stay anywhere from two to three hours, exploring everything and taking a break to eat their lunches at the fairgrounds.

One teacher from Norris Elementary school said, "The children love hands-on learning experiences. Touching the animals is always a big hit."

"The Farm Day in the City program



Farm Bureau director, Jay Kroeker, explains how cotton grows and is harvested to students. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



They might not get off the ground, but students get to sit in a helicopter as John Slykerman explains ag spraying. (Photo by Betsy Hunter)



Students don't mind get really close to bugs, mounted under glass, which were part of the entomology exhibit by the University Cooperative Extension. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



One "kid" waits to be joined by the kids in the background. (Photo by Betsy Hunter)



provides an excellent opportunity to interact with thousands of school children to educate them about the importance of agriculture and our water supply," said Jeanne Varga, Kern County Water Agency Public Information Consultant. "Each year the Agency teams up with the Water Association of Kern County to talk with the students and teachers about the role water plays in our lives and the importance of water conservation."

The 15th Agricultural Association donates use of the fairgrounds and the Farm Bureau relies on volunteers from ag organizations, including: California Foundation for Ag in the Classroom, Slykerman Ag Aviation, California Safety Training Corporation, Kern County Department of Agriculture, Kern County Cattle Women, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farmer John Eggs, the University of California Cooperative Extension, Kern County Water Agency, the Kern County Sheriff's Rural Crime Unit and Air Support Unit, the Twisselman family, the Dairy Council of California,

Kern County Dairymaids, Greeley 4-H, Calloway 4-H, Big Valley 4-H, Greenacres 4-H, East Valley 4-H, California Beet Growers Association, American Cancer Society, Bakersfield College Ag Department and Ag Ambassadors, Paramount Farming, Berchtold Equipment, South Kern Machinery, San Joaquin Tractor, Pioneer Equipment, Highland High School FFA and the Kern County Junior Fair Board.

Farm Day in the City is free to attend. If you would like to be involved as an exhibitor, volunteer or sponsor for next year, contact the Farm Bureau office at (661) 397-9635.

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Rebecca Been (right) holds up an apple to students to symbolize the world during her exhibit at Farm Day. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Three pink piglets warm themselves in the sunshine at the fairgrounds. (Photo by Betsy Hunter)



Tom Twisselman (left) unhooks a practice steer as a happy student finishes her turn. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Students watch a sheep sheering demonstration during Farm Day. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Sally Sterns (left) and Lindsey Ono from Bakersfield College, have fun with students. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Swashbuckling pirates provide a fun background for baby chicks from Farmer John Eggs. (Photo by Betsy Hunter)



John Jelmini, Farm Bureau director, finishes his talk on farm equipment and asks students to smile for the camera. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Chisholm Twisselman prepares students for roping practice at Farm Day in the City. (Photo by Michelle Gamblin)



Jeff Byers (far right), from the Dairy Council of California, stands in front of a packed house during his exhibit of the Mobile Dairy Classroom, which shows students how cows are milked. (Photo by Betsy Hunter)

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Schools flood fairgrounds during Farm Day

By Michelle Gamblin

Nearly 2,600 second, third and fourth graders from all over Kern, traversed rainy weather and long lines at Farm Day in the City, March 28 and March 29 at the Kern County Fairgrounds. For over 20 years the event has been one of the Farm Bureau's outreach programs to educate children about the importance of ag.

According to Executive Director, Matthew Park, the Farm Day committee had to come up with a few last minute changes because of the rain. "A few of our outdoor exhibits had to be moved inside or under covering, but everyone was very understanding and cooperative," he said.

"This is the first time I can ever remember it raining," said Ruben Bartell, a cotton grower in the Rosedale area and Farm Bureau director. Bartell, along with other volunteers are asked to give short presentations to class groups on a variety of topics. This year, his duties included telling students how farmers use a cot-



Children walk their way through a maze of pigs, sheep and chickens at Farm Day.



Ben Laverty, IV of California Safety Training Corporation gives students a lesson about basic safety during Farm Day.



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ton picker, spray rig and tractor. Local dealerships loan the equipment for this agricultural show and tell.

"They always want to know how fast it can go and how much it costs," he chuckled.

While teachers and parents attempted to avoid contact with the intermittent showers, children purposefully slogged through puddles on their way from one exhibit to another. Ms. Halbrook from Blake Elementary in Woody said, "I asked the kids, 'Do you still want to go even though it's raining?' and they all looked at me as though I had asked them the silliest question."

The 15th Agricultural Association donates use of the fairgrounds and

the Farm Bureau relies on ag organizations to volunteer their members, time and resources for the event. These groups include: Kern County Cattle Women, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farmer John Eggs, the UCCE, Kern County Water Agency, the Kern County Sheriff's Rural Crime Unit and Air Support Unit, the Twisselman family, Murray Family Farms, Kern County Woolgrower's Association, the Dairy Council of California, Kern County Dairymaids, Greeley 4H, Calloway 4H, Big Valley 4H, Kern County 4H Horse Project, California Beet Growers Association, American Cancer Society, Bakersfield College Ag Ambassadors, Paramount Farm-

ing, Berchtold Equipment, South Kern Machinery, San Joaquin Tractor, CPCSD, Pioneer Equipment, Kern Valley Feed, California Safety Training Corporation, and the Kern County Junior Fair Board.

"It's important to give school kids an opportunity to learn about ag in a memorable way, said Farm Bureau director Betsy Hunter. Even though many of the volunteers live farming and ranching day in and day out, it's the kids' first real look at how food and fiber are grown."

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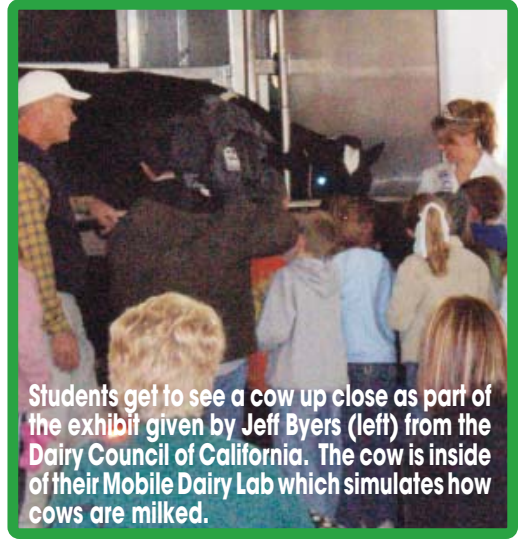
MORE
FARM DAY
 in the city **FUN**



Long lines formed during Farm Day, as everyone took the opportunity to see equipment in the sunshine.



Farm Bureau director, Jay Kroeker, is swarmed by kids under umbrellas as he explains how farm equipment works.



Students get to see a cow up close as part of the exhibit given by Jeff Byers (left) from the Dairy Council of California. The cow is inside of their Mobile Dairy Lab which simulates how cows are milked.



Farm Bureau director, Ruben Bartell in front of the spray rig he showed to kids.



Students climb aboard the Kern County Sheriff Air Support Unit's helicopter for a better view.



Brightly colored plumage catches the attention of a student.



Sheila Bowen from the Kern County CattleWomen shows off items that come from cattle.



Everyone waited patiently to see the 4H animals, in spite of the puddles.