

Press Release

Fall is approaching and that means the Greater Hillsborough County Fair is just around the corner. This year's event will be held October 12 through 16 at the County Fairgrounds on Highway 60, just east of Brandon.

The Fair boasts some of the nicest Youth Livestock Shows held anywhere. Animals, large and small, can be entered. Dairy and Beef animals are housed in one tent and adjoining tents house Sheep, Goats, Swine and a large Rabbit and Poultry Show.

Youth participants vie for the best of the best with their animals. But as longtime volunteer Fair Manager Tom Umiker likes to put it, "we're in the business of raising Grand Champion Youth, not just "champion animals". Fairgoers are encouraged to walk through the tents and visit with exhibitors and learn first hand, the skills of animal husbandry. The Fair also hosts a Youth Horse Show on Sunday, October 16 in the outdoor arena. Fairgoers can watch the riding and horsemanship skills demonstrated by our County's young equestrian enthusiasts.

Many fair competitions are open to residents of all ages. Students may enter in the "Just For Kids" areas and adults entries will be on display in Photography, Craft Works, Quilting, Needlework, Sewing, Handicraft and other areas of competition offered under Family Living Artistry. Those with an artistic talent can enter their work in the Visual or Decorative Arts area and those with a green thumb may find their plant wins the Best of Show in the Horticulture Show. Canning, cooking and baking are making a come back during our current tough economic times and the Fair has expanded those competitive categories this year.

Compete or just eat at the Annual Rotary Chili Cook-off held on Sunday, October 16. Fairgoers are also encouraged to EAT! The cuisine ranges from Bar-B-Que, sausage sandwiches, hamburgers, corn dogs and fresh deep fried vegetables for the main course. Save room for ice cream and an elephant ear. New this year will be deep fried Oreo cookies and deep fried Snicker bars.

Speaking of Oreo cookies, Robinson's Racing Pigs are back this year to race the porcine oval for first place and an Oreo cookie. Just like life, the winner gets the cookie, the losers get the crumbs! The Entertainment doesn't stop there. A fantastic show of equestrian agility and knowledge is on display with this year's show "Horses Got Talent Too!" Produced by third generation circus animal trainer and entertainer, Heidi Herriot, the show brings new light to the talents of our equestrian friends.

Local television personality Ken Suarez will be on hand again this year with his array of interesting animals. A variety of animals on display, performing and demonstrating abilities designed to educate and give Fairgoers a "WILD, WACKY and WONDERFUL" experience, and an added appreciation for the animal kingdom.

The Ranch Rodeo returns on Friday and Saturday nights at 7 pm. Watch real ranch hands from across Florida, ride, brand and milk the wild cow they rope.

Bronc riding, trailer loading and youth mutton busting are on tap as well. Real ranches enter a team of real ranch hands who compete in everyday ranching tasks for the prize money. Purchasing a rodeo ticket in advance from one of many area merchants provides free admission to the Fair. Also in the arena on Saturday will be the Bay area Bandits Mounted Shooting Club with an exciting show of skill and marksmanship.

For those with talent the Fair offers a Talent Showcase all week long to show off their abilities. Individuals and groups singing, instrumentals, baton twirling just to name a few. For those who want to compete with their talent, there's the Hillsborough County Fair Spotlight Talent Competition for all

ages. Competitor's will be judged and prizes awarded.

This year marks the 14th annual County Fair Teenage Battle of the Bands sponsored by the Hillsborough County Parks and Recreation Department
Rock,Gospel, Country and Crossover bands all compete on the outdoor community stage.

The antique tractor, engine and equipment area has been added this year. Yesteryears machinery brings new appreciation to the advancements that have been made in farming and industry. Also new and featured in the arena on Weds. evening, October 12 is the Youth Cow Whip Cracking Contest.

The Hillsborough County Fair hosts many events designed to raise funds for scholarships. Among those are the FNGLA Plant Auction held on Saturday October 15. Purchase top quality plants donated by area growers. All proceeds go to the Youth Scholarship Fund. The Hillsborough County 4-H Foundation hosts it's annual BBQ on Saturday during the Fair. Proceeds go to support and help fund 4-H youth activities in the county.

If you enjoy rides and midway games don't miss the Midway. Wristbands and single tickets are offered each day. Thursday's wristband special is \$15 to ride all the rides. On Opening Day,Wednesday, October 12, Arnold Amusements has agreed to offered any ride for \$1!

The Harvest Awards Banquet will be held Tuesday evening ,October 11 on the Fairgrounds. Five awards will be presented - Hillsborough County Farmer of the Year, Agribusiness of the Year, Urban Agriculturalist of the Year, Outstanding Public and Community Service and the Lifetime Achievement Award .

Nominations are accepted through September 19.

The Fair is produced by hundreds of volunteers serving on dozens of committees and governed by a diverse, all volunteer Board serving the residents of Hillsborough County. General adult admission is \$7, Students K-12 is \$5, Senior 65 and over \$4, and children 5 and under are free. Parking is free. Fair gates open at 5 pm on weekdays,10 am on Saturday and noon on Sunday.

For more information about the Fair visit www.hillsboroughcountyfair.com
<<http://www.hillsboroughcountyfair.com/>> . All competition rules,deadlines and entry forms are available online.

The fair office phone number is (813) 737-FAIR.