

Rain can't wash out 4-H on Parade

Calgary - Parades are usually events where you see huge floats, bright balloons and goofy clowns on bright sunny days. However, 4-H on Parade is not your typical type of procession.

Calgary Region's 4-H on Parade is in a category unto its own. Being the largest 4-H gathering in Canada, it shows many different aspects of 4-H. From livestock to life skills, there is something for everyone to learn and partake in.

"When I explain 4-H on Parade to people I tell them it is youth in agriculture in action," says Rob Smith, Calgary 4-H Regional Specialist. "It is the single greatest showcase, in my opinion of youth in action with their 4-H projects."



4-H on Parade 2010 kicked off on May 28 on a cold and rainy morning at the Calgary Stampede grounds. The temperature was down to zero, it was snowing, then raining, then snowing again for the entire weekend. Hot chocolate couldn't even warm you up! But the cold didn't make one bit of difference to the 4-Hers' attitudes.

From early Friday morning to late Sunday afternoon every 4-H member, leader and parent alike were busy as ever with their clubs. The Main Barn and Producer Tent were abuzz with activity. The sounds of stalls shutting could be heard throughout the barn, the scent of horses and cattle were in the air and you could see that members and leaders were busy getting ready for the days ahead.

The first event that went down was the Beef Female show in the Big Top. This was the largest group of livestock with over 200 heifers and calves walking through the ring. Throughout the day, the Sheep and Dairy Trimming Competitions were also happening. You could tell the members were focused on their clipping because of their tense concentration in the ring.



In the evening, the Multi Species Judging Competition was held. Almost 250 members gave reasons on sheep, beef steers and heifers, dairy, and horses. Members were also given a Consumer Decision Making class. 4-Hers were assigned the task of deciding which of four lawnmowers, each with their own pros and cons, was the best fit for a grass cutting company. Members certainly took their time and thoroughly analyzed each machine for this competition. At this time an announcement was made: the Calgary Stampede Board made a donation for each 4-H member to attend this year's Calgary Stampede rodeo. The Board felt that along with providing the grounds for the weekend, this was a great way for them to give back to 4-H.

Saturday kicked off with a free pancake breakfast sponsored by Encana, and the Calgary Stampede Caravan was on-hand to flip pancakes and sausages in the early morning rain. Country superstar Gord Bamford was also on-hand to sign autographs and copies of his new CD "Day Job." Encana also made it

possible for every 4-H member present to get a free signed copy of Bamford's album. This meet and greet with Bamford was also in conjunction with his "Rural Roots Run Deep" fundraiser with 4-H. Devon Parkinson, a member of the Golden Rod 4-H Club Multi Club, who helped Bamford at the breakfast said, "It was a lot of fun (helping Bamford). He was such a down to earth guy. He would talk to you about anything and he was able to connect with a lot of the kids since he had been to 4-H on Parade when he was a member. There was one



little boy that was there for probably an hour asking Gord Bamford a bunch of questions, and Gord would just answer each of them. It was such a great experience meeting him, and to see how much 4-H has helped him and how involved in 4-H he still is."

As the day progressed there was always something to check out. In the Main Barn the Life Skills alley was full of 4-H projects. Over 50 projects, ranging from photography, cake decorating to crafts, were there for people to ogle. There were also 33 silent auctions items that Parade-goers could bid on. The highest selling piece went to Cam McPeak, who sold his welded sign at \$270. The highest selling photography project was Darci MacDonald's "Flowers of Paradise," which went for \$125. Meanwhile at the Corral, the Horse show was in progress. Sixteen horse clubs were represented, with 125 horses going through the ring. They all competed in various English and Western and Heavy horse events.

When Sunday rolled around it was time for the Sport Dog events. Members of all ages and dogs of all different breeds were competing in showmanship, obedience and agility. The final order of business for 4-H on Parade was the steer and sheep sales. The highlight of the auction was the sale of the charity animals. Every year, a steer and a lamb are raised by Calgary Region clubs. This year, the charity steer Jagger was raised by the Jumping Pound 4-H beef club. Jagger was auctioned off for \$10/lb and bought by Encana. The money raised by Jagger went to the Alberta Children's Hospital. The Jumping Pound club decided to donate proceeds from Jagger because they felt that everyone could relate to the Hospital. One of their own members, Kelsey Cartwright, had brain surgery done at the Alberta Children's Hospital so they all felt that it was an excellent opportunity to give back. The charity lamb, which was raised by the Foothills 4-H Club and sold for \$30/lb, was bought by Balzac Meats. Profits from this year's charity lamb went to STARS Air Ambulance. The reason for supporting STARS was because members have a strong connection to the ambulance service. After the selling of all the animals and takedown of stalls, the curtain fell on 4-H on Parade 2010.

"I would have to say that by all accounts, this year's 4-H on Parade was a success," says Smith. "There were times this weekend where it was cold and miserable weather and we could have found fault in what are we doing here. But seeing members in the ring smiling, or talking to people about their project or just hanging out with other 4-Hers, smiling and laughing, can make me put down a checkmark to say that this weekend was a success."

4-H on Parade is sponsored by Encana, the Calgary 4-H Region and Agro and hosted by the Calgary Stampede.