

HOUSTON LIVESTOCK SHOW AND RODEO™

HLM MAGAZINE

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Winter 2010

Volume XVIII, No. 4

**MINIATURE
CATTLE —**
*Bigger Isn't
Always Better*

**ENTERTAINER
SNEAK PEEK
BEHIND THE
BIRTHING CENTER**



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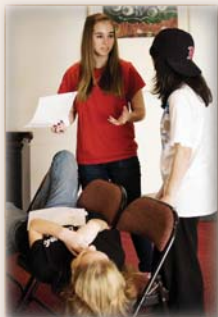
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EDUCATION



ENTERTAINMENT



WESTERN HERITAGE

A Message From the Chairman

While the outside temperature may be cooling down, things are heating up in Reliant Center with committee meetings in full swing as our staff and volunteers get ready for the 2011 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™! And what a great Show it promises to be.

Inside this issue you will find a preview of the 2011 RODEOHOUSTON™ entertainer lineup and our Season and Mini-Season Ticket information. We are off to a great start with these entertainers, so watch for more entertainer and Show information as it becomes available.

The Show recently received the results of an economic impact study conducted by Barton A. Smith, Ph.D., a University of Houston economics professor, and I am eager to share some exciting findings with you. This study indicates how strongly the Show impacts not only our local economy, but also that of the state and the nation.

The study found that, because of the Show, gross sales in the region increase by nearly half a billion dollars! In addition, regional incomes are raised by more than \$290 million, and more than 7,200 full-time equivalent jobs are generated. We also are pleased to report that a fiscal dividend of more than \$27 million goes to local governments.

These numbers are significant because our Show brings outside dollars into the region that are spent locally throughout various sectors of the economy, including hotel accommodations and other off-grounds expenditures. This represents a major annual boost to the economy in which each of you, as a volunteer, plays a major role. It is indeed something to be proud of.

With the holiday season upon us, I would like to wish you and your family the very best. The new year will be here soon with the 2011 Show right around the corner. Let's make it a good one!

Happy Holidays!

Butch Robinson

SILLY BOYS – AG MECHANICS IS FOR GIRLS

By Sonya Aston



Watch out, boys! The girls have discovered the secret that agricultural mechanics is a lot of fun, builds character and could use a woman's touch.

Up and down the aisles of the Agricultural Mechanics Project Show, the color pink slyly embellishes macho projects, and every once in a while, pink hits you right between the eyes. Girls have joined agricultural mechanics classes for a variety of reasons: creating female-friendly equipment, producing something useful and important, or just for the satisfaction of completing a big project.

Savannah Williams had experience in leather projects and decided to take on the ultimate leather project — a saddle. The ornate tooling is a Texas basket-weave stamp with a half flower as a border. "This saddle is not as heavy and, therefore, easier to carry for a woman," Savannah said.

Brittini Bailey and Allie Vasquez, who have been in agricultural mechanics classes for three years, worked well together and decided to do a project as a team. They designed a black gate showing thundering horses with

flying manes. Brittini said, "This gate is special because the metal is a flat bar and each piece is bent by hand." Proudly demonstrating the technique of bending the flat bar to form their beautiful creation, Brittini said, "We have already been offered \$2,500 for the gate."

Taylor Mitchell's father is an agricultural mechanics teacher and encouraged his daughter and her friends to have an all-girl team. Four girls from Kerens, Texas, wanted to build something that benefited their school, so the team built a black shop table accented by bright pink flecks. The table is 5 feet by 10 feet and is outfitted with a crane and three vises, one being a pipe vise.

While Courtney Wilcox demonstrated the importance of the placement of the support beams underneath the table, Taylor walked every passerby through the photo album documenting the history of their creation. It was intimidating





to compete because usually you don't see an all-girl team," Courtney said. "It was an honor to do it. It improved our character, and we learned that we can do it just as good as the guys."

Chelsea Low and Krystal Yager get spectators to investigate the light bar attachment they created for a pickup truck. "This bar is useful for feeding cattle or doing anything that you need to do at nighttime," Chelsea said. "Our ag teacher decided that it should be an all-girl team."

"We work well together, and we did our own wiring. My dad is a welder; he gave us some good advice," Krystal said. Excited that the light bar will be used by the agricultural department of their school, both girls are proud of their invention.

Thrilled about their all-girl team, Courtney Cole and Amber Rushing show off their photo album emblazoned with the words, "Silly Boys — Ag Mechanics Is for Girls." This is their first Agricultural Mechanics Project Show. Describing the real motivation behind their project, Courtney said, "We really want to kick the boys' butts." The girls built a trailer that was painted with huge pink accents. "Our lights worked the first time, and we started after the boys and finished before them," Amber said.

Amanda Weaver and Ashley Waters have been garnering attention across the state with their pink wildlife observation booth/deer blind. The booth is flashy to the human eye with its pink and green camouflage design. "The animals will only see straight lines, so we made them crooked and they do not see the colors, so the pink is perfect," Amanda said. This booth is decked out with carpet, lights and a magazine rack. The inspiration for this project came from their teacher, who is a breast cancer survivor. "We are going to sell the booth and donate the proceeds to fund research to help fight breast cancer," Amanda said. When asked why they chose an all-girl group, Ashley said, "We wanted to learn to build it by ourselves, because boys always take over the project."

Whatever the motivation — charitable causes, experience or sheer competition — it is clear that girls are not only doing a great job in agricultural mechanics, but they are doing it with flair. 🐾

Banding, Not Branding

By Lawrence S Levy

What do you get when you combine thousands of day-old chicks, Breeders Greeters Committee volunteers, and a couple of dozen Texas A&M Aggies, all gathered on the campus of Texas A&M University? It is the beginnings of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ Junior Market Broiler competition.

To secure a single source of broiler chicks for all participating Texas FFA and 4-H youth programs, a few logistical questions had to be answered, including how project chicks would be distributed efficiently and in a timely manner to the youth exhibitors.

The Show orders 30,000 to 50,000 day-old chicks from a single breeder of broiler chicks based upon pre-orders received in January from FFA and 4-H advisers. Set for delivery to Texas A&M's Pearce Animal Pavilion the first week of February, containers full of chicks are stacked around the arena and sounds of little chirps echo off the pavilion walls.

With birds in hand, a process was needed to verify that a broiler entered in the Show's Junior Market Broiler competition was from those hatched in February. A simple yet elegant process was devised. Each day-old chick would be identified with a small band of metal embossed with a unique number.

At 7:30 a.m. the day the chicks are delivered, more than 100 Breeders Greeters Committee volunteers gear up with gloves, crimping tools and enthusiastic smiles. Gathering around a dozen tables, volunteers separate into groups of eight to 10. Experienced volunteers guide first-timers, as each chick is banded, counted and readied for distribution by 2 p.m.

Every chick must be banded humanely, and the technique requires a delicate touch.

Once the band is in place, its number is recorded and the chick is passed to a crimper, who specializes in using a





crimping tool to make the band into a figure-eight. Fastened tightly onto itself, the band will remain secure in the wing, yet able to rotate freely, with no harm to the chick as it grows.

The tag number is verified, and the chick is put back into a container. As each container is filled with chicks, and the band numbers have been recorded to that container, it is moved across the arena to the distribution point.

Beginning as early as noon, FFA and 4-H advisers arrive to pick up the birds they ordered to take back to their students.

After taking possession of a complete order, each adviser takes the time to inspect every container and every chick. The objective is to produce a winning pen of broilers in a month's time.



Angelina County adviser Steve Gardner arrived early to pick up seven boxes of chicks to take back to his county's hopeful exhibitors.

"I look to see that every bird has a band. A kid can't show a bandless chick. Coloration has to be consistent. And, I'll cull on size. I pick up every bird in my hand. That way, I can see how active and strong it is," he said.

On this one day for advisers, all roads lead to College Station, Texas, but the stay is short. As soon as boxes of birds are received, inspected and signed off, all roads lead back home, where empty roosts wait to be filled and hopeful exhibitors dream of raising the Grand Champion Pen of Broilers. 🐔



DEEP FRIED DREAMS

By Brad Levy

As any yearly attendee of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ will attest, one of the best parts of the Show experience is the opportunity to partake in the plethora of tasty foods that are available. Personally, I have spent the last 20 years indulging in the best barbecue, smoked turkey legs and decadent sweets in Texas, but I had always overlooked the food booths that advertised the dreaded “F” word — “fried.” In 2010, I expanded my horizons!

With more than 30 deep-fried foods available, I was poised to spend my time sampling different items each day. Who can resist deep-fried Twinkies®, cupcakes, cheesecakes, beignets and funnel cakes? One vendor offered a good selection with its fun and refreshing approach to fried foods with the help of two large deep-fry pressure cookers. The vendor is part of a brother team who takes pride in its distinctive array of fried foods. Weeks before the start of the Show, the brothers traveled to Houston to find local vendors to build their entire menu and were excited to share their food with the public.

However, since this was my first year eating fried items, I narrowed it down to an old favorite and a couple of spins on some healthy treats.

My first bite into the deep-fried s’mores brought back memories of camping out and building s’mores by the campfire. The sweet flavor of the marshmallow, chocolate

and graham crackers — all deep-fried — was incredible! I must warn you, though, that this item may require a little cleanup; the chocolaty goodness can get a bit messy.

As for the old-time hot dog, it has been given a new, healthy twist. The “zucchini weenie” is a beef hot dog stuffed into a shell of zucchini, coated with a sweet corn batter and deep fried. The end result is aesthetically pleasing and flavorful.

Last, but not least, a favorite of Californians, and now a favorite of Texans, is the deep-fried avocado. I was skeptical that it would hold up during the frying process, but indeed it did. The fried portion accents the flavor and creamy avocado texture, while the dipping sauce complements it nicely.

After all the dust settled at the 2010 Show, visitors had ordered more than 3,000 fried avocados and s’mores, making two of my favorite picks top sellers.

These deep fried delicacies are just a few of the foods I will be dreaming about for the 2011 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. I cannot wait to see what new concoctions will be offered. I cannot wait to eat these favorites and try some new tasty treats from from the winning food vendors of the 2011 Gold Buckle Foodie Awards. My stomach is already making room. 🍷



RODEO HOUSTON

Season and Mini-Season Tickets on Sale Now

Season and Mini-Season tickets are now on sale with four exciting superstars as part of the lineup for 2011 RODEOHOUSTON™. The first four entertainers announced to perform on the 2011 RODEOHOUSTON stage are Sugarland, Selena Gomez, Zac Brown Band and Brad Paisley.

"All I can say is, buy your tickets now! This is just the beginning of an incredible 2011 Rodeo season," said Skip Wagner, president of the Show. "With these stars, action-packed rodeo events, and more stars on the way, everyone in the family is going to have a great time."

SEASON TICKETS

The only sure way to see these four performances, plus 16 more, is with Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo Season Tickets, which are on sale now. Season Tickets start as low as \$336 a seat and there is currently a good supply.

MINI-SEASON TICKETS

Mini-Season Tickets, with nine great performances in each option, are available to purchase now. Mini-Season Ticket seating is located in the loge and upper levels of Reliant Stadium. Option A can be purchased for \$154 in the Upper Level and \$189 in the Loge Level, and Option B can be purchased for \$146 in the Upper Level and \$189 in the Loge Level.

Option A Dates

Tuesday, March 1
Thursday, March 3 – Sugarland
Monday, March 7
Tuesday, March 8
Thursday, March 10
Monday, March 14
Wednesday, March 16 *Value Day
Friday, March 18
Saturday, March 19 – Brad Paisley

Option B Dates

Wednesday, March 2 *Value Day
Saturday, March 5
Sunday, March 6 – Selena Gomez
Wednesday, March 9 *Value Day
Friday, March 11
Saturday, March 12
Tuesday, March 15
Thursday, March 17 – Zac Brown Band
Sunday, March 20

*Upper level tickets on Value Day Wednesdays are only \$10.

Black Heritage Day, Friday, March 4, and Go Tejano Day, Sunday, March 13, are available as part of the Season Ticket line-up, but are not included in the Mini-Season Ticket options.

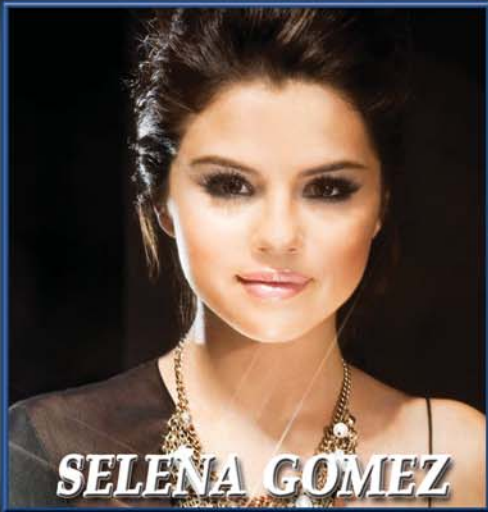
HOW TO PURCHASE SEASON TICKETS AND MINI-SEASON TICKETS

Season and Mini-Season tickets are on sale now and can be purchased by:

- visiting www.rodeohouston.com
- calling the Show's Ticket Office at 832.667.1080
- visiting the Show's Ticket Windows on the second floor of Reliant Center, Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The full 2011 RODEOHOUSTON
line-up will be announced
Jan. 10, 2011!

Individual tickets will
go on sale Jan. 15.



SELENA GÓMEZ



SUGARLAND



BRAD PAISLEY



ZAC BROWN BAND





HOUSTON[®] Livestock Show and Rodeo

Economic Impact

From data collected from the 2010 Show, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ is excited to release results of its economic impact study prepared by Barton Smith, Ph.D., Professor of Economics, Emeritus, University of Houston.

“While the primary benefit of the Rodeo is the unparalleled entertainment opportunities it provides the region and the large distribution of charitable giving, the Rodeo also provides a bonus economic stimulus to the overall economy that is significant,” Smith said. “This stimulus is almost certainly greater than any other sports or arts production in Houston and is comparable to the presence of a major economic base corporation with local employment in excess of 3,000 employees.”

Because the Show exists:


- Annual aggregate gross sales in the region are increased by \$475 million
- Annual regional product is increased by \$320 million
- Annual personal incomes are raised by \$290 million
- 7,265 full-time equivalent jobs are created
- The local population is increased by 16,316 people
- Residential capital is changed by \$361 million
- Non-residential capital is changed by \$420 million
- The annual fiscal dividend (tax revenues) to local government is increased by \$27 million

Expanded over the life of the Show’s current 30-year lease at Reliant Park, the increase in government revenue is estimated by the Show staff to exceed \$820,000,000.

The above results were obtained by utilizing the Regional Economics Modeling Incorporated research model. The REMI model analyzed \$143,760,712 in exogenous spending (from money external to the area) by spectators, contestants, exhibitors, contractors and sponsors at the 2010 Show.

“Oftentimes, promotional efforts to bring growth to Houston are to help beef up the fiscal health of the community. Once again, the Rodeo comes to the plate swinging grand slams. It is doubtful that there has been any relocation to Houston in recent times that has netted local governments in the region over \$27 million annually.

“Finally, add to all of these impacts the sheer enjoyment most of us Houstonians get from attending and participating in the Rodeo each year, and even with the explicit numbers aside, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo comes out a major winner for Houston year after year,” Smith said.

The Show would not be the well-run success that it is today without the vision, dedication and hard work of its volunteers, staff, supporters and more. With the help of these individuals, the Show is able to continue to provide scholarships to well-deserving youth of Texas. 



RODEO HOUSTON

Super Shootout: North America's Champions

The RODEOHOUSTON™ Super Shootout: North America's Champions, is a ground-breaking new event for 2011.

"This is the biggest change in the sport of rodeo in recent history," said Skip Wagner, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ president. "This will be the first time that a rodeo championship has featured all of the champions from the top 10 rodeos in North America. This change benefits the rodeo athletes as well as the rodeo spectators."

Scheduled for Sunday, March 20, this televised, invitation-only, one-night rodeo will feature champion athletes from the top 10 U.S. and Canadian rodeos competing in RODEOHOUSTON fan-favorite events — bareback riding, barrel racing, bull riding and saddle bronc riding. With a total purse of \$200,000, this event will be the richest one-day rodeo.

With this new event, RODEOHOUSTON's cash commitment to its contestants is \$2 million for 2011.

"We always try to bring excitement to the sport of rodeo," said Joe Bruce Hancock, general manager of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. "These events and the \$25,000 check to each event champion do just that."

RodeoHouston will invite the top 10 contestants in each event — one in each of the four Super Shootout events from each of the top 10 North American rodeos (based primarily on total purse):

- Calgary Stampede – Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- Cheyenne Frontier Days – Cheyenne, Wyo.
- Fort Worth Stock Show & Rodeo – Fort Worth, Texas
- Greeley Stampede – Greeley, Colo.
- National Western Stock Show – Denver, Colo.
- Pendleton Round-Up – Pendleton, Ore.
- Ponoka Stampede – Ponoka, Alberta, Canada
- Reno Rodeo – Reno, Nev.
- RODEOHOUSTON – Houston
- San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo – San Antonio

If the 2010 PRCA World Champions are not champions from the above rodeos, the World Champions will be invited to compete as well.

The 2011 RODEOHOUSTON BP Super Series will run March 1 – 19. The Super Shootout will close the 2011 Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, Sunday, March 20.

FOX Sports Houston will broadcast two-hour live coverage of the RODEOHOUSTON BP Super Series Championship

(Saturday, March 19) and the Super Shootout (Sunday, March 20). FOXSportsHouston.com will stream all rodeo action live from March 1 – 20. Live coverage and Internet streaming includes rodeo only no concerts.

Leading up to the 2011 Show, FOX Sports Houston will air a 30-minute preview show, spotlighting RODEOHOUSTON and its athletes.

"We're excited to continue our partnership with RODEOHOUSTON," said FOX Sports Houston General Manager and General Sales Manager Steve McNair. "We look forward to offering fans live daily event streaming on FoxSportsHouston.com, and for the first time, live television coverage of the finals on FOX Sports Houston. The sport of rodeo features some of toughest athletes around, and RODEOHOUSTON is an iconic event that our fans will enjoy watching, both through the live broadcast and Internet streaming." 🤠





Behind the Birthing Center

By Becky Lowicki

Tinkerbelle, a Jersey calf weighing 45 pounds, joined the world under the watchful eyes of experts at the Capital One Bank AGVENTURE Birthing Center, as well as an eager audience of spectators who viewed the birth via the live feed on four video monitors.

“A lot of people, adults included, will never see a farm animal being born,” said Rich Knebel, who, along with his wife and son, manages the live onsite exhibit throughout the Show. “It’s all about education, and the kids get to learn more about the beginning of life here.”

Knebel and family, who make the annual trek to the Show from Indiana, have witnessed firsthand the powerful impact that viewing the live births has had on visiting children.

“There’s a tremendous amount of excitement whenever we start preparing for a live birth,” he said. Once a live birth is happening, the video production crew is notified and the entire event is broadcast live in Hall A of Reliant Center, with Knebel narrating each stage in the process. “We’ll have a packed house with people on the bleachers watching the process and kids clamoring for a front-row spot next to the fence where the animal is in labor.”

Even when there is not a birth in progress, the exhibit features continuous video footage of previous highlights on the monitors. Other fun facts about the animals and their care also are posted.

In 2010 at the Birthing Center, 73 piglets, 22 lambs and 17 calves were born during the Show, surpassing 2009’s final tally of 106 newborns. With so many deliveries, one may wonder how the births happen to occur at just the right time during the Show each year.

“Timing is everything!” Knebel said. Since the gestation periods for pigs, sheep and cows all vary — from approximately 120 days to 150 days to nine months, respectively, the planning process to source livestock locally begins almost a year in advance.

Texas A&M University interns help the Knebels at the Birthing Center as part of their educational requirements.

“It’s a great opportunity for the students to receive hands-on experience caring for the animals, as well as gain a new understanding of the preparation needed to answer all kinds of questions from the public,” Knebel said. “The first thing I tell the interns is that all eyes are on us at all times, and that’s why it’s so critical that the visitors see how well we care for and treat the animals. After all, it’s critical to our livelihood, and we want visitors to walk away knowing that the agricultural industry provides a safe, nutritious food supply and that the animals are well cared for in a humane manner.”

With the Knebels, up at 4 a.m. for a post-midnight feeding, making any necessary adjustments and monitoring for any possible signs of illness with around-the-clock care, these babies are watched over 24/7.

Care of the newborn animals and the doting mamas during the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ requires the same diligence and special care as if they were out on the farm.

Some require additional attention, but most readily take to their new surroundings.

After the birthing process, the newborn calves will receive colostrum — the mother’s first milk after giving birth — by bottle for 24 hours if they are not nursing within the first two hours. Colostrum is high in fat and protein and rich in antibodies that help strengthen the immune system. The calves next are bottle-fed twice a day for the next six to eight weeks until they are weaned.

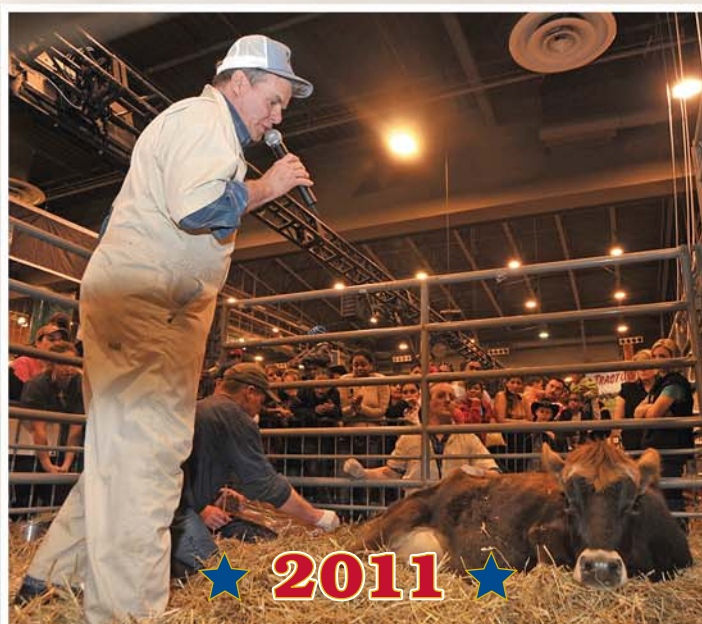


Throughout the Show, there are as many as 100 head of livestock to care for as the cows, sows and ewes that have given birth are rotated off of the public display with their babies to make room for others who are expecting arrivals in the near future.

The popularity of the exhibit has grown each year as part of an array of activities within AGVENTURE that focus on agriculture and how it affects the daily life of consumers. More than 75,000 students received a hands-on agricultural education through a school tour or field trip in 2010.

“[Visitors will] ask all kinds of questions — some related to the animals — but oftentimes they’ll want to know about many other aspects of farming as well,” Knebel said. “It’s that personal connection and education about our industry that is so valuable, as I’ve found there’s a gap in

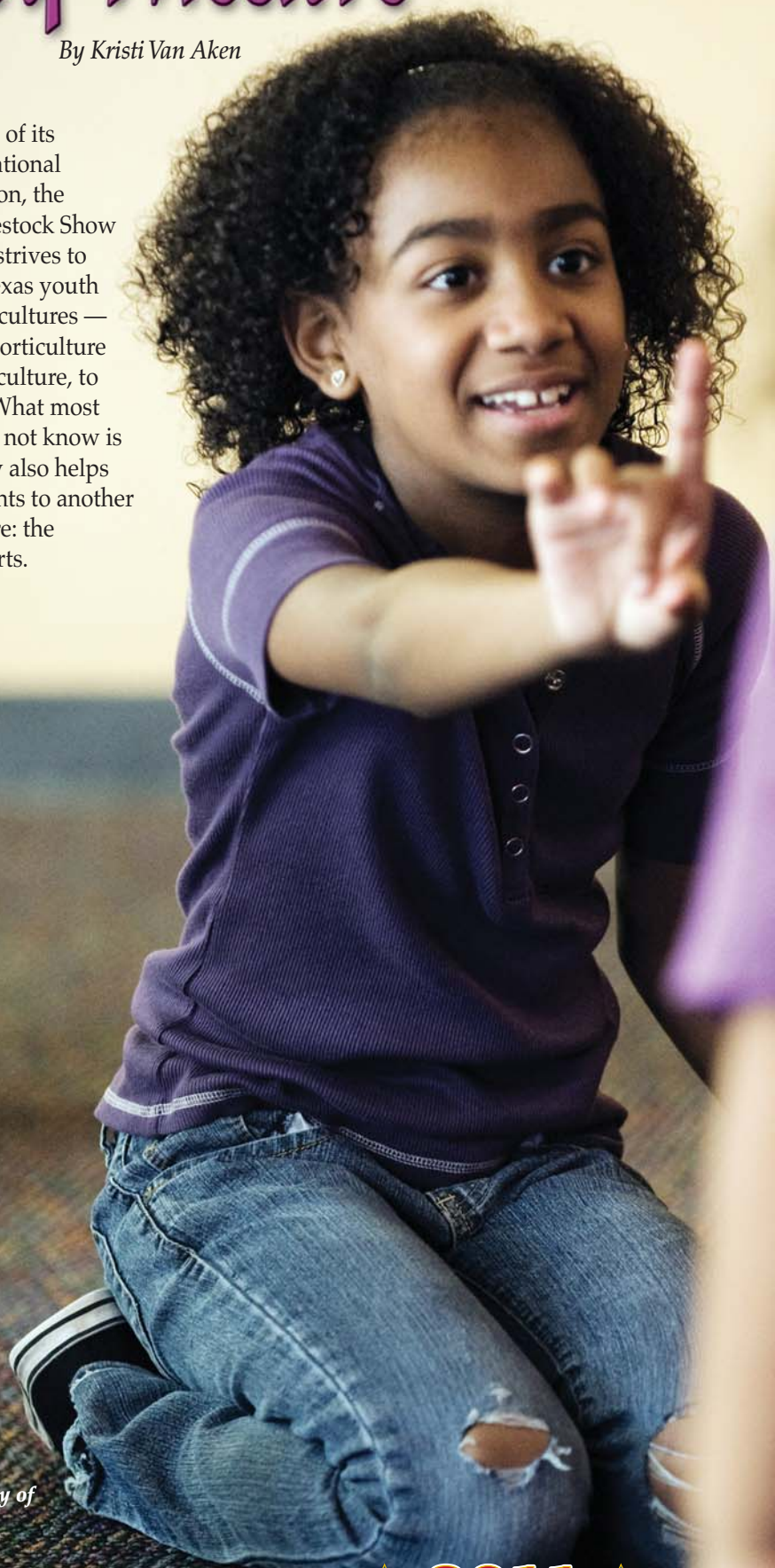
understanding the critical role that agriculture plays for the consumer in terms of food source groups. Perhaps by remembering their visit to see a newborn Jersey calf, the children will remember to drink their milk and learn how nutritious it is for them. They’ll also have the opportunity to experience the miracle of life firsthand, and what could be better than that?” 🐄



Cultivating Culture: Alley Theatre

By Kristi Van Aken

As part of its educational mission, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ strives to familiarize Texas youth with various cultures — agriculture, horticulture and Western culture, to name a few. What most people might not know is that the Show also helps expose students to another type of culture: the performing arts.



Photos courtesy of
Alley Theatre

Education is a significant part of the Show's mission. Since the first scholarship was awarded in 1957, more than \$265 million has been committed to the youth of Texas. While scholarships are the most prolific and account for the majority of educational dollars spent, the Show also funds a diverse set of community-based programs and organizations that share one of the Show's goals of educating students. One beneficiary of this support is the Alley Theatre.

Founded in 1947, the Alley is a Tony Award®-winning, professional resident theater company that sits at the heart of Houston's Theater District. Ostensibly, the Show and the Alley differ vastly in their ambitions and activities; however, they share important common ground. Both organizations are staunchly committed to student development. In fact, the money the Show provides the Alley is earmarked for a set of community outreach and educational programs known as Education and Community Engagement.

The Alley's ECE program comprises workshops, in-services, classes, and other activities and events that use theater to cultivate appreciation of the performing arts and encourage community participation in the theater by removing social and economic barriers. These programs also aim to enhance classroom learning and supplement school curricula. "We have specific programs for our two different constituents — the schools and the community," said Joe Angel Babb, director of ECE. "What the [Show's] funding is doing is making the theater more accessible and equitable to more people."

The ECE's programs offer a myriad of ways to experience the theater. Cheap Thrills provides affordable access to Alley plays on Sunday and Tuesday evenings; \$10 Tix and Alleyways benefit the community and local, non-profit organizations; TalkBacks, Theater District Open House and Backstage Tours offer behind-the-scenes access and insight into the production process. The school-focused programs are equally diverse and comprehensive.

"In addition to weekday matinee performances that bring students to the theater, we provide school-based programs designed to develop communication and critical thinking skills and support performing arts standards set by the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills," said Babb, referring to the state-mandated curriculum standards for all public-school students. "When we work with kids, we're an 'antidote' to the regular school setting."

The ECE's School Partnerships are one example of innovative education. Collaborating with teachers and schools, Alley staff members and teaching artists create interactive experiences that delve into whatever subject teachers choose. Recent titles include "Atoms, Molecules and Matter," which uses movement and acting exercises to simulate atoms, molecules and the three states of matter. "Staging the Electoral College" uses characters and improvisation to examine early American history and the roots of its democracy.

Other programs that expand arts education and exposure to the theater are making an impact locally. In 2009, Alley Shows for Kids brought two professionally produced plays designed for student audiences to 38 area schools for 52 total performances. More than 100 scripts written by local teens were submitted to the Houston Young Playwrights Exchange program that encourages students to create stories for the stage. Six HYPE finalists were chosen to participate in a summer clinic. Each received a \$500 award and spent the summer developing their scripts with mentors and professional playwrights.

Rounding out the impressive list of educational endeavors are: DramaKids, an after-school creative writing and drama workshop; Young Performers Studio; From Stage to Page; Playwriting 360°, a residency program in local public schools spawned by HYPE; and Between the Lines, a workshop for teachers that earns them professional development credit and focuses on arts education and integration.

Much like the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo, the Alley Theater is devoted to educating young people and enriching their lives. "Arts education complements the core curriculum and completes every student's education," Babb said. "It's part of creating students' success — not only in school but in life, at work, in the future." 🐜



Miniature Cattle — Bigger Isn't Always Better

By Todd Eudy



In today's economy, downsizing has become quite popular. People always have enjoyed bonsai trees, toy poodles and miniature cars. Now, size and efficiency have caught the attention of the dairy and beef cattle industries. If you listen carefully, you can hear the sound of a mini-stampede across America's farms. It is the sound of hoof beats of the "mini" or "micro" cattle that some farmers, old and new alike, are recognizing as cash cows.

Currently, the International Miniature Cattle Breeders Society and Registry lists 26 breeds of miniature cattle. So, what makes a cow a miniature? The registry's guidelines state that a cow must measure 42 inches at the hip as a baseline for the maximum height and should weigh between 500 and 700 pounds.

There also is a middle range of cattle known as "mid-size" miniatures, and these can be as tall as 48 inches. Micro cattle are shorter, at 36 inches in height.

Like their full-sized counterparts, these smaller versions of their bigger relatives are raised for beef and milk. Yet, minis have other appealing attributes.

USDA statistics show that since 1974, the number of small farms, 49 acres or less, in the United States has increased by more than 46 percent.

Some popular breeds raised in Texas are miniature Herefords, Lowline Angus, Dexter and Zebu. Here in Houston, these microcopies of larger cattle have been a staple of the Specialty Cattle Show at the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ for several years. Greg Schulz, a fourth-generation cattle rancher and farmer, has been raising miniature Herefords on his ranch outside of Bay City, Texas, for six years. Miniature Herefords, originally bred in the 1960s, are registered with the American Hereford Association.

"I wanted to be able to get the greatest return on investment, and I was also looking for a product that I could market," Schulz said.

Schulz runs his grass-fed herd on 450 acres. Two miniature cattle only need two acres on which to grow to market size.

"Usually, with miniature cattle you can double or triple your stocking ratio

versus full-sized cattle," Schulz said. "We're stocking light right now, because we just finished two years of some of the worst drought we've had in this county. When you get into drought conditions you can go in one of two directions: lower your numbers or start buying a lot of hay. We lowered our numbers."

Miniature cattle also have a reduced total expense per head. The cost of confinement and feed, and the maintenance of farm equipment, with smaller cattle is much lower than with full-sized cattle. Fences do not have to be as high, and the volume of feed can be lower. Land owners also may be eligible for tax incentives by showing agricultural use of the property without having to invest in full-sized cattle.



According to the American Lowline Registry, Lowline miniature cattle were bred from an Angus herd in Australia in 1929 and went to New South Wales as breeding stock. Proving successful, they eventually became known in the United States and arrived in America in 1996.

Marjo Gore of Bullard, Texas, has raised her Lowline cattle herd on grass and hay since March 2008. She said they are incredibly easy to care for.

“We don’t need any special equipment you need for regular size cattle,” Gore said. “They are good-natured animals and so easy to handle — they go where you want them to go.”

Originating in Africa and India as a milk production and work animal, the Zebu breed has been miniaturized by selection and breeding. Larry Munchrath has stocked miniature Zebus on his Eustace, Texas, ranch for a number of years. Munchrath said the miniature Zebu can, if utilized for milk production, provide a gallon of milk a day — more than enough for a family of four.

“Don’t think because they’re not big and beefy that they’re useless,” Munchrath said.

Miniature Zebus have proved themselves to be good meat producers, with a 60 percent hanging weight as opposed to bigger boned cattle that have a 40 percent hanging weight. Hanging rate refers to the weight of a side of beef from a meat cooler before it has been trimmed.

Compared to other miniature cattle breeds, the Zebu may appear to be an exotic, with its slanted eyes and coffin-shaped head, but when it is shown, those are the exact breed characteristics judges are looking for.

With all of the savings and economic benefits of the 26 breeds of miniature cattle, the modern cattle farmer can benefit immensely by thinking small when building a herd. Someday soon there may be a spot for them right beside the toy poodle. 🐄



COMMITTEE *Spotlights*

LIVESTOCK

By Emily Wilkinson

The more than 600 members of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ Livestock Committee help ensure an orderly, enjoyable livestock show with efficient organization among its various groups and subgroups.

The arena group assists with foot traffic — both animal and pedestrian — in and around the judging arenas. The safety of the guests and the exhibitors is a main priority for this group that helps move 2,000 animals a day during Showtime. Its volunteers are most easily recognized on Show grounds by their orange sticks, which are used to direct livestock exhibitors and keep their animals separated from Show visitors.

Cleanliness is key at any livestock show, and members of the committee's good herdsman group inspect the exhibitors' animals during the Show and evaluate their appearance and condition, as well as that of their stalls. Tommy Walker, committee chairman and a 17-year veteran on the Livestock Committee, said, "We encourage exhibitors by giving out awards for having the cleanest stall." As part of its program, the group presents Good Herdsman Awards to high-scoring exhibitors based on the results of the committee members' evaluations.

Through the work of the judges' reception group, the committee provides support for visiting livestock judges. These volunteers greet the judges upon arrival in Houston and address their various needs, such as transportation, while in town.



Committee members work hard year-round to raise funds to increase award premiums for exhibitors and to ensure that all the participants in the livestock show go home with something from the Show, such as T-shirts and hats for all the exhibitors.

The committee is especially busy during the run of the Show, but it also has several events throughout the year, including an appreciation picnic, a golf tournament and an annual fundraiser.

Walker said managing the committee's numerous responsibilities is made easy as a result of its talented leadership hierarchy. "It is well-run and real organized — we never have any problems," he said.

TRAILBLAZER

By Kate Gunn

The Trailblazer Committee's goal is to provide fun events for Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ members and the public that support and enhance the Show's mission. Each year, the Trailblazer Committee hosts the Trailblazer Luncheon and Fashion Show that honors outstanding women volunteers of the Show, as well as Ladies' Night Out, a fun party for women only, held during one of the Show's performances.



Originally starting out as the Ladies' Season Box Committee, the committee was responsible for season ticket sales at the Show, but in 2005, when the ticket sales were handed over to the Rodeo Ticket Sales Committee, the Trailblazers Committee was born. There are currently more than 150 committee members. With the exception of their officer in charge, Steve Roe, the committee is completely made up of women.

COMMITTEE

Spotlights

During the first week of February, the committee produces the Trailblazer Luncheon and Fashion Show. The luncheon honors outstanding women for their lengthy and consistent commitment to the Show. The event boasts a fashion show, a formal lunch and an awards presentation. Awards given each year are the Trailblazer Awards and the Pearl Award, which distinguishes one woman as the top award winner.

Sandra Crook, committee chairman, said, "It gives me such honor to put these women in the spotlight and call attention to their achievements as members of the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. It is a privilege to represent the committee that honors them."

The committee's second big event is Ladies' Night Out, which usually is held on the first Thursday of the Show. The 2010 Ladies' Night Out event was a sellout with almost 600 women in attendance. The evening's theme was "Pink Pearls, Petticoats, and Cowgirls," and featured make-up artists, a martini bar, massages and photo shoots. Ladies' Night Out has been a fun way for women to connect with each other, while learning more about the Show.

Although girls may just wanna have fun, the women of the Trailblazer Committee strive to recognize the important contributions of outstanding female volunteers, and act as ambassadors of the Show and all it stands for, all while ensuring that a good time is had by all!

TRAIL RIDE

By Sarah W. Langlois

Each February, the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™ Trail Ride Committee works tirelessly to oversee the 13 official trail rides as they meander into Houston's Memorial Park in preparation for the Downtown Rodeo Parade. Covering a combined total of 1,943 miles in 2010 and enduring Texas' varied weather conditions, participants in the trail rides make the trek from across Texas from as far away as the Louisiana and Mexico borders, to Houston each year in an effort to preserve Western heritage and increase awareness of the Show. The trail rides have grown from four riders — who rode the first trail to the Show from Brenham, Texas, to Houston, in 1952 — to more than 4,000.

Many of the trail rides make stops along the way to visit schools and share the history of the Show and trail rides with the community.

Beginning the Thursday before the annual Downtown Rodeo Parade, the 125-member Trail Ride Committee works around the clock in four-hour shifts to coordinate the arrival of the riders to Houston. The committee provides assistance for trail riders and their horses along the route to Houston, ensuring that every rider and animal is safe along the trail. The committee works closely with the trail bosses, who manage their respective trail rides and address safety issues as they arise. Committee members also coordinate rules, regulations and proposed events with the trail bosses.

"Safety is paramount along the trail," said Kevin Leck, chairman of the Trail Ride Committee, who noted that injuries are possible along the trail. Leck said he is thankful that the 2010 rides had no major accidents.

The Trail Ride Committee also works with the Houston Parks and Recreation Department to carefully position the trail rides in Houston's Memorial Park. As each trail ride enters the park, teams from the Trail Ride and Jr. Rodeo committees judge the trail ride's appearance, authenticity and originality, which are combined with the trail ride's previous scores judged along the trail. The trail ride groups vie for one of three highly prized awards: Top Trail Ride, Best Appearing Group and Best Show Wagon.

Leck said that the best thing about being chairman of the Trail Ride Committee is being able to work with all of the wonderful volunteers, trail bosses and trail riders each year. The Trail Ride Committee is already gearing up for another safe, happy trail ride in 2011. 🐾





RODEO

Roundup

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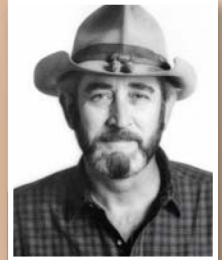
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➔ Jimmy Dean and Don Williams Inducted into Country Music Hall of Fame

Past RODEOHOUSTON performers and Texas natives, Jimmy Dean and Don Williams were part of the 2010 class of inductees into the Country Music Hall of Fame.



Dean, best known in recent years as a sausage entrepreneur, performed at RODEOHOUSTON 1966 and 1967. Williams, who has garnered more than 17 No. 1 hits during his career, performed at RODEOHOUSTON in 1981-83 and in 1986.



➔ RODEOHOUSTON Radio

RODEOHOUSTON Radio is an online radio channel playing the best of 68 years of 350 superstar entertainers. Although musically driven, RODEOHOUSTON Radio also features sound bites from history-making Show officials, entertainers, scholarship winners, committee volunteers, and more; year-round committee happenings; and news from the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™. Listen to all that RODEOHOUSTON Radio has to offer. Visit www.rodeohouston.com to start listening!



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