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Work Continues on 2020 Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale

Community support already pouring in; Friends of the Merced County Fair to underwrite all sale commissions and the first \$10,000 add-on donation received

MERCED, CALIFORNIA, May 7, 2020 – Plans continue to move forward on the 2020 Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale, supported by Merced Irrigation District (MID), to support the more than 500 Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA exhibitors through the utilization of the [StockShowAuctions.com \(SSA\)](https://www.stockshowauctions.com) online sales platform. The virtual sale will take place starting Thursday, June 11 at 8 a.m. and go until Saturday, June 13 at 8 p.m. Buyers, both past and new, will need to register as a buyer on www.stockshowauction.com/register either in advance of the sale or during, then they can login during the sale and place bids, add-ons and receive notifications if they get outbid. Merced County Fair livestock staff will be available to answer questions at livestock@countyofmerced.com or (209) 722-1421. Additionally, step-by-step instructions have been posted on the fair's website (www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits).

“Agriculture has long been the backbone of the Merced County Fair and while today's world with COVID-19 is prohibiting us from having our annual fair, it won't stop us from holding a sale for our hard-working 4-H and FFA exhibitors. I look forward to their innovative outreach in securing buyers for our new virtual livestock sale,” said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair.

There is already one local business stepping up to support the exhibitors in the Merced County Fair Virtual Livestock Sale. Dr. J.L. Byerly D.V.M. owner of Sierra Gateway Veterinary Clinic has donated \$10,000 towards add-ons to support those exhibitors who do not receive adequate bids on their projects.

Dr. Byerly said he “is hopeful that our community will help to support our 4-H and FFA exhibitors in buying their animal projects or placing add-on bids. It is a real call to action for our agricultural community to step up for our youth in Merced County.”

Additionally, the fair's non-profit foundation, Friends of the Merced County Fair has committed to covering the costs of the online sale platform, as well as all sale commissions – so every dollar spent by buyers will go directly to the students.

“We are so grateful for Friends of the Merced County Fair who have always greatly supported our annual auctions and through this latest act of generosity – it will put every dollar bid during the virtual sale into the pockets of these kids to use to recoup their animal project expenses and invest in their next project or save for school,” said Burrola.

35th District Agricultural Association

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Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA exhibitors who submitted animal projects will be contacted by the Livestock Department regarding the virtual sale with more details and resources. Exhibitors will need to continue feeding and caring for their animals and marketing to secure buyers, just like they would if their animals were going to the traditional auction. The Merced County Fair has put together exhibitor information sheets by species and an extensive Q&A so they can better understand the new sale process. These resources are available at www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits. More information such as step-by-step instructions on how to upload their project for the online sale will be posted in the coming weeks. These details are also available on the SSA website at www.stockshowauction.com/auctions. Additionally, the Livestock Department will be available to assist with online registration and address questions at livestock@countyofmerced.com or (209) 722-1421.

Each year, the livestock competition at the Fair helps to create the next generation of men and women in agriculture and by participating, 4-H, FFA and Independent students not only have the opportunity to showcase and sell their animal projects, they also learn responsibility and gain agribusiness experience. While this year looks different, the life and business skills gained through these experiences – and even more so with the adaptation to an online sale – will continue to serve these youth.

About The Merced County Fair:

The Merced County Fair, first founded in 1891, represents the 35th District Agricultural Association. The fair's mission statement outlines that it "*promises to meet the needs of our community by providing a fun, safe venue to celebrate our area's agricultural heritage, discover new technology and be entertained.*" Each June, the Merced County Fair welcomes more than 70,000 people from throughout Merced County and beyond to attend the five-day event. Members of the Board of Directors include: President, Carol Sartori-Silva; First Vice President, Lee Lor; Second Vice President, Kim Rogina; Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Lori Gallo; Emily Haden; Flip Hasset; and Luis Lara. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. The 2021 Merced County Fair will run June 9 - 13. For more information about the Merced County Fair, please visit www.MercedCountyFair.com. Connect with the Fair on Facebook (@mercedfair), Twitter (@Merced_CA_Fair) and Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).