



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The 2020 Merced County Fair Cancelled Amid COVID-19 Concerns**

*Jr. Livestock Auction to Move Forward With Virtual Sale through Stock Show Auctions (SSA)*

**MERCED, CALIFORNIA, April 21, 2020** – At an emergency meeting yesterday, the Merced County Board of Directors and fair CEO made the difficult decision to cancel the upcoming 2020 Merced County Fair, which was to be held June 10 - 14, due to COVID-19 public health concerns. In light of Governor Newsom's current position on the likelihood of public events in the near future, and after consultation with the Merced County Department of Public Health, it became apparent that this year's fair could not take place. However, the fair is moving forward with plans to hold a virtual Jr. Livestock Auction in June. The fair is working with [StockShowAuctions.com \(SSA\)](https://www.stockshowauctions.com) to utilize its online platform for the more than 500 4-H and FFA Merced County Fair exhibitors to sell their animal projects in a professional, easy to use way.

"The decision to not hold this year's fair was not made lightly as it impacts the livelihood of many individuals and businesses in our community and the fair industry. However, it is the right decision to make at this time in order to protect the health and safety of our community" said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. "The silver lining is that we are working through plans to hold a virtual livestock sale to support our hard-working 4-H and FFA exhibitors who have already invested in their animal projects for this year's fair."

Through SSA, the Merced County Fair will be able to hold a virtual auction that enables buyers to purchase as they have in the past, just from the convenience of their home. Market beef, market goats, market sheep, market swine, market rabbits, and replacement heifers will be included in the virtual auction, which will be held from June 11 – 13. Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA exhibitors will need to enter their animal projects as normal; deadline for entries is May 7. After that date, all exhibitors who entered will be contacted and provided details for the virtual auction and processing. Exhibitors 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 is working through developing a "toolkit" for exhibitors to utilize to secure and guide buyers in the new virtual auction. Additionally, staff and volunteers will be available to assist with online registration and bidding process information. More details will be posted on the fair's website ([www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits](http://www.mercedcountyfair.com/livestock-exhibits)). Advisors, exhibitors and buyers with questions can also email [livestock@countyofmerced.com](mailto:livestock@countyofmerced.com).

"I am incredibly proud of our livestock team for diligently working to source a great platform and plan for our exhibitors to still market and sell their animal projects – which is such an important experience for our livestock youth. We hope that our exhibitors and buyers will participate in this year's 'virtual auction' and keep this longstanding tradition of the fair alive this year," said Burrola.

**35th District Agricultural Association**

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Tickets have not yet gone on sale for the 2020 Merced County Fair; so there are no refunds that will need to be issued. All purchased 2020 Merced County Fair VIP Parking Passes will be honored for the 2021 Merced County Fair. If purchasers would prefer a refund on their VIP Parking Pass, email the Fair at [info@mercedcountyfair.com](mailto:info@mercedcountyfair.com) or call (209) 722-1506. The fair is also working to process refunds for RV and vendor deposits, which will be issued in the next two weeks.

The 2020 event would have marked the 129<sup>th</sup> Merced County Fair held – a longstanding tradition for the community. Through the annual fair and its 220 interim events, more than \$23 million in economic impact dollars are generated for the local economy, based on a 2015 report put out by the California Department of Food & Agriculture. The Merced County Fair will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and stay in close contact with health officials to determine when it is appropriate to resume interim events at the fairgrounds.

“On behalf of my Board and our staff, I want to thank our sponsors, vendors, exhibitors and community for all of the years of support. We will be back next year and it will be a celebration to remember!” said Burrola. “Until then, please continue to follow public health guidelines so we can stop the spread of COVID-19.”

#### **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 Sartoni-Silva; First Vice President, Lee Lor; Second Vice President, Kim Rogina; Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Lori Gallo; Emily Haden; Flip Hassett; 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](http://www.MercedCountyFair.com). Connect with the Fair on Facebook (@mercedfair), Twitter (@Merced\_CA\_Fair) and Instagram (@mercedcountyfair).