



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **The 2021 Merced County Fair Cancelled For A Second Year Amid The Continued Uncertainty of COVID-19 and Restrictions On Large Public Events**

*Fair is proceeding with plans to hold a modified in-person livestock show and sale*

**MERCED, CALIFORNIA, March 9, 2021** – At its monthly meeting held on March 8, the Merced County Fair Board of Directors and fair CEO unanimously made the difficult decision to cancel its upcoming 2021 Merced County Fair, scheduled to be held June 9-13. The decision was made based upon the ongoing uncertainty of COVID-19 and current restrictions on large public events in the State. However, the fair is moving forward with plans for a modified in-person livestock show and sale that aligns with COVID-19 health and safety protocols to keep this aspect of the fair tradition alive and support the hardworking 4-H and FFA students.

“The decision to cancel the 2021 Merced County Fair was a heartbreaking one to make, but given the ongoing uncertainty of COVID-19 we sadly do not see large public events returning by June,” said Teresa Burrola, CEO of the Merced County Fair. “However, we are focused on finalizing plans that would allow for a modified in-person livestock show and sale – giving our 4-H and FFA kids the important experience of showing their animal projects at our fairgrounds.”

Livestock exhibitions have long been an integral part of fairs and a pivotal experience; raising, exhibiting and selling their animal projects provides 4-H and FFA members with vital leadership skills to prepare them for career success, personal growth and experience in the Agribusiness. The Merced County Fair is committed to providing this important experience and continues to work on plans for its in-person livestock show and sale, while adhering to the recently updated CDC guidelines that allow for animal activities at fairgrounds. Merced County Fair 4-H and FFA students are encouraged to continue with their animal projects to enter in the fair; the Livestock Exhibitor Handbook will be available April 1, 2021. As more details are available, they will be posted on the fair’s website ([www.mercedcountyfair.com](http://www.mercedcountyfair.com)). Advisors or exhibitors with questions can also email [livestock@countyofmerced.com](mailto:livestock@countyofmerced.com).

“As we approach another year with no in-person Merced County Fair, we greatly miss the sights, sounds and experiences that come with our annual event – especially our Still Exhibits. We are disappointed that we will not have the opportunity to display the hard work of our incredible community for attendees to enjoy,” said Carol Sartori-Silva, Merced County Fair Board President. “These exhibits are what make the Merced County Fair so unique and is a top highlight for Fairgoers that is greatly missed, along with our other annual fair traditions.”

**35th District Agricultural Association**

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In support of the fairgrounds and its various programs, Friends of the Merced County Fair will be hosting a drive-thru version of its annual Friends of the Fair Pre-Party dinner fundraiser on April 15. Boxed dinners complete with deep pit beef, beans, salad and rolls – plus Fair treats like kettle corn, cotton candy and corn dogs will be available. Cost is just \$20 per box. If you're interested in purchasing a ticket and supporting Friends of the Merced County Fair dinner, please contact the fair office at (209) 722-1506.

"Now more than ever the support of the community is critical for our fairgrounds. We are looking forward to this drive-thru fundraiser, which is a great way to enjoy a delicious meal prepared by John Pedrozo and Friends, give a taste of the fair and share a smile with friends" said Burrola. "The Merced County Fair, along with many other county fairs throughout the country, play a vital economic and cultural role throughout the Valley. We truly appreciate our communities continued support, especially now as we struggle with minimal allowed operations."

The 2021 event would have marked the 130<sup>th</sup> Merced County Fair – 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 each year, based on a 2015 report put out by the California Department of Food & Agriculture. The Merced County Fair continues to monitor the COVID-19 situation and work with health officials to determine allowed operations for interim events, as well as a plan for a modified in-person livestock show.

#### **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, Kim Rogina; Second Vice President, Vicky Banaga; Mark Erreca; Lori Rossi Gallo; Emily Haden; Luis Lara; and Mark N. Pazin. Teresa Burrola heads up the daily operations in her role as CEO. 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).

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