

Daily Union Article

Saturday, July 14, 2018

Title: It's Fair Time!

The Geary County Free Fair is just around the corner – July 23 – 26 at the 4-H/Sr. Citizens Building and grounds. What a great time for family and friends to get together and enjoy the fun of outdoor events, indoor exhibits, and homemade ice cream and other good food! Exhibits and animals are entered and showcased by area 4-H youth and there is a place for adults and non-4-H youth involvement, as well! If you have a love for crafting, cooking, or construction of many kinds, you can exhibit your work in the Open Class fair hosted in conjunction with the 4-H exhibits.

The Open Class Fair is divided up by departments, divisions and classes. The nine departments in the open class fair are: Food Preparation, Food Preservation, Textiles (including quilting, clothing construction, and fiber arts), Arts and Crafts, Photography, Floriculture, Horticulture, Agriculture, and Extension Educational Units. Each division has its own youth category for children aged 4 to 15. For those who are 16 and older, entries will be placed in the adult category. All work must be the work of the exhibitor and must have been completed within the past two years (July 2016 to July 2018) – except food preservation, which must have been preserved since July 2017 and food preparation, which needs to be freshly made. Additional guidelines apply and can be found in the Open Class Fair Book available on the Geary County Extension webpage at <http://www.geary.ksu.edu> – look for “Geary County Free Fair” tab. Printed copies of the fair book are available free at the Extension Office at 119 E. 9th Street, Dorothy Bramlage Public Library and various business offices in Junction City.

The different classes within each division allow for an expansive variety of exhibits you can enter and you will receive a ribbon for each exhibit you enter. If you answer yes to any one of the following questions, you can enter an exhibit at the Open Class Fair. Participation is open to anyone in Geary and adjoining counties.

Do you have a garden? Whether you have a flower or vegetable garden you can showcase the fruit of your efforts in the open class floriculture competition. Open to any gardeners (except professional nurserymen or florists), you can enter anything from fresh flower arrangements to single stems of flowers cut from your own flowerbed. If you rather work with dried flowers, there are different classes you can enter exhibits in for that, as well. With all the beautiful foliage we are enjoying from our spring and summer rain, perhaps you have a patio plant you want to enter in the fair. There's even a class for fresh culinary herbs.

This most certainly has been a challenging year for garden produce, but why not show the extra work you have done to keep the plants alive? Beans, beets, peppers, cantaloupe, apples, tomatoes, or any of the other ripe fruits and vegetables can be entered into the competition.

Have you caught some rain that others haven't? We are all excited to see what might be thriving in this period of extreme drought. For our local ag producers, there is a division for you, too! Regardless of the

size of your farming operation, you can get involved with the Open Class fair by entering samples of this year's crops such as wheat, oats, yellow corn or forage such as alfalfa, prairie hay or brome. Enjoy seeing what area producers are harvesting as well as sharing a piece of your own operation by entering in Open Class Agriculture!

Do you enjoy baking and/or food preservation? Cookies, cakes, candies and more set the stage for the Food Preparation division at the Open Class fair. Anyone who like to bake has a few "secret recipes" that are always a hit at family gatherings or potluck dinners. Why not share you tastes and tantalize others by showing off your culinary efforts? You can bring out baked goods that are more challenging, like yeast bread, or keep it simple with a sample of snack mix.

Whether you like to can fruits and vegetables or dry them, your products can be entered in the Food Preservation Division. Pickles, Dried Foods, and Sweet Spreads are but a few of the many different classes found in this open class division at the fair.

Do you enjoy working with cloth or other textiles? There is something for everyone who has this interest area or hobby! Knitting, Crocheting, Rugs, Quilts, Sewing and more are included in this department at the fair. Share your creative skills by entering one of your projects completed in the past 2 years.

In addition to these competitive areas, the Geary County Free Fair hosts a special baking contest. The this year's contest is for *homemade cinnamon rolls*. These must be baked from scratch by the person entering them in the contest and follow the guidelines listed on page 3 of the Geary County Free Fair Open Class Fair Book. Cash and gift prizes will be awarded to the top three placings. Sponsors for this years' competition are the Kansas Wheat Commission, Red Star Yeast, Junction City Dillons, Clarks Creek EEU, and Walla Walla EEU.

You don't have to enter an exhibit to enjoy the Geary County Free Fair. Come out to the fair grounds to look over the hard work of our 4-H youth in the county as well as the work of others who have entered exhibits. Contact the Geary County Extension office at 238-4161 if you have any questions. See you there!