

Cloverdale Livestock Club shines at Deschutes County Fair

By Kathryn Godsiff
Correspondent

The Deschutes County Fair, held last week in Redmond, is a major event for members of the Cloverdale Livestock Club. This 4-H club is based in Sisters, with members from Sisters and Redmond. They pitched tents, parked travel trailers, and shared successes, challenges and food over the course of the week.

Most of the 21 club members show sheep in various classes. Two members had pigs and one had a sheep and a goat, making for many trips to the various livestock barns at the fairgrounds. During the 4-H show, the young people are the ones in charge. Parents and club leaders are strictly hands-off when it comes to prepping the animals for the show ring and keeping the barns spiffy.

Pam Mitchell has been leading the club for nearly 30 years, before her own children were able to participate. The fair has been a part of her life for as long as she can remember. Mitchell is a daughter of the Cyrus family of Sisters and was an active member of the Cloverdale Livestock Club all through her 4-H years. This year she was assisted by Nathan Hunt, who has finished his 4-H career but came back to lend his expertise to younger members.

"That's the beauty of 4-H, the older kids helping the younger ones. It's a perpetual mentoring program," said Mitchell. Hunt agreed that his time in 4-H and in raising

livestock taught him responsibility and some solid leadership skills.

Rod and Tracy Johnson have two sons, Bailey (18) and Aaron (15). They've noticed changes in the boys through their involvement in 4-H.

"It's really rewarding to see them develop and gain confidence in what they're doing," said Tracy.

A walk through the livestock barns, ripe with the smells of summer and animals, provides opportunity to watch and interact with youths who are focused, cheerful, and committed to their animals. The barn aisles are swept clean, the pens are tidy and the animals are calm. Each club adorns their area with décor expressing the culture of the club. The first three days of the fair are showing days, culminating in the Saturday auction of the market animals.

Mitchell said the club did very well in the show ring, with many blue ribbons and several supreme and reserve champions in the sheep section. Over in the swine barn, Tanner Pease and Sydney Salomone were enjoying their first year of showing pigs, after having sheep projects for several years.

There are classes for market animals, sold at an auction on Saturday of the fair, and for production animals, used for breeding. Mitchell was particularly pleased with the results from the production classes, with several members receiving championship ribbons for sheep they had bred



PHOTO BY PAM MITCHELL

Cloverdale Livestock Club did very well at the fair last week. Pictured are Elizabeth Moss (holding ribbons), Jordan Ortiz, Noah Keeton, Sam Mitchell, Judah Keeton, Stacey Estrada, and Judge Clint Cummings from California.

themselves.

An additional feature, for the tiny showmen, is Peewee Showmanship, open to toddlers through 7-year-olds. Cloverdale Livestock Club alumnus Awbrey (Cyrus) Gaines and Annette (Smith) McAvan took the reins of the event at the last minute. On Friday night they started a sign-up sheet that made the rounds of the sheep barn, and by Saturday morning 20 young children had signed up. Then, 4-H kids started showing up with their gentle market lambs and goats, offering them to the little ones and helping the kids show the animals. (See photo, page 25.)

Over in the swine barn, the Future Farmers of America alums were doing the same thing. In a cooperative effort between 4-H and FFA,

ribbons were procured, a judge was found and a happy gang of little kids had a fun morning.

"I'm very grateful for the 4-H kids who offered their lambs," said Gaines. "It's extremely important that

little kids get excited about 4-H, and this gives them a jump-start."

From the looks on the faces of participants both young and experienced, 4-H livestock at the fair looks set for many more happy times.

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