

BEAUTY AND THE BEASTS

Animals compete at the County Fair BY CAMILLA MORTENSEN

Some fairgoers hold their noses when they walk into the livestock area at the Lane County Fair, but others whiff the scents of manure and hay, cow, goat and sheep like it's a fine (albeit peculiar) perfume. For you Eugeneans who spend your days in the city and don't venture out to the farms and fields that surround us, the Fair is your big chance to spend a couple hours getting down with your rural self.

After watching the sheep shearing (every day at 1 pm), livestock judging and Saturday's horse show featuring Western horses (think cowboy), English horses (think fox hunting) and the miniature horses (think small, very, very small) you'll not only be able to talk like you know a little bit about farm animals, you may kind of smell like one too.

And when we're talking about the Fair, we're not just talking about plain old boring farm animals standing around chewing their cud. We're talking serious farm animal business. These are sheep and cows that have been raised and prepped for their big moment in the sun, when the livestock get judged.

Remember Wilbur in *Charlotte's Web* competing for the big blue ribbon at the county fair? Yep, that's what we do too, here in Lane County. Remember the part about how Wilbur was afraid he was going to get made into bacon post-fair? Ummm, well, yeah, that is also what we do. But before they get eaten, milked or shorn, the cows and other livestock get slicked up and shown off. Behind the scenes, 4-H kids and full-grown farmers primp their beasts like beauty queens.

The beef cattle are judged on their fine (and presumably tasty) physiques. When cattle judging begins on Wednesday, Aug. 19, look closely to see if competitors resort to some of the tricks of the cattle showing trade to show their Bossies off. Like the Vaseline beauty contestants use to put a shine on their teeth or the extra hold spray that makes their hair look bigger and better, there are products to whiten cow coats or shine hooves — and even something called “hair adhesive,” which is sort of like hairspray for cows. Does your show cow have skinnier legs than she ought to? Does she lack a little muscle on the forearm? Contestants at fairs are known to spray a little adhesive on that beast, get her hair to stand up and create the illusion of the thick-legged heifer the judge will love.

If beef cattle aren't your thing, check out the judging of the dairy cattle, also on Wednesday, and you'll be treated to not one, not two, but five classes devoted to “Best Udder,” including, “Best Udder, Aged Cow” (for you Fair newbies, that would be a cow born before 2004) and you can learn more than you ever wanted about cow teats.

And before you think judging a cow by her teats is udderly funny, remember this is serious business — a good udder means a good milker, and kid exhibitors at the fair are learning how to breed and raise the cattle that

produce the milk that makes up the bulk of that latte you're sipping as you watch some of the less serious livestock competitions.

In addition to the judging of the cows, swine, chickens, cavies (aka guinea pigs), rabbits, sheep, goats and horses, and the showmanship classes, which may be a little esoteric for the average fairgoer,

Fair organizers have thrown in a couple events even the most non-animal oriented Eugeneans can understand. At 7 pm Tuesday, Aug. 18, you can catch the rabbit and cavies costume contest. And the only thing better than a bunny in a costume takes place on Saturday after the horse show ends at 5 pm — that would be the can't-be-missed costumed goat parade. All this, plus for you Wilbur fans, there's the 4 pm daily running of the All-Alaskan racing pigs. Though, now that we think about it, those pigs probably retire to a bacon farm, seeing as *EW* was unable to locate any farms devoted to retired racing pigs. Now that you know a little more about where your burgers and breakfast foods come from, there's nothing like going hog wild at the County Fair ...



COURTESY LANE COUNTY FAIR

HOW NOT TO GO GREEN AT THE FAIR

The sunny, hot August days of the Lane County Fair are nostalgic gems that citizens of Lane County can remember fondly: Ah the fried foods, the games of skills and chance, the rides.

Unless you puke. Or worse yet, you get somebody else's puke on you. It's strange how vomiting can create a lasting, if unwanted, memory of any event. To better understand this unfortunate reaction to food and fun at the fair, we turn to science.

Motion sickness (or kinetosis) is the result of a broken alignment between a body's perceived motion and the vestibular system (part of the inner ear). To put it another way, the eyes will believe the body is not moving while the body is actually in motion. This can sometimes occur when a person is placed into a carnival ride with limited visibility and sudden, quick movements, such as, let's say, the Zipper, El Niño or the Inverter, just a few of the many entertaining and possibly nauseating options at this year's fair.

Unfortunately for those suffering kinetosis and those near them, vomiting will usually not relieve the nausea. Therefore, if a ride doesn't come to a stop immediately after a person vomits, it's very likely they will expel their stomach's contents again and again without mercy. Good luck with that.

Fortunately, sailors suffering from centuries of seasickness have come up with a solution: Look to the horizon. Although it's not a surefire way to cure nausea, it can relieve symptoms by allowing what the eyes perceive to line up with how the body is moving. Passing this helpful tip about the horizon onto an ill-looking stranger in line for a ride could save you a trip to the dry-cleaners, and with some consideration for Newtonian mechanics, the nightmare straight out of *The Exorcist* can be easily avoided.

Centrifugal and centripetal forces (the forces that make a potting wheel work) are what to keep in mind when you decide to hop on the Starship 2000 (once known as “the Gravitron”), a ride that basically spins very fast and plasters its passengers against its padded walls. Note the direction the Starship 2000 spins while you're standing in line, and get ready to choose your position. If it is spinning clockwise and an ill-looking person decides to stand at the three o'clock position, then standing in the two o'clock or even the one o'clock position could create a terrible mess for you. However, standing in the four o'clock position will probably be fine — you'll be ahead, not behind anything that comes flying out of your weak-stomached fellow passenger. The same principles can be applied in reverse if the ride is spinning counter-clockwise. Keep in mind that centrifugal force, sometimes thought of as a reaction to centripetal force's inward pull on an object in a spinning environment, will throw the vomit almost directly against the wall, where it will remain until the end of the ride.

With the help of science, the average fairgoer can remain splatter-free this summer, and once again enjoy the spinning and flipping the rides at the Lane County Fair have to offer. — Shaun O'Dell