

Fair: ‘There’s definitely still a demand’ for buying animals

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The Crab, Seafood & Wine Festival was set for April and the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival was planned for June.

John Lewis, the fair’s manager, said on Facebook that the decision to cancel the fair comes with a “heavy heart.”

“As soon as we can all get together, we will put some great events together so we all have something to look forward to,” he said.

The fair is one of the fairground’s largest events and brings in about 12,000 people every year.

Lewis said the concerts at the fair draw people from throughout the state. Josh Turner, a popular country music singer, was scheduled to perform this year.

A loss for 4-H

Lewis said the next challenge is creating a plan to support the 4-H program and help recoup money the youth would have made from the fair’s auction. The 4-H program is preparing an online virtual fair and virtual livestock auction.

Jared Delay, the 4-H program assistant, said they are concerned about trying to sell the animals while people are struggling financially. But he said the program has received phone calls from people who are still interested in buying animals.

“There’s definitely still a demand there and we’re going to try to create a platform that will work,” he said.

“A lot of these families have a lot of dollars wrapped up in buying the animals and the feed for them. That’s a lot of money on the table. It makes a lot of families nervous. But everybody’s been understanding right now.”

Madelynn Weaver, a senior at Knappa High School, has participated in 4-H and the fair for nine years.

She said it was heartbreaking to miss out on the end of her senior year, and that the county fair was the one thing she was looking forward to before she goes to college.

She was planning on bringing her steer and two pigs to the fair. She said a lot goes into preparing the animals for the fair — a big responsibility on top of her school, basketball and softball obligations.

“I’m so glad we have all the support in our county,” Weaver said. “And the Fair Board and all the fair members are trying really hard to make sure we have something.”

Reopening plan

At a press conference on Thursday, Brown also discussed her plan for the first phase of a step-by-step reopening of the state from government restrictions beginning May 15.

During phase one, restaurants, bars, retail stores, child care facilities, gyms and salons



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Clatsop County Fair was canceled over the coronavirus.

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Jared Delay | 4-H program assistant

can open with conditions. Groups of up to 25 people will be allowed to gather as long as social distancing is observed.

Counties will need to submit a plan to the state for approval demonstrating a decline in the prevalence of the virus, adequate testing, personal protective equipment and hospital capacity, among other things.

Clatsop County plans to submit its reopening plan for phase one next week. The county Board of Commissioners is expected to discuss the plan at a special meeting on Monday.

“We still don’t have everything we need, but things are definitely improving,” Brown

said.

“We have finalized our statewide testing and contact tracing strategy. We’ve been wrapping up those programs rapidly so that we can safely and quickly track, trace and isolate new cases,” she said.

“As we reopen parts of our economy, we know and expect that there may be an uptick in new coronavirus cases. That’s why we have to be prepared in every single corner of the state, because as we’ve seen, an outbreak can occur anywhere in the state.”

Following the outbreak at Bornstein Seafoods in Astoria, there have been concerns

that Clatsop County may be set back in its plan for reopening.

County Manager Don Bohn said Wednesday he does not yet know how the outbreak will impact the way the state reviews the county’s application.

Pat Allen, the director of the Oregon Health Authority, emphasized that the phased reopening comes with risk.

“The point of all of these different things — reminding people about the simple stuff like washing your hands and covering your cough or sneeze, wearing facial coverings, doing contact tracing, testing — these are all things that we layer on top of what we’re doing to make up for the fact that we’re going to allow a lot more contact throughout the region,” Allen said.

“That’s why this process involves these 21-day steps, to see what’s going on and make sure we don’t have a rebound in the disease so that we don’t go too fast and open things up too quickly and end up in a situation that gets away from us. But I’m very concerned.

“This is a calculated, mitigated risk, but a risk nevertheless.”

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