

# The Augusta Chronicle

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## Campbell Vaughn: Livestock Show a big part of Georgia Carolina State Fair

**Campbell Vaughn** Columnist

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One hundred years. That is a lot of years. World famous chiropractor and Exchange Club of Augusta fellowship chairman, Dr. Randall Boutwell, shouted it from the mountain top, “A HUNDID YEARS” (using a different dialect for the word one hundred to create emphasis). Randall is as excited about this year’s anniversary as the rest of the members of the Exchange Club of Augusta for the 100<sup>th</sup> edition of the Georgia-Carolina State Fair.

Chartered in August 1923, the Exchange Club of Augusta quickly jumped at the opportunity when the Savannah Valley Association of Agricultural Clubs decided to abandon its plans for a Fall Agricultural Fair. On Oct. 3, 1923, the Exchange Club met and voted to take on the Fair as a project. By Oct. 11, the Club announced that the famous Johnny J. Jones Exposition Company was coming to Augusta for one week, Nov. 12-19.

A parade was organized to celebrate the opening. This spectacle on Broad Street drew a crowd of more than 25,000 persons that lined the sidewalks to see this grand parade march to the newly chosen site for the fair at the lower end of Greene Street.

Each day of the fair was dedicated to a different theme, such as merchants, farmers, children, and Augusta. The entire production was a smashing success, especially considering it was taken from being merely an idea to becoming a huge production all within the span of six weeks.

I am lucky enough to be a part of this annual fair by being on the Livestock Committee. Youth from ages pre-K to seniors in high school come from all over the Southeast to participate in the fun. The shows consist of five categories of livestock animals – beef cattle, dairy cows, pigs, sheep and goats. These kids (and animals) that come to Augusta for the week are amazing to watch.

So how does a livestock show work? It is quite the exhibition. The Exchange Club has a large livestock barn with an entrance across from Magnolia Cemetery on Third Street in downtown Augusta. A day or two before their show, contestants trailer their animals to the fairgrounds,

unload and bring them to the barn. A Georgia Department of Agriculture agent will check the animal's health records and physically examine them. When given the ok to enter the barn, the kids bring their show animals to their assigned location in the barn for anyone attending the fair to see. They set up their camp with feed, grooming supplies, halters, fans, chairs and start getting ready for the big event.

The shows are divided up into two basic types Showmanship entails showing how good of a handler the youth are. Best of Show is all about the animal.

**Campbell Vaughn:** Just in time for Halloween, an immigrant spider has made its way to Augusta

Showmanship is broken down into to various age groups and is a blast to watch. Each kid dresses nicely and introduces their animal into the show ring making sure the maintain eye contact with the judge at all times. The handler of the animals is supposed to maintain control of the livestock and be ready to have their walking direction changed at the nod of the judge. The judge may also stop each participant and ask some questions about the animal like date of birth, weight or mother's name. Winning the Showmanship event is what seems to drive these young handlers. The winner's prize is a giant belt buckle (which is usually put on their belt immediately), a ribbon and some spending money.

The other part of the livestock show is the actual showing off the animal itself. The animals are usually divided up by categories like age, breed and weight. When these show animals are presented, the judges look for the structure of the animal's body, straightness of their back, muscle tone, gait and general appearance relative to age. Ribbons and money are awarded for the best of category. And even more for Best of Show and Grand Champion.

These kids work hard to raise, feed, groom, vet and train these bests of the best animals for our annual show. Make a trip down to check out the Livestock Shows and the rest of the fun the fair has to offer. You won't be disappointed.

## **Schedule of Livestock Show events**

Beef Cattle Show is Oct. 14 at 2 p.m.

Swine Show is Oct. 18 at 2 p.m.

Sheep Show is Oct. 19 at 3 p.m.

Goat Show is Friday Oct. 20 at 3 p.m.

Dairy Show is Saturday Oct. 21 at 2 p.m.