

New ideas propel Acton fall fair

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Herald Staff Writer

There is a perceptible tingle of excitement building in the air around Acton and it has everything to do with the onset of autumn.

Preparations for the 69th annual Acton Fall Fair have moved into high gear with barely four weeks before the three-day event opens Sept. 17. Like the majestic Carlsberg horses, which make a return visit to the fair this year, a roster full of new ideas promises to thrill residents and fall fair buffs from across the province.

While other new events added to the Fair will be announced in coming weeks, if you're a truck fan, pork producer or are easily hypnotized by the magic of a parade, the Acton Fair has something for you not likely to be found anywhere else in the area.

Fair board officials have funnelled extra money into building up the parade, which winds its way through the streets Sept. 16. There will be all kinds of bands and floats and there's a room in the parade for wacky novelty entries.

EXTRA BOUT

In addition to the regular tractor pull competitions Sept. 19, officials have added an extra bout pitting mechanical strength against sheer dead weight. This year's Fair features a pulling competition for regular four-wheel drive trucks - not the souped-up kind born in an urban garage, but the ordinary "workhorse" one might find around the farm.

"We're still stressing agriculture in our Fair," Acton fair president Keith Aitken told The Herald Monday. "And we're trying to achieve a blend of agriculture and entertainment that appeals to everybody."

"The emphasis on agriculture allows us to bring

people up to date on farming."

With that in mind, another major new event is the Swine Carcass Competition sponsored by the Halton Pork Producers.

LIVE HOGS

Pork producers competing in this novel contest can submit live hogs the ten best of which will then be slaughtered in Kitchen-er by Schneider's Meats. The slaughtered side of pork will be judged, winners chosen and then the ten will be placed on auction at the fair Saturday.

There's some excellent prize money to be won in this event, Mr. Aitken said. Acton's Brian's Meats has agreed to sponsor a silver tray trophy for the winner.

Horses will be another attraction. An Arabian horse show is planned for Friday (Sept. 17). Jumper and hunter English classes will run Saturday and Sunday and for cowpokes, a western show takes place Sunday.

Watch for heavy and light horse pulls Friday night and Saturday. These events are perennial favorites at the Acton Fair, drawing entrants from Ontario and the U.S. In various classes, magnificent draft horses have to pull a dead weight a specified distance, without much coaxing from the owner or trainer.

PONY SHOW

For youngsters there will also be a pony show on the weekend, an event built on games at centre field.

Beef cattle will be on show Saturday and the finest dairy cattle in the province will be judged Sunday. For area sheep farmers, their show day at the Fair is Saturday.

One event which is often overlooked by all but the most interested people is the Fair's poultry show held in the building adjacent to Memorial Arena.

"It's a real attraction," Mr. Aitken said. "There are very few fairs in the province which have as good a poultry show as we have."

The poultry competition runs Friday and Saturday, replaced Sunday by a rabbit show.

Still on the subject of feathers, organizers have added an event this year which is giving them lots to crow about.

Preceding Friday night's horse pull, a rooster crowing competition will be held on the track, a chance for local leghorns to strut their stuff.

LARGE SLICE

Top notch entertainment has booked into the Fair this year, too, a large slice of it for the Miss Acton

pageant at the arena Friday night.

Through a Toronto booking agency, organizers have snagged the Leahy Family, a popular Peterborough clan which is so talented they could do an entire two-hour show on their own, Mr. Aitken maintained.

Toronto magician Tony Molesworth will also appear with plenty up his sleeve to amaze the audience. The Paul Brothers and Shirley plan to keep Actonians in stitches, relieving some of the pageant's exciting tension.

A professional master of ceremonies will host the competition, backed up by the Billy Williamson Trio.

Local merchants have committed a delightful

selection of gifts to Miss Acton and her two runners-up and there will be cash prizes as well.

The arena will open after 6 p.m. Friday - about two hours before the Miss Acton show begins. This gives everyone plenty of time to browse through numerous produce and baking entries judged earlier in the afternoon.

OTHER EVENTS

Other events at the Acton Fair include:

- the return of Albion (Midway) Shows which will begin operating Friday with one of the largest ferris wheels in the province;

- model boat races Saturday and Sunday, including two 50-lap endurance races;

- a gala fiddlers' contest starting Saturday at 5 p.m., building into the evening with a banjo competition and then a fiddle and banjo duet contest in the arena;

- an antique tractor pull Sunday afternoon, featuring mechanical "senior citizens" of an earlier era which still have plenty of gusto;

- of special interest to youngsters, the annual pet show; have you got a cat with the longest whiskers?

- the Pioneer Games at centre field in Prospect Park; time to test old boats in hay bale throwing, log sawing, horse shoes or the farmer's walk; Mr. Aitken described the games as an opportunity for fair-goers to

actually participate in the Fair and get a feeling that it genuinely belongs to them.

- a Fall Fair dance is planned at the Acton Curling Club on Churchill Road Saturday night.

- throughout the weekend a variety of concession stands will dole out a variety of fast foods. Don't forget to visit The Spot in The Park.

- a special weekend pass will be available at Acton banks and the local credit union during the first week of September. It's good for unlimited entry to the fair (except to the Curling Club dance) and costs a mere \$5.

Adult admission each day will be \$3 - youngsters will be allowed in for \$1.

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