

# Markham Fair: Food, Fun and Farming

By Hannelore Volpe  
Stouffville Free Press

Celebrate all things fall, food and farming at the Markham Fair, a four-day extravaganza running from Oct. 1 to 4.

This is a family-friendly agricultural fair you won't want to miss.

It becomes even more exciting if you or your children have entered one of the fair's many competitions, and perhaps get to take home a prize-winning ribbon. Fair organizers anticipate about 3,000 people bringing in up to 10,000 entries this year.

Along with the growing number of dedicated volunteers, around 850 at last count, it is the people who enter their crafts, baking and preserves, agricultural products and animals in the various competitions, who make the fair such a success. Take time to linger over the entries so you know who has had that 400 pound pumpkin lurking in their backyard. It's no small feat to grow a prize-winning giant potato or tomato or produce a prize-winning dairy cow or excellent wheat or hay. Among this year's entries, you might also see letters written to people in Canada before 1900, hand-forged horseshoes, railway spikes, Buddha statues and decorated phone covers. And don't forget to check out the schoolchildren's entries.

At the fair, you'll be greeted by all kinds of agricultural displays from century-old machines to modern farming technology.

Keep an ear out for mooing, quacking and neighing, have your kids meet baby chicks, ducks and piglets up close. Smell the aroma of sizzling, delectable foods, and enjoy lots of music and entertainment.

"It doesn't matter what culture we come from," said Markham Fair general manager John Peco, "we all eat. This is a great place to make a connection with farmers who put food on our table."

New this year is the family-friendly Horse Power Live show to be presented on the Thursday and Friday of the Fair. The show introduces the magic of horses with trick-riding, a horse mythology primer, get-to-know horse breeds and other information.

Also new is the RAM rodeo tour, which takes place on Saturday and Sunday. It features some of the 200 or so cowboys and cowgirls who follow the rodeo circuit competing for prizes and championships titles.

Mr. Peco said it is important to introduce such innovative attractions. "As we grow we need to look at new ways to make the Fair relevant."

The Markham Fair is open Thursday, Friday and Saturday October 1, 2 and 3 from 9 am to 10 pm., and Sunday October 4 from 9 am to 6 pm. Admission is \$15 for adults and youths; \$5 for children 12 and under and \$10 for seniors. Children four and under, as well as people with special needs and their caregivers, are free. Family passes, four day passports and midway ride all day passes are also available. Parking is free.



Jake Ward gets a helping hand from Laura Seeley, as fellow volunteers Laura Lee O'Brien (standing, left) and Candice Ward help put the finishing touches on a 'Straw Creature' to promote the Markham Fair.

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