

County flocks to dairy breakfast

By Randall Dullum Union news editor | Posted: Monday, June 1, 2015 9:27 am

Rain did not dampen attendance or enthusiasm at the Jefferson County Dairy Breakfast Saturday, as several thousand hungry people turned out for a hearty morning meal.

The 12th annual event, held at Jefferson County Fair Park Activity Center, drew 2,200 people, with two lines forming within the first two hours.

The county Dairy Breakfast tradition resumed 12 years ago after a hiatus and has been a start-of-summer and National June Dairy Month highlight each year since.

Coordinators said 2015 was another good year for the charity event, which supports FFA and 4-H programs, agriculture-related scholarships and improvements at the fairgrounds.

“What an awesome event again, this Jefferson County Dairy Breakfast,” Jefferson Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Janet Werner said Saturday about an hour before the event concluded. “We have just had a huge crowd out here again today, and the weather isn’t the greatest out there, but maybe that’s helping our attendance. Everybody certainly is enjoying themselves and having a good breakfast.”

The chamber director said turnout was quite slow for about the first two hours of the breakfast, but then began picking up in a big way.

“We had a couple little breaks, but by 8 (a.m.) it’s just been nonstop,” Werner observed. “I can finally see the end of the line now two-and-a-half hours later. So this is good ... this is good for the Dairy Breakfast Committee — everybody’s really happy we’re having a good attendance.”

Public relations coordinator Marlene Zick agreed.

“Oh, this (year’s crowd) is fantastic — we have had two lines going since 8:30 this morning, which we’ve never had before,” she said. “It’s just been very steady, so that is good.”

She joked that perhaps her telling farmers over WFAW radio early Saturday morning that it was too wet to go into the fields persuaded them to come over and eat some breakfast.

“I’m sure that’s not what did it, but it (dairy breakfast) started out very slow and, like I said, since 8:30 (a.m.) we have had two food lines going, so that’s fantastic,” Zick enthused. “Rain certainly hasn’t been a deterrent.”



BREAKFAST BONANZA

BREAKFAST BONANZA — The Jefferson County Dairy Breakfast on Saturday drew more than 2,200 hungry people to the Jefferson County Fair Park Activity Center. Coordinators said 2015 was another good year for the charity event, which supports FFA and 4-H programs, agriculture-related scholarships and improvements at the fairgrounds. The breakfast also enabled attendees to participate in a number of activities. For more photos [click here](#).

And by having it inside the Fair Park Activity Center, she said, the breakfast can be held rain or shine.

“If we were outside in a tent ... and I know a lot of people liked the breakfast on the farm,” Vick said. “But this is so convenient — it doesn’t matter if it’s raining or not because we can put the activities inside.

“And I know some people liked the down-on-the-farm (breakfast) because the kids can see the animals and stuff,” she added. “But the parking here (at Fair Park) is fantastic; we have the guys with the tractors that bring you (attendees) right up to the door. So this is just, I think, an ideal place to have it.”

The all-you-can-eat breakfast, held from 6 to 11 a.m., featured food cooked on site by hundreds of volunteers from the county’s FFA and 4-H organizations who also helped set up and take down tables, carry out garbage, staff activities and clean up after the last meal was served.

The menu featured Jones Dairy Farm sausage, two kinds of scrambled eggs, pancakes, Sargento cheeses, chocolate and white milk, coffee and orange juice. For dessert there were delicious “dairy cakes” with ice cream and a share of a 300-pound banana split, courtesy of John Anhalt of Burger Corner, unveiled early in the morning.

Zick said this year’s breakfast-goers consumed an estimated 700 pounds of sausage and Canadian bacon, 3,200 cartons of milk, more than 150 pounds of butter and 500 pounds of cheese, along with 800 pounds of liquid eggs, and countless dairy cakes, served with 42 gallons of chocolate ice cream from Wedl’s and 50 pounds of sour cream.

And 12 gallons of syrup was used to top off those pancakes.

“So all this food consumed will really help out the dairy industry,” Zick said.

Despite higher egg prices from the recent outbreaks of Avian flu, she said the dairy breakfast was not impacted unduly.

“We got a quote from a couple of different places (egg producers), but everything goes up, so they (egg prices) did not have an impact,” Zick said. “You just have to incorporate any price increases.”

Meanwhile, area band “The Variations” provided the morning’s musical entertainment.

“The people are drawn to the music,” Zick said. “There are some people that come just for the music — they sit the whole time.”

Besides filling their stomachs, the breakfast enabled attendees to participate in a number of activities that were introduced last year and coordinated by Sue Marek, events chair.

A kids country dress-up contest featuring little “cowgirls” and “cowboys” from all over the county drew only two entries this year, Zick noted.

“They announced for it (dress-up contest) and only one person came up,” she said. “Only one little boy came up and they (organizers) gave him a prize ... and a little girl also got a prize. So evidently, many people didn’t come for the dress-up.

“Our participation in the events was down a little bit this year, so that’s too bad,” Zick lamented. “Sunday would have been a great day for the breakfast.”

Also, in the adjoining buildings, a milk-drinking contest was reprised, as was the kids' pedal tractor pulls sponsored by the JC Riders Snowmobile Club. There also were many vendor booths featuring local businesses, door-prize giveaways, dairy princesses, a mini-farm setup and a petting zoo.

Nurses from St. Coletta of Wisconsin were on hand offering blood pressure checks for attendees.

And for the third consecutive year, the breakfast featured dog sheep-herding demonstrations outdoors, despite the drizzle.

Games and a display of antique tractors rounded out Saturday's activities.

Money raised from the breakfast will go to promote agriculture in Jefferson County, with some going toward Fair Park improvements, and some for grants and scholarships to local FFA and 4-H clubs.

One highlight mid-morning, in fact, was the presentation of this year's scholarships and grants to 4-H and FFA youth, announced by Arlette Sambs.

"Over the past 10 years, the dairy breakfast has raised — and organizers have awarded — \$51,500 in scholarships, and \$23,470 in grants and youth-related improvements at the Jefferson County Fair Park," Sambs informed the throng of breakfasters. "Last year, \$4,000 in scholarships and \$6,500 in grants were awarded."

This year's eight grant applicants, she said, were: Fort Atkinson Meat & Animal Project, to replace equipment; Jamison Richardt, to help fund a robotics project-lego teams, 4-H; Jefferson County Ag in the Classroom Program, Tracy Brandel; Jefferson County Connections, to support youth and youth development experiences.

Also, Johnson Creek FFA, to help pay for a fertilizer injector for the greenhouse; Lake Mills FFA, to help send students to the Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C.; Jefferson County Dairy Youth Fund, for judging, dairy quiz bowl and jeopardy clinics; Jefferson County 4-H Junior Leadership Association, to help pay for Cloverbud day event.

"This morning we have the 12 scholarship applicants here helping out at the breakfast," Sambs said. "Here they are."

They are as follows: Natalie Ciciva, attending William Woods University, with a double major in equine science; Melanie Eck, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, agribusiness; Issac Elsen, UW-Platteville, environmental engineering; Colleen Hann, UW-Oshkosh, accounting and finance; Bethany Hartwig, UW-Platteville, undeclared; Bridgett Hoffman, South Dakota, animal science business and production.

Also, Carl Koeppel, UW-Platteville, soil and crop science; Bryce Krull, UW-River Falls, ag marketing and pre-law; Sara Mark, Huntington University, education; Jennifer Michel, freshman, UW-River Falls, animal science; Amanda Strauss, sophomore, UW-Platteville, animal science; Amber Ziebel, Glove University, veterinary technology.

Also going on at the fairgrounds Saturday was the Furry Friends 5k, benefiting the Humane Society of Jefferson County, of which some participants afterward trotted over to the Dairy Breakfast cold and wet to warm up with some hot breakfast fare.

"Overall, it has been a really successful year," Zick concluded. "I don't think anyone could have gone away

hungry.”