

Farmers set agenda at Missouri Livestock Symposium, Dec. 4-5

Source: Bruce Lane, 660-665-9866

KIRKSVILLE, Mo. – The annual Missouri Livestock Symposium, Dec. 4-5 at Kirksville Middle School, will demonstrate ways area farmers working together make learning easy.

The secret is to offer a variety of topics and select the best speakers in each field, said Gary Mathes, farmer from Greentop, Mo., and head of the working committee.

This year some 24 speakers will appear in eight simultaneous sections running from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There will be inspirational speakers and entertainers before and after the classes.

“We thought we’d be lucky to keep this going three or four years,” said Bruce Lane, University of Missouri Extension regional livestock specialist, Kirksville. “It keeps getting bigger after 10 years.”

Any of the 23 committee members can nominate a speaker they think will do a good job.

This year the sections include Beef, Sheep, Stock Dogs, Meat Goats, Forages, Around the Home and Farm, and Renewable Resources. Speakers and panels change every hour.

Topics range from “Top Profit Tips” by Colorado rancher Lee Leachman to “Control of Nuisance Wildlife” by Bob Pierce, MU Extension wildlife specialist.

Returning will be Temple Grandin, who writes books and appears on national TV discussing animal behavior. She teaches producers to see their working chutes and corrals as livestock does.

Herd health gets attention in several sections from visiting large-animal veterinarians from Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

The Home section includes speakers on vineyards, quilting and energy conservation.

Those attending can stay with one section or mix and match to meet their own interests, Lane said. “It’s a very flexible program and people like that.”

The program was designed for farmers in the grass-covered hills of northern Missouri and southern Iowa. However, last year the symposium attracted attendees from 78 of Missouri’s 114 counties, plus 17 states. In all, 2,125 people registered at the door.

The farmer committee insists on keeping things simple, Lane said. There is no advance registration and no fees. Even the meals are free, paid for by meeting sponsors.

Exhibits fill the school gym and hallways. Large stock equipment is shown in the parking lot. “More exhibitors want to come, but we’re out of space,” Lane said.

On Friday night, Dec. 4, Mike Adams, who hosts the daily radio show “Agri-Talk,” will be the keynote speaker. He will be preceded by welcomes from local legislators, leaders of the MU College of Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources, and the Missouri Department of Agriculture.

The symposium committee will give awards to top stock producers, educators and classic-tractor owners.

After the full day of meetings on Saturday there will be a concert by Steve Holy, who has topped the country music charts with the singles “Brand New Girlfriend” and “Good Morning Beautiful.”

There will be a \$20 charge for the concert, Lane said. Seating is limited to 450, the capacity of the auditorium. For tickets, call the MU Extension center in Adair County at 660-665-9866 and ask for Vanessa. Lane can be reached at the same number for additional information.

For a complete program, see <http://www.missourilivestock.com>.

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