

Fair manager brought to tears at close of youth livestock sale

August 12, 2020



As the Friday deadline approached last week to purchase an animal in the Del Norte County Fair's Junior Livestock Sale, Thursday was an eerie day for Fair Manager Kim Floyd.

"Thursday would have been the opening day of the fair," Floyd said. "It was extremely quiet."

In the wake of the fair being canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic prohibiting mass gatherings, Floyd and her staff did all they could to continue one of the fair's traditions — the Junior Livestock Auction. The event was transformed into a virtual sale. Youth advertised the animals they raised on the fair's website with a little biographical information about themselves. Buyers then contacted the youths with proxy letters and a minimum bid, based on the animal.

Floyd said the number of participants was down from previous years in the virtual format, but staff expected that with the allure of the in-person auction cancelled.

However, Floyd received a surprise just before deadline that transformed the unsettling day into a very special day.

“I had left the office to run errands when I got a call from a buyer,” Floyd recalled. “He said, 'I want to take your rough day and make it a little better.’”

There were still eight unsold animals. The mysterious buyer bought five of them.

“He told me, 'I cannot keep going to the website and see all the kids not have a buyer,’” Floyd said. “I broke down and started crying.”

By 4 p.m. Friday, the remaining animals also sold. Over the weekend, the youth dropped off their animals at the fairgrounds. Floyd said they kept safely socially distanced by remaining inside their vehicles. The animal’s good health was confirmed, then they were taken to market to be delivered to buyers.

Floyd said the operation went very smoothly, thanks to a lot of volunteers. She especially thanked the members of the Junior Livestock Working Group, without whom the livestock sale wouldn’t have been possible, including director’s Kim Haban, Doug Wakefield, Steven Westbrook and Vanessa Alexandre; and leaders Robin Payne, Jessica Chamberlain, Jessica Phillips, Helen Ferguson and Heather Scott. Lastly, she thanked the many supportive buyers who went above and beyond minimum bids.

“We had a lot of first-time buyers who wanted to support the kids. Many even bought multiple animals. It was cool,” she said. “I know a lot of people are struggling, but they opened their pockets to support these kids. The animals looked great. (The kids) did an excellent job raising their animals this year.”

As an additional bonus, she added American AgCredit chipped in to each purchase amount for each participating youth.

While the livestock sale was carried off flawlessly, Floyd said she can’t wait to return to normal.

“I’m very optimistic we’ll have a fair next year. When we do have a fair, it’s going to be big,” Floyd promised. “I’ve learned our community is pretty stinking special. The support our community gave to these kids was huge. We have a great community. This is the reason why I love my job.”