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Prepare for a

family day at the fair

(METRO CREATIVE)

County fairs, state fairs and country fairs dot the landscape in late spring, summer and fall, offering fairgoers plenty of attractions and rides to fill warm days and evenings. Families who plan ahead for the festivities may be able to improve their experiences.

Purchase passes in advance

Some fairs enable visitors to purchase entry tickets, parking passes and even game vouchers online. There are advantages to doing so, such as bundling discounts. Buying tickets in advance also cuts down on time spent waiting in line.

Devise a basic plan

Look over the list of attractions and activities to gauge what you want to get out of the fair. Some fairs post their calendars online. With kids in tow, you'll likely want to check out any children's rides or animal exhibits and interactions. Create a generalized plan, but be flexible, especially when going with other families.

Think about safety

Fairs attract thousands of people and that can lead to confusion if children become separated from their parents. Write your mobile phone number down and put it in your child's pocket or bag, so he or she doesn't have to memorize it. Consider finding the tallest attraction at the fair (perhaps the ferris wheel), and make that the meeting point if anyone becomes lost.

Snap a photo of youngsters when you arrive so that you'll have a recent image and know exactly what they are wearing if you need to engage law enforcement. Some parents tell their children to find another parent and ask them to help them contact security.

Time your visit

If the fair runs during the week and into the weekend, weekdays are likely to be much less crowded. Also, while not ideal, a cool day or one with a slight drizzle will cut down on crowds and improve the ability to see more things and get on more rides.

Factor in food

Fair food is an indulgence to enjoy when fairs come around. Rather than go overboard, pick one meal or item that the family will enjoy. Bring a backpack, if permitted, and fill it with bottled water and other light snacks so that you can tame hunger pangs and not bust the budget at the food court.

Understand game odds

Fair games are largely designed to earn the event money and not to cash out prizes to all participants. The chances of winning the grand prize, which may be a giant stuffed giraffe, usually are low, so it's best if children do not become overly concerned with winning a prize. Play the games for fun and memories and not to walk away with the biggest prizes.

In addition to these suggestions, parents can make sure they bring insect repellent and sunscreen to the fair. Dress for comfort and not fashion.

These strategies can help families make the most of the county fair this year.

Racine County Fair 2023

Southern Lakes Newspapers
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above: Connor and (back) Harris Carson (front) wash their 8-month-old Holstein during the 2021 Racine County Fair. Family friendly activities abound at the fair.

CHAD HENSIKAC Racine County Fair

on the cover: Riley Runkel smiles with her steer, Hot Fudge, during the 2022 Racine County Fair Livestock Auction.

JASON ARNDT PHOTO Racine County Fair

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Wednesday, July 26



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RACINE COUNTY FAIR 2023

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Wednesday, July 26

OPENING DAY

Noon to close – ride wristband for \$30

- 9 a.m. Judging – Junior Dairy, Rabbits
- 9:30 a.m. Judging – Poultry Showmanship
- 10 a.m. Poultry Photo Judging contest
- 10 a.m. Junior English Horse Show
- 1 a.m. Picture with a goat! Goat Barn
- Noon Official Opening of the 101st Annual Racine County Fair – Fair Office
- 2 p.m. Judging – Open Class Dairy
- 2 p.m. Pictures with a Goat! Goat Barn
- 3 p.m. Goats on Parade
- 3 p.m. Cake Decorating – Open Class Bldg
- 3 p.m. Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena
- 4 p.m. Laura Bell – Center Stage
- 4:30 p.m. Dog Demonstration – Showcase Stage
- 6 p.m. Craft Challenge – Live Open Class Bldg
- 6:30 p.m. Truck and Tractor Pull – Grandstand
- 7 p.m. Fiddleface – Activity Building

Appearing daily

South end of grounds

- Live Stingray Encounter, Wednesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Brunyon Blaszek Royal Bengal Tiger Show, 3 and 6 p.m. Wednesday, 1:30, 4:30 and 7 p.m. Thursday through Sunday.

Children's Area

- All Star Stunt Dogs, 3:30 and 5:30 p.m. Wednesday; 2:30, 4:30 and 6:30 p.m.
- Nick's Kids Show – Wed – Sun 2, 4, and 6 p.m.
- Kids are People Too, 1 and 3 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday
- Free Petting Pen, 10 a.m. to noon, 2 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Wednesday; 9 a.m. to noon, 2 to 5 p.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. Thursday through Saturday, 8 to 11 a.m., 1 to 4 p.m. and 6 to 8 p.m. Sunday
- Paul Bunyan Lumberjack Show, 4 and 6 p.m. Wednesday; 2, 4 and 6 p.m. Thursday through Sunday

Center Stage Craft Beer and Wine Garden

Free entertainment daily
Bingo by the Lions Club, Thursday and Friday, 5 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, 2 to 7 p.m.; Sunday 2 to 6 p.m.

Last game of the day starts at last time listed.

Fair hours

Wednesday through Saturday
8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

Sunday

8 a.m. to 10 p.m.
Note: Junior and Open Class exhibits (including animals and competitive exhibits) close around 5 p.m. on Sunday.

All events are subject to change.

7 p.m. Northcape Express – Center Stage

Thursday, July 27

CHILDREN'S DAY

Noon to close – ride wristband for \$30

- 8:30 a.m. Rooster Crowing Contest
- 9 a.m. Judging Junior Swine, Swine Showmanship
- 9:30 a.m. Children's Day Activities – Hospitality Tent
- 10 a.m. Junior Horse Western Show/Judging
- 10:30 a.m. Kiddie Tractor pull registration – Children's area.
- 11 a.m. Pictures with a Goat! Goat Barn
- 11 a.m. Kiddie Tractor pull – Children's Area
- 1 p.m. Monster Truck Rides – Grandstand "Nothing But Trouble"
- 1 p.m. Cream Puff Eating Contests – Center Stage, registration required
- 2 p.m. Pictures with a Goat! Goat Barn
- 2 p.m. Chocolate Bomb Making – Open Class Building
- 3 p.m. Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena
- 4 p.m. Cookies with the Queen – Youth Building
- 4 p.m. Marty Martin and the Crowd Pleasers – Center Stage
- 4:30 p.m. Dog Demonstration – Showcase Stage
- 6 p.m. Wine Tasting – Beer/Wine Garden
- 6 p.m. Quick and Easy Table Runner Quilting Demonstration – Open Class Bldg
- 6:30 p.m. Monster Truck Show, presented by JM Motorsports – Grandstand, \$5 per person
- 6:30 p.m. Fair Night Photo Shoot – Open Class, Photo Building
- 7 p.m. Breaking Cadence – Activity Building
- 7:30 p.m. New Piano Guys – Center Stage
- 8 p.m. Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena



above: Hannah Oxendine-Morey hangs out with her pigs named Daphne and Vulcan during s previous Racine County Fair. **top:** The demo derby always draws a big crowd at the Racine County Fair.

CHAD HENSIKAC Racine County Fair

Friday, July 28

4-H/FFA/YOUTH DAY

Noon to close – ride wristband for \$30

- 8:30 a.m. Judging – Junior Poultry
- 9 a.m. Judging – Open Class Beef, Junior and Open Goats
- 9:30 a.m. Judging – Junior Beef
- 10 a.m. Horse Drill Team Demonstration
- 11 a.m. Junior Sheep Judging
- 11 a.m. Poultry Auction sign up
- 1 p.m. Saw and Shingle making demos Antique tractor area
- 2 p.m. Steve Meisner Polka Band – Activity Building – Sponsored by Community State Bank
- 3 p.m. Saw and Shingle making demos – Antique tractor area
- 3 p.m. Cheryl McCrary Band – Center Stage
- 4 p.m. Cookies with the Queen – Youth Building
- 4:30 p.m. Dog Demonstration – Showcase Stage
- 5 p.m. On A Roll Food Contest – Open Class Bldg
- 5:30 p.m. Antique Tractor Parade – Grandstand
- 6 p.m. Sue Isaacson Memorial Showmanship Competition
- 6:30 p.m. Truck and Tractor Pull – Grandstand
- 7 p.m. Under the Lights Speed event – including Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena
- 7 p.m. Lunch Money Bullies –

Grandstand attractions

Truck and Tractor Pulls

6:30 p.m. Wednesday, July 26.
Free with fair admission.

Freestyle Monster Truck Show

7 p.m. Thursday, July 27
Grandstand fee: \$5. Monster truck rides will start at 1 p.m. at the grandstand for \$10/person.

Pit Party to see the trucks up close will start at 5 p.m. for an additional \$5/person.

Note: This does not include fair admission or grandstand fee. Rides and pit party admission must be purchased at the fair (not in advance).

Truck and Tractor Pulls

6:30 p.m. Friday, July 28
Antique Tractor Parade begins at 5:30 p.m.

Bulls-N-Barrels

7 p.m. Saturday, July 29
Free with fair admission.

Garden Tractor Pull

8 a.m. Sunday, July 30.
Free with paid fair admission.

Demolition Derby

2 and 6 p.m. Sunday, July 30
Free with paid fair admission



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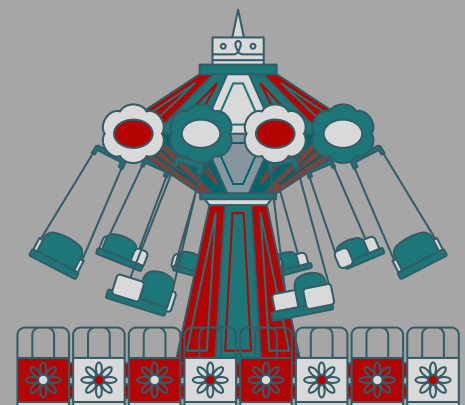
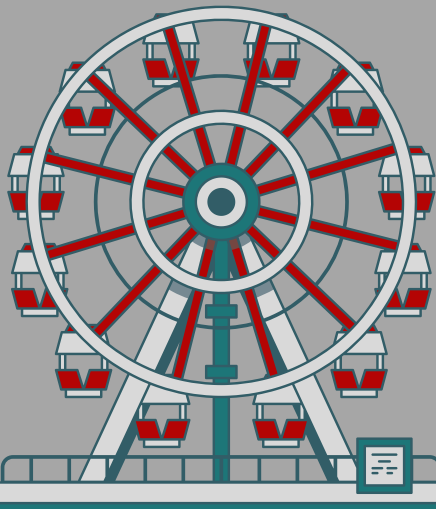
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The Racine County Fair celebrated a century in existence last year at fairgrounds in Union Grove. The summer tradition included all the usual trappings – carnival rides, tractor pulls, live music and livestock shows, to name a few. The four-day event was also blessed with ideal weather.

CHAD HENSIK
PHOTOS
Racine County Fair



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Racine County Fair



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Henderson crowned Fairest of the Fair

Grove graduate looks forward to representing the Racine County Fair

By Jason Arndt

STAFF WRITER

Kelsey Henderson hasn't missed a single day at the Racine County Fair in her life.

Henderson, who graduated from Union Grove High School in 2020 and attends Iowa State University, has spent several years exhibiting award-winning animals ranging from steers to pigs while staying dedicated to the agriculture industry.

While her show career came to end in 2022, since she aged out of the junior class, Henderson wanted to remain involved in the Racine County Fair and decided to seek the Fairest of the Fair post.

On June 2 at the Racine County Fairgrounds in Union Grove, amid a strong field of competitors, Henderson earned the title of 2023 Fairest of the Fair and will represent the Racine County Fair set for July 26 to 30.

Additionally, she earned a \$2,000 scholarship, while picking up a lifetime membership to the Racine County Agricultural Society, which grants Henderson free admission to the Racine County Fair.

She will also vie for the title of Wisconsin Fairest of the Fair competition in January.

Henderson called the honor a privilege and looks forward to the challenge of showcasing the 2023 Racine County Fair titled "Fair-Ever Fun."

The newest Fairest of the Fair said admits the 2022 Racine County Fair was difficult, considering it was the last time she could show animals, but wanted to stay engaged with the fair and local agricultural community.

"Last year was definitely really hard, you spent a lot of years in the barn, you have a lot of animals and a lot of memories," Henderson said. "One of the reasons I really ran for the Fairest of the Fair was because there are so many other ways to get involved at the fair level, give back to the community, work with the exhibitors and fairgoers, all of the above."

The Racine County Fairest of the Fair contest is a two-day selection process consisting of three major categories, including evaluation of applications and further assessments by a panel of judges.

Assessments include an individual interview, group interview, dinner, general social interactions as well as presentation on stage.

Henderson succeeds Kennedy Bosch, who graduated from Waterford Union High School in 2022, as Fairest of the Fair.

Deeply rooted in agriculture

According to Henderson's biography submitted by the Racine County Fair, she grew up strongly rooted in agriculture on her family's farm in Union Grove.

After graduating from Union Grove, she enrolled at Iowa State University, where she majors in agricultural business while staying actively involved in several extra-curricular activities related to her course of study and university community.

Before applying for Fairest of the Fair, she has held several professional internships, including CNHS Industrial and John Deere, with hopes of having a career in the agricultural industry.

Henderson, who actively participated



above: Kennedy Bosch, 2022 Racine County Fairest of the Fair, presents her mother, Theresa, with the Tom Busch Friend of the Fairest Award during the June 2 Fairest of the Fair coronation ceremony on the Racine County Fairgrounds. **below:** Kelsey Henderson receives a roses from 2022 Racine County Fairest of the Fair Kennedy Bosch after winning the 2023 title at the June 2 Fairest of the Fair coronation ceremony. **at right:** Bosch, crowns Kelsey Henderson after a panel of judges selected Henderson to succeed Bosch.

JASON ARNDT PHOTOS Racine County Fair



in Yorkville 4-H for more than a decade, also served a founder and inaugural students for the Union Grove FFA program that launched in 2017.

"I was very fortunate to be deeply rooted in agriculture with great people, my family and friends, and course, teachers, FFA advisors, 4-H leaders," Henderson said. "They made me the person that I am today."

Henderson earned selection as Fairest of the Fair among five total applicants.

Strong field

Amanda Kurt, one of three judges tasked with selecting Fairest of the Fair, found the completion challenging because all five finalists presented strong platforms.

"It was difficult this year, they answered the questions so well," she said. "It was very well challenging."

Dave Adams and Kendall Riskedal also served on the panel.

Other applicants included Olivia Albello, Waterford; Rylee Hetland, Burlington;

Jennifer Hinkel, Franklin, and Paige Koenecke, Union Grove.

Waterford graduate Albello plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to study sonography with hopes of working with expectant mothers as an ultrasound technician.

Koenecke graduated from Westosha Central High School, where she earned recognition as an Academic Top 10 performer, and looks to major in Clinical Laboratory Science and double minor in Spanish and Healthcare Administration at UW-Stevens Point.

Hinkel, a recent graduate of UW-Madison with a bachelor's degree in business administration majoring in marketing with a minor in communications, serves as agriculture and communication coordinator at the Wisconsin State Fair.

Hinkel also served the 2020 Wisconsin Honey Queen and 2021 American Honey Queen.

Hetland, an eventual Burlington High School graduate, will attend UW-Platteville and major in agricultural education.

The other four candidates, like Henderson, also carried several years experience at the Racine County Fair.

"It was a great competition and I wish the best for them," Henderson said. "They are all wonderful ladies and I am glad that we got to become friends through this experience."

Henderson plans to continue advocating for Racine County, the Racine County Fair, and the agriculture industry while serving as the 2023 Fairest of the Fair.

"I am really excited for this opportunity to become an advocate for Racine County and the Racine County Fair," she said.

She has yet to miss a day of the Racine County Fair in her life, and that isn't stopping anytime soon, according to Henderson's biography she submitted as part of the application process.

Activity Building
 7 p.m. Eddie Butts Band –
 Center Stage

4:30 p.m. Dog Demonstration –
 Showcase Stage
 6 p.m. \$1,000 Winner Takes All
 Contest – Open Class Building
 7 p.m. Boot Jack Road –
 Activity Building
 7 p.m. Bulls -N- Barrels Bull
 Riding and Barrel Racing –
 Grandstand
 7 p.m. Trick Riding Demo –
 Horse Arena
 8 p.m. Bedlam/Lines of Loyalty –
 Center Stage

Saturday, July 29

Noon to close – ride wristband for \$30

8 a.m. Horse Show – Gymkana –
 Horse Arena
 9:30 a.m. Livestock Auction – Sale
 Arena. Sale order: Swine,
 Goats, Lambs, Beef
 10 a.m. Beer and Wine judging –
 Open Class Bldg
 10:30 a.m. Dog Demonstrations –
 Showcase Stage
 11 a.m. Pictures with a Goat!
 Goat Barn
 1 p.m. Matt Meyer – Center Stage
 1 p.m. Log Sawing and Threshing
 Demos – Antique Tractor area
 2 p.m. Wine Tasting –
 Beer/Wine Garden
 2 p.m. Pictures with a Goat!
 Goat Barn
 3 p.m. Milk in the Bottle Competition
 Goat Barn
 3 p.m. Log Sawing and Threshing
 Demos – Antique Tractor area
 3 p.m. Trick Riding Demo –
 Horse Arena
 4 p.m. Cookies with the Queen –
 Youth Building
 4 p.m. Knitting and Crocheting
 Challenge – Open Class
 Building
 4:30 p.m. Cork N Classics –
 Center Stage

Sunday, July 30

Noon to close – ride wristband for \$30

8 a.m. Garden Tractor Pull –
 Grandstand
 9 a.m. Church Service –
 Center Stage
 10 a.m. Horse Fun Show –
 Costume Class
 10 a.m. Beer Bloody Mary's and
 Mimosa's – Beer/Wine Garden
 11 a.m. Pictures with a Goat! –
 Goat Barn
 11 a.m. Fur and Feather Sale –
 Poultry Building
 Noon Kenny and The Night Owls –
 Center Stage
 Noon Chocolate Dessert Contest –
 Park Pavilion
 1 p.m. Hay Bale Throwing Contest –
 Dairy/Beef Building
 1 p.m. Log Sawing and Threshing
 demo – Antique Tractor area
 1:30 p.m. Fun and Fashionable Sheep –



The Racine County Fair features a carnival with rides and games. This year's fair opens Wednesday, July 26, at the fairgrounds in Union Grove.

CHAD HENSIK Racine County Fair

	Sale Arena	3:30 p.m. Sadie – Center Stage
1:45 p.m.	Favorite Pie Contest – Park Pavilion	4:30 p.m. Dog Demonstration – Showcase Stage
2 p.m.	Demo Derby – Grandstand	5 p.m. Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena
2 p.m.	Pictures with a Goat! – Goat Barn	6 p.m. Genesee Depot – Activity Building
2 p.m.	Trick Riding Demo – Horse Arena	6 p.m. Demo Derby – Grandstand
2:30 p.m.	Pie Auction – Park Pavilion	7 p.m. Steve El Show (Elvis) - Center Stage
3 p.m.	Chainsaw Carving Auction	

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Riley doubles down & wins again

Local student has another grand champion steer

By Jason Arndt
STAFF WRITER

Raising a grand champion steer for any exhibition, including the Racine County Fair, takes time and patience.

Riley Runkel, then 17 and an incoming Burlington High School senior, it was the epitome of dedication during last year's fair. Runkel, who first showcased a grand champion steer at the Racine County Fair in 2018, exhibited three more in the next four years with the last one happening during the 100th anniversary of the fair in 2022.

In between winning at the Racine County Fair, she also captured multiple other livestock victories, including drawing the highest bid at the 2019 Governor's Blue Ribbon Livestock Auction at the Wisconsin State Fair last year.

Runkel, however, said showcasing a grand champion 2,290-pound crossbred steer she called Hot Fudge in 2022 was unlike any other previous winning experience.

"I would say my steer, personality-wise, he is pretty spunky. He is really lovable, but he also has quite a bit of an attitude sometimes, so it is hard to work with him," Runkel said. "His personality is quite different from the ones I had before."

Compared to previous years, Runkel raised Hot Fudge from birth on her family's Town of Wheatland farm.

Typically, exhibitors purchase a steer from a producer in October, but Runkel started raising Hot Fudge in March 2021.

Runkel, daughter of Ron and Gail, acknowledged Hot Fudge's personality presented a challenge and required patience.

"It has kind of been a tough year with this one. It took him awhile for him to come around," she said. "I had to have a lot of patience."

Family legacy

Runkel quickly deflected credit to her family for her successes in the show ring and raising award-winning steer.

Runkel's father, Ron, has shown award-winning cattle as well as brother, Reid, who captured the high bid at the Governor's Blue Ribbon Livestock Auction for a steer in 2018, one before Riley's victory.

"I have been lucky enough to have family with a lot of experience in showing cattle forever and raising champions themselves," she said. "I am really lucky to have that knowledge from my dad and my brother."

Ron remembered when Hot Fudge was born, and the family initially looked to sell the steer, but did not receive any offers even after a handful of shows.

Instead, the Runkels opted to keep Hot Fudge, which also made an appearance at last year's Wisconsin State Fair in West Allis. Hot Fudge capturing the title in the Bred and Owned Show at the State Fair.

"We had him for sale and nobody would buy him," he said. "We couldn't understand why, we took him to a show, and we had him for sale there and nobody bought him there."

Ron, however, recognized Hot Fudge had a bright future and showed steady



progress in the show ring.

Hot Fudge, initially jittery, continued to improve.

"He was a little bit fidgety, so it took a lot of work, he was never mean, so it just took a lot of time and patience and hard work," Ron said.

The work, he said, included Riley making many sacrifices as teenager.

While many teenagers spend time with friends, or participate in other activities, Riley often worked full days with Hot Fudge on the Runkel family farm.

"Riley works on him two or three hours in the morning and it is the same at night," Ron said. "If she wants to take the night off and hang out with some friends, which is rare, she has got to get her brother or somebody to help out."

Riley, a member of Burlington FFA and Burlington Back 40 Club, said she named him Hot Fudge at a friend's suggestion.

"I actually didn't name him, but a friend did, he has a weird color that not a lot of people have seen before," she said. "He has kind of a yellowy-brownish color. That is kind of why he is named Hot Fudge."

Runkel, also showcased a 1,339-pound Crossbred steer she called Sosa at the State Fair, which fetched the highest bid in the Governor's Blue Ribbon Livestock Auction with Meijer Supermarkets paying out \$35,000.

Overwhelming victory

Runkel, who broke out in tears upon learning of the victory last year, said she worked diligently with Hot Fudge during the day.

In addition to feeding him at 6:30 a.m.,

she washed him and dried him quickly in preparation for the show, since the wash area was full earlier in the morning.

Ron recognized Riley's work ethic before and during the year.

"It is a lot like a full-time job, it is really really a lot of work," he said. "I am just really proud of her, she has given up a lot as a teenager to do this."

Racine County Fair Livestock Winners

Beef

Grand Champion - Riley Runkel
Reserve Grand Champion - Clara Henderson
Champion Main Anjou - Madisyn Henderson
Fourth Overall - Chloe Uhlenhake
Champion Hereford - Parker Schaefer
Champion Carcass - Emma Henningfeld
Reserve Carcass - Colt Miller
Champion Dairy Steer - Emma Henningfeld
Champion Beef/Dairy - Sawyer Kastenson
Champion Angus - Jack Johnsen
Champion Charolais - Karson Kastenson
Champion Simmental - Kelsey Henderson
Champion Shorthorn - Jacob Kreuscher
Champion Shorthorn Plus - Tori Crisp
Champion Any Other Breed - Aiden Vesel

Swine

Grand Champion - Amanda Miklaszewski

Reserve Champion - Bennett Wilks
Champion Yorkshire - Ainsley Balfanz
Champion Spot - Kaden Hetland
Fifth Overall - Simon Rigert
Champion Berkshire - Maya Wienkauf
Champion Chester White - Brannt Balfanz
Champion Duroc - Olivia Albelo
Champion Hampshire - Kyle Bailey
Champion Hereford - Colton Naber
Champion Poland China - Amanda Miklaszewski
Champion Tamworth - Dane Loppnow
Champion Carcass - Miranda Henningfeld
Reserve Carcass - Daniel Baker

Lambs

Grand Champion - Ramona Holden
Reserve Champion - Dane Richter
Champion Pen - Ramona Holden
Reserve Champion Pen - Hunter Drissel, Shropshire
Reserve Champion Pen - Hunter Drissel, Hampshire
Champion Dorset - Ainsley Balfanz
Champion Katahdin - Mallory Henningfeld
Champion Natural - Katie Walkington
Champion Suffolk - Alicia Desirena
Champion Any Other Breed - Lilli Steffenson
Champion Carcass - Alaina Bird
Reserve Carcass - Brooklyn Bailey

Riley Runkel, of Wheatland, walks her steer around the ring during last year's beef show at the Racine County Fair.



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