



POWER Communication

Policy Outreach with Effective Results

POLICY AND ISSUE DISCUSSION SHEET

County and Local Independent Fairs

Defining the Issue

County and independent fairs provide important opportunities. Fair related programs sponsored by 4-H, FFA and other service organizations help young people foster life skills in communication, leadership, work ethic and sportsmanship. Several generations of community leaders have identified their involvement in these organizations coupled with local fair activities as important life experiences.

Other activities and programs allow local industry and businesses to promote products and services. Government leadership at all levels see fairs as an important platform for community outreach. Rides, attractions, special programs and exhibits provide local promotion and entertainment opportunities, too.

The excitement and atmosphere fairs provide enhance community life. People from the area come together to share, celebrate and showcase youth and community achievement. Families take time to learn together, share talents, build new skills and instill life lessons. Long-term friendships across individual school and community borders are developed. These relationships and memories are often rekindled as community leaders work together to address county-wide and regional issues.

There are a variety of causes (technology, population, social institutions, environmental) that impact and change communities over time. What role and benefits do county and independent fairs provide to address these changes? What traditions need to be preserved and what adjustments need to be made to fair programs?

OFBF Policy – Ohio Fairs

We support:

- Exempting agricultural societies and historical societies from amusement taxes levied by municipalities;

- Fair boards to place more emphasis on agricultural education and agricultural youth activities at their respective fairs;
- The continued efforts for promotion of farm products, including new and specialized products,
- Additional funding for local junior fairs as administered through the Ohio Department of Agriculture budget;
- Strong measures by 4-H, FFA, Fair Boards and the Ohio Department of Agriculture to prevent and discourage livestock tampering and promote good animal husbandry at livestock shows, provide quality assurance training for market animal youth exhibitors and refocus these programs on their original educational purpose. This should also include development and communication of a strong code of ethics;
- County, independent and state fairs to adopt the use of electronic identification (EID) tags;
- Ohio fairs developing biosecurity plans to address human and animal health and safety;
- County fair boards and sale committees to accept the highest fair market value bid for market livestock projects.

Discussion Questions

1. What part of county and local fairs do you cherish most? How did participation in those programs impact your life? Do you feel these opportunities are still available to participants in county and local fairs today?
2. How have you seen county and local fairs remain the same (preserve valuable traditions) as well as change (provide new ideas and opportunities)? Is there any part of a county and/or local fair generating a cause for concern?
3. If “stay at home” orders and social distancing with COVID-19 are implemented again, how would this impact your county and local fairs? What challenges do you see for these events as they support FFA, 4-H programs and other service programs in your community?
4. What community challenges (rural, suburban and/or urban) do you see impacting fair programs and activities? How can local fairs enhance community relationships? What changes/enhancements to Farm Bureau policy do you suggest?