

BEEF

It's not only what's for dinner, It's how the Matagorda County Fair got started.

Welcome to the Matagorda County Fair and Livestock Association. We hope you are as thrilled as we are to be a part of our Annual Fair event. Over the past years Founders, Directors and Volunteers have worked hard to bring Matagorda and the surrounding counties one of the best fairs in the state. We are always looking forward to the betterment of our youth's future.

Matagorda County has always had a large population of cattle. Cow calf operations date back before the immigration of Austin's original 300. After the Civil War the New Republic of Texas drew another wave of immigrants. Upon arrival the new Texans found large quantities of native cattle doing well in the humidity and insect infested region. Matagorda County is located on the fertile coastal plains of the Gulf of Mexico. Located about 80 miles south/southwest of Houston with Bay City serving as the county seat. This region's economy has always been based on agriculture.

John E. Hutchison, a Vocational Agriculture Teacher, founded the First Bay City FFA Livestock Show to provide an opportunity for his FFA students and parents to learn more about livestock management and production.

In 1944, The Matagorda County Fair was organized as an outgrowth of his efforts. In 1946, the show was expanded to include all 4-H and FFA students from Matagorda County.

In 1948, the Champion Steer was shown by Bobby Shaw and sold for \$1.25 per pound. That year Swine and Capons were added to the Junior Livestock Project Show. Moses Smith Jr. showed the first Grand Champion Barrow which brought 40 cents a pound, while Rudy McNeil sold two Champion Capons to Mr. Clarence Mehrens for \$10.50 each.

In 1952, five futuristic individuals, T.J. Poole Jr., L.M. (Keeter) Slone, Roland Rugeley, E.L. McDonald, and F.G. Cobb organized and developed The Matagorda County Fair Association and signed the original Texas Charter. The Fair Association grew to include rabbits, heifers, goats, chickens, sheep, horses, arts & crafts, prepared food and canned goods. In that same year the first girl, Carrine Collins showed a steer at the Matagorda County Fair, Livestock Show, and Rodeo. The founders encouraged all youth to actively participate in the many different projects and programs the Fair had to offer.

Today the Fair Association continues to offer educational programs and projects for the youth to participate in and learn from. Our goal today, as it was in 1944, is to reach as many of our young people as possible and offer them the opportunity to participate in the Fair Activities that will build character, teamwork skills and leadership qualities needed to ensure a successful future. We strive to bring out the very best in every child through our guidance and encouragement.

Each year, we continue to grow and provide our youth with the best learning and leadership experiences at the Fair ensuring skills and memories that will last a lifetime.

All participants and visitors to the Matagorda County fair will have a meaningful Agricultural learning experience. The entertainment format will have life long memories for the young and the young at heart. We have something for everyone: the fair, carnival, petting zoo, stock shows, talent shows, rodeo, Bar B Q contest, ranch rodeos, team penning, calf decorating, horse and livestock judging, Academic Rodeo, senior citizen arts and crafts, mounted drill teams, Exceptional Day, local ladies barrel racing, county team roping, bucket calf show, and much more.

At the Fair you will see our local youngsters participate in the Mutton Bustin' Contest, sparking their love for Bull Riding. Our junior participants will brave the arena as they challenge themselves to saddle a wild steer and ride across the finish line. Our future livestock exhibitors will run their hearts out as they halter a calf in the Calf Scramble to start their next year's project. Our local Cowboys will brave the wild Cows in an attempt to saddle and ride across that line at the end of the arena. The cowboys will compete on stock that has bucked at Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association (PRCA) events in Houston and Fort Worth as well as the National Finals.

We have dedicated our Thursday night performance to breast cancer awareness. So come out, wear pink and celebrate "Pink Night" at the Fair.

Our Friday Night "Patriot Night" performance is dedicated to our Veterans so come out come and support our Veterans by wearing our nation's colors. Let's say "Thank You" to those who gave and to the families of those who gave all.

None of our fair activities would be possible without the continued support of our community, sponsors and volunteers. The time and many years of dedication have played an important role in the lives of these youths and the success of our county fair.

To each of our founders and their families, our many exhibitors, volunteers, supporters, directors and friends, we tip our hats and say, "Thank You!"