



to take Center Stage at WVDA's State Fair Annex

It's time to head to the State Fair of West Virginia! The annual event kicks off August 12 and runs through the 21.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) has 10-days filled with fun and educational activities. Make sure to stop by the Gus R. Douglass Annex (right next door to the West Virginia Building). Annex hours are 9 a.m.-9 p.m. August 12-14 and 19-20, 9 a.m.-7 p.m. August 15-18 and 9 a.m.- 5 p.m. August 21.

Inside the annex, you'll find something for everyone in the family. Our country store is back by popular demand. WV-Grown products from across the state will line the shelves. From jams and jellies to popcorn and peppers, pick up your favorites and take them home for a taste of the fair long after the gates have closed. Each day the store will feature a different product for visitors to sample.

Our apiary (bee) specialists will be on hand to give you the buzz on the importance of bees and answer questions if you're considering starting a hive of your own. They'll bring a few bees along for you to see up close and personal. Maple syrup producers will have their own demonstrations. Find out where sap comes from, how it's harvested and the ins and outs of turning sap into maple syrup. It's a fascinating process!

If the kids need a few minutes to sit down and rest, we'll have our traveling agriculture library. Books for toddlers all the way through high school will be available. They can plop down and learn more about where their food comes from, how it's made and what it takes to get it to your table.

For kids from 2 to 102, you can visit the WV Conservation Agency's Soil Trailer. Take a trip inside the earth to find out what goes on underground. From the bugs that help till the earth to the roots that grow beneath your plants, it's a unique learning experience about the land where we live.

They say birds of a feather flock together. You can too by visiting our Poultry Building (next to the barns), open August 12-20 from 10 a.m.-7 p.m. and August 21 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. An old favorite returns – the duck slide. Watch the quackers climb up a ramp for a treat and then slide down the other side. A kids' coloring contest and lots of feathered friends will be on display.

One of the newest projects at the WVDA is our pilot potato program. We're promoting potatoes all over West Virginia and the State Fair is no exception. On Thursday, August 18, a Potato Head Decorating Contest will be held at 1 p.m. in the West Virginia building. On Friday, August 19, the WVDA will

host the Potato Hot Dish Recipe Challenge at 4 p.m. Bake your favorite potato treat (savory or sweet) and you could go home with a cash prize. The newest member of our WVDA family, Spud, the potato mascot, will be making visits throughout the fair to take selfies with the kids (and the adults).

The Youth Livestock Auction takes place on August 16 at 1 p.m. at the barns. FFA and 4-H members have spent the past year raising their animals and will show off their prize cattle, sheep, goats and pigs. You can bid on your favorite and help students raise money for next year's project or their savings account.

Mamma Mia! The WVDA is sponsoring the Kids Cast Iron Pizza Party Contest on Thursday, August 18, at 3 p.m. in the West Virginia Building. Children 6-12 and teens 13-18 will compete for the title of champ by creating their own pizza pies.

One of our favorite events of the fair takes place on Sunday, August 14 when the WVDA celebrates Women in Agriculture by naming the 2016 class. Four women who have made an impact on WV agriculture will be inducted.

And last, but not least, if you have questions about plants, pests, animals or anything related to agriculture, visit our information desk located in the annex. We'll have experts on hand to get you the answers you need. They'll be handing out seed samples and you can pick up ag-related brochures on all sorts of topics to help you get growing at home.

Come visit us on your trip to the State Fair of West Virginia. We love to meet farmers, growers and fans of agriculture!

For all of the latest information on the WVDA at the State Fair of West Virginia, log on to <http://www.agriculture.wv.gov> or check out our Facebook and Twitter pages. You can also contact WVDA Communications Officer Buddy Davidson at 304-558-3708/304-541-5932 or bdavidson@wvda.us

WVDA Ag Annex Educational Activities

Monday, Aug. 15
"Divine Bovine Day"... We'll feature all things "moo," from our milking stations to 'There's a cow in your marshmallow' game. Children will look at dairy and beef in a whole new way.

Tuesday, Aug. 16
"Buggin' Out"... From hissing cockroaches to Asian longhorned beetles, the children will be screaming with delight while they learn about the world of insects and agriculture.

Wednesday, Aug. 17
"Germ City"... Children will walk through our hand washing station to see just how clean their hands are after they suds up. (You might be surprised!)

Thursday, Aug. 18
"Kids in the Kitchen"... Eating healthy can be delicious and nutritious! The kids can taste for themselves.