

Fair cancelled

For the first time in 117 years, there will not be a fair in Fertile. The Polk County Fair Board made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 Polk County Fair. The board met May 5 via Zoom.

Given the restrictions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic – social distancing, wearing masks, the need to sterilize equipment, seating – basically everything associated with the fair was in jeopardy.

The restrictions are in place and they will continue for the foreseeable future, especially in relation to large group gatherings.

Safety is the reason for the restrictions.

The fair board concluded that by July 8, the opening day of the fair, the situation will not change substantially.

“The board, in good conscience, cannot risk people getting sick or worse because of attending the Polk County Fair. It is sad to think that might be the result, but that is the reality

of the situation,” said Mike Moore, fair board secretary.

Plans were already underway for the fair, which was to run July 8-12.

The board issued the following statement: “The Polk County Fair is proud of the public support the fair receives year after year. The fair is also proud of those that help put the fair every year.”

Letters are being sent to inform those who have already paid for sponsorships giving them the options to carry over to 2021, receive a refund or simply donate the funds this year.

As for exhibitors, the fair board is considering allowing some exhibits completed in 2019-2020 as well as those completed in 2020-2021 to be entered in next year’s fair.

“We don’t know exactly how FFA competition could be handled and the same goes for 4-H,” Moore said.

In Polk County, all 4-H activities are shut down

until the end of June.

“Coordinator Katie Becker still doesn’t know about the 4-H situation,” Moore said.

Some sort of mini-fair might be held for 4-H and FFA. “Will we be asked? We don’t know yet,” Moore said.

Top 4-H exhibits and animals have always advanced to the Minnesota State Fair.

This year, it’s possible even that fair could be canceled because of COVID-19.

“As sad as it is, this may be a lost year for those kids,” Moore said.

Even if the fair is cancelled, it might be commemorated with the traditional fireworks display. “We are thinking about fireworks on Saturday night (July 11) of what would have been the fair,” Moore added.

“We hope everyone understands the really tough decision and we hope to see everyone at the 2021 fair.”

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