

# What is an Agricultural Fair?

By Maddie Vranish

Summer is just around the corner which means it's time to start planning fun activities and events to attend like concerts, festivals, parades, and everyone's favorite— attending an agricultural fair.

For many, attending an agricultural fair means eating a tasty meal from one of the many food stands, trying your luck playing games with friends, taking a ride on an attraction, enjoying live entertainment and taking a look at what is agriculturally showcased. In the midst of all the fun, food, and entertainment, many seem to look past what an agricultural fair truly stems from.

## How did Agricultural Fairs Begin?

Throughout the United States of America agricultural fairs have become wildly popular and frequent during the summer season, but just how did agricultural fairs come to fruition?

In the past, and still today, agricultural fairs were created for farmers to showcase and educate the public on their recently harvested crops, livestock, and farmmade goods.

Originating back into the middle ages in Ancient Rome, agricultural fairs operated as a venue to [share and trade goods with the public](#). It wasn't until the early 19th century when the first American State Agricultural Fair popped up in the United States of America.

The [first agricultural fair](#) that took place in the United States was held in Pittsfield, Massachusetts in 1807 where Elkanah Watson encouraged goers to showcase their livestock to the public. Over time the concept of agricultural fairs would gain mass popularity and quickly spread throughout the entire country.

When the idea of agricultural fairs spread to Pennsylvania, Washington County Agricultural Fair was one of the first fairs established in the state in the year 1822 in a lot on East Maiden Street. Since then, the Washington County Agricultural Fair has navigated through the many decades of changes over the years with the biggest adjustment being technology advances.

As technology and farm machinery advanced, so did the concept of agricultural fairs. What used to be focused highly on livestock and harvested goods would now shift focus to new forms of entertainment like airshows, tractor pulls, carnival rides, and fireworks just to name a few.

In addition to technology and farm machinery advancements, live entertainment acts became a main point of attraction at agricultural fairs. Talent shows, live bands, musician showcases, and pageants are just a few of the many live entertainment acts you can see at almost any given agricultural fair in the United States.

## **What to Expect at Agricultural Fairs Today?**

Agricultural fairs have come quite some way from their original roots— That said, you can still expect to see the same old school agricultural components showcased with a new school twist. At most agricultural fairs throughout the country, you are able to explore fresh goods harvested from local farms throughout the area, petting zoos filled with different farm animals, and large farm machinery like tractors and plows.

As for food and shopping, many agricultural fairs have a section specifically designated for local vendors to sell from. Some of the most popular food items sold at fairs are fried foods, desserts, kettle corn, and corndogs. When it comes to shopping some of the most popular items sold by vendors are handmade jewelry and accessories, pet accessories, and graphic t-shirts just to name a few.

## **What to Expect at the Washington County Agricultural Fair Today?**

When entering this 9 day event at the Washington County Fairgrounds your head is almost forced to turn a million directions at all of the exciting things happening. Between the live entertainment, food and shopping, and agricultural showcases there is something for everyone to enjoy at the Washington County Agricultural Fair.

### **Agriculture Showcases**

For those who came for the agricultural showcase local farmers participating in the agricultural fairs will provide educational information on all facets of life on the farm including livestock and some might even let you check out the inside of a tractor.

On select days of the fair, you can see various different livestock shows. Some of their most popular shows include the market hog show, the lamb show, and boer goat show just to name a few.

### **Live Entertainment**

Some of the most highly anticipated events happening at the Washington County Agricultural Fair are in the form of live entertainment and contests. Whether its tractor pulls, demolition derby, car shows, live bands and music, or magic shows there is something to keep everyone entertained and on the edge of their seat.

## **Contests**

As for contests, there is a wide range of contests you can watch or participate in if you would like. Some of the most popular contests include the crock pot contest, Fair Queen contest, angel food cake contest, and so many more.

## **Attractions & Games**

If you are one looking for a thrill while at the fair, then you will be excited to hear that the Washington County Agricultural Fair offers a wide range of attractions and games. Some of their most popular attractions include merry-go-rounds, a ferris wheel, giant slides, and so many other wild attractions.

For those looking to try their luck at playing fair games there are so many to play. Balloon blast, skee-ball, ring toss, milk bottle knockdown, and bust-a-balloon are just a few of the many fun games at the Washington County Agricultural Fair. Try your luck!

## **Food & Vendors**

There is only one thing for sure that you need to bring to the Washington County Agricultural Fair and that is a big appetite. From savory foods like pizza cones, a brick of fries, and corn dogs to the sweeter side of deep fried oreos, candied apples, and kettle corn, there is sure to be a tasty bite to eat for everyone.

If you are on to enjoy shopping with local vendors then the Washington County Agricultural Fair is the place for you. Enjoy browsing handmade goods, accessories, clothing, and homegoods all sourced from local and small owned businesses. Find a gift for someone special or even yourself the next time you are at the fair.

*For more information and updates on the Washington County Agricultural Fair [visit their website](#) or [Facebook page](#).*