

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for October 5, 2020
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about memories of the Coshocton County Fair and some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

Yesterday was October 4, and I just couldn't help but think "Ten four, good buddy." That was the way my co-workers remembered the due date for my second child. Eleven years ago, I waddled my way through the Agriculture Hall comparing the size of my belly to the pumpkins on display. Due date or not, there was no way I was missing the Coshocton County Fair on that Sunday in 2009. My daughter took her time to make her appearance. I would eventually discover this to be true to form. She was born in the wee morning hours the day of the Jr. Fair auction. It was one day before my mother's birthday. Her first birthday in heaven.

For many of us, today doesn't feel quite right. We would normally be walking through the Art Hall admiring the beautiful quilts and paintings and photographs, searching for a child's or grandchild's project in the Youth Building or Education Building, getting that annual family photo in front of the giant pumpkins, or intently watching the judge select the class winners of the rabbit, dairy, and beef shows. The whirring sounds of rides and excited screams of children would be blowing through the chilly air. And the smell of sweet, fried goodness would be seducing our senses as well.

The fair is still going on, yet it looks a lot different this year. My son showed his goats Saturday, and they were home that night, snug in their usual spots in the barn. My daughter is showing her rabbits right now, livestreaming for everyone to watch on Facebook Live. Fair is one more thing to add to the growing list of canceled or significantly changed activities. It presents us with a choice. We can choose to mope over what we do not get to experience this year, or we can choose to be grateful for our memories of past fair experiences.

My first fair was 1977. Though I certainly do not remember it, my mother kept a Dover Daily Reporter newspaper clipping from October 3, my first photo in the paper. I was only ten days old, and there was no way I was missing the Coshocton County Fair. Most of my birthdays have been spent in preparation for the fair. Birthday presents while I was young included clothing like

a wool sweater to wear in the Guys and Gals Lamb Lead class or a new button-down shirt for show day with my feeder calf.

Many of my fair memories are of activities. Yet upon deeper contemplation, they are more importantly of people. All the school boosters who worked in those hot food stands to raise funds for music and athletic programs. Parents who taught children how to ready their animals for show day. Busy volunteers in 4-H, Scouts, FFA and Grange displays, who climbed into spaces with great balance to proudly display that last quilt or shop project.

This week I will be cherishing the memories of past fairs. I will remember my dad, always arriving to help me fit lambs much later than promised, because as a fair board member he had been listening to concerns of a parent or advisor. At the fair I gained independence and confidence. I will equally remember my dad, thirty years later, asking others to wait while he spent time with his grandchildren. At the fair I gained insight that investing time as a parent and a volunteer is a delicate balance to determine.

Fair week is a week like no other, and it is unique for all of us. Though in many ways it stays the same, it is different each year. Hot years, cold years. Dry years, muddy years. Years we won, years we lost. Years we laughed, years we cried. Years we learned. Years we helped. Years we connected. And the year the county fair still went on, even if just in our hearts.

Now we'll take a look at some upcoming opportunities from OSU Extension. Come and learn the basics of home canning and food preservation through a virtual series called "Food Preservation Office Hours". These online classes emphasize the science behind preservation so that everyone understands why certain procedures must be followed precisely to ensure a high-quality, safe product to enjoy. These online classes are on Tuesday afternoons from 4:00 – 5:00 PM beginning October 6. Topics include: Preserving Fall Vegetables; Preserving Apples; Canning Soup; Canning Meat, Poultry, and Game; Making Jerky; and I'll be co-teaching the last session on November 10 on Making Sauerkraut. You can find registration information for these free virtual programs on our website Coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!