

## Santa Cruz County Fair History

Fairs are a part of everyday social interaction. Evidence exists of fairs as early as 500 BC.

Historically, fairs serve agriculture and animal husbandry. They are mixed with commerce, trade, a marketplace, festivals, feasts, and more. At fairs you will find Carnivals, Junior Livestock Shows, Volunteering, Fine Arts, Poetry, Arts & Crafts, Photography, Baking, Cooking, Canning, Landscaping, Horseback riding, 4-H, FFA, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Auto Racing, Lego's, Apple Pies, Home Brewing, Floriculture, Agriculture, Horticulture, Hand weaving and Hand Spinning, Collectables, and more.

Long ago, in the 1880's, farmers and homemakers of Santa Cruz County produced what has become the Santa Cruz County Fair. In May of 1941, 105 acres of land near Hecker Pass was purchased. That first fair opened on October 16, 1941 and has remained at its present location along Hecker Pass Road (the present East Lake Avenue). It wasn't until 1968 that Mr. Allen, the fair manager at the time, approved a five-day fair. Today we have an even longer fair, six days.

The Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds is home to many events year-round. These events include and are not limited to: Horse Shows, Concerts & Dances, Car Shows, Auto Races, RV Rally's, Weddings, Quinceañeras, Benefits, Fundraisers, Corporate Functions, Company Picnics, Farmers Markets, Flea Markets, and more. In addition, the fairgrounds serves as an emergency base in the event of an earthquake, fire, flood, and other disasters. In 2008 and 2009 the fairgrounds was used four times as a command center for those agencies battling local wildland fires. The fairgrounds housed about 8,000 firefighters in those two years and provided emergency shelter for hundreds of animals.

Today, over 3,200 fairs are held in North America each year. They provide industrial exhibits; demonstrations and competition aimed at the advancement of livestock, horticulture, and agricultural practices with special emphasis on educational activities such as 4-H, FFA, and similar youth development programs. While enjoying all of these, fair visitors are also able to see, hear, touch, smell and taste the richness and variety of what the world has to offer.