

Indianapolis Attractions

The NJAS host city has much to offer Angus families.

Commentary by **Kasey Brown**, associate editor

Growing up showing cattle, it was common that shows — especially junior nationals — served as the family's summer vacation. The 2014 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS) is in Indianapolis, Ind., July 6-12. There are a plethora of neat attractions, especially to those in the agriculture industry. I grew up 40 miles northwest of "Indy," and here are a few of my suggestions to enhance your summer showing vacation. Keep in mind that this is certainly not a comprehensive list.

Conner Prairie

Conner Prairie is a living history museum that creates interactive ways to learn about Indiana in the 1816 Lenape Indian Camp, 1836 Prairietown, 1859 Balloon Voyage, 1863 Civil War Journey: Raid on Indiana, the Nature Walk, and the Animal Encounters.

The historic aspects of the park are great, but the livestock are my favorite part of the whole museum. There are about 120 head of different livestock on the grounds, and they are correct for the time period they represent. This means that Conner Prairie is home to rare breeds like English Longhorn cattle, Randall Lineback cattle, Ossabaw hogs and Tunis sheep, among others.

Six of the breeds of livestock are on the rare breeds list, with three in the critical category, meaning there are less than 2,000 in existence. For more information on the rare

breeds at Conner Prairie, visit <http://bit.ly/1kCcl4y>.

Animal Encounters in the Conner Barn attract new guests and make them regular members. This barn has baby animals of different species at all times during April through October. The Conner Barn lets guests truly interact with animals and ask questions of the agricultural staff. There are countless encounters that teach the general public about agriculture's role in history and modern society.

Eli Lilly, founder of the pharmaceutical company, played a large part of creating Conner Prairie as an interactive museum.

Lilly bought William Conner's brick house in the 1930s to be used for historical reenactments. Lilly was a champion of education and opened the site to the public.

Indianapolis is home to several agricultural pharmaceutical companies, including Eli Lilly and Co. Pharmaceuticals, Elanco Animal Health, and Dow AgroSciences.

National FFA headquarters

If you've ever worn the blue corduroy jacket or have seen the leadership benefits to youth that the National FFA Organization



► The Children's Museum is easy to spot with the three dinosaurs breaking out of the side of the building and another dinosaur peeking into the front of the building.

offers, then you may enjoy visiting the National FFA Center. The center was moved from Alexandria, Va., to Indianapolis, Ind., in 1996, eight years after the organization changed its name from the Future Farmers of America to the National FFA Organization. The National FFA prepares members for premier leadership, personal growth and career success.

The majority of the organization's day-to-day activities occur here, and tours can be scheduled by calling 317-802-6060 or emailing tours@ffa.org for more information.

Indianapolis Zoo

For a long time, I wanted to be an exotic animal veterinarian, partly due to the Indianapolis Zoo and my fascination with tigers. I never became an exotic veterinarian, but I still love the Indianapolis Zoo. Having visited many zoos across the country, the Indianapolis Zoo holds its own and warrants a visit.

The zoo offers several biomes, or collections of habitats. These include oceans, forests, plains, deserts, aviaries, the White River Gardens, and dolphin pavilion and marine mammals. The dolphin pavilion has a 30-foot (ft.)-diameter, 12-ft.-high underwater viewing dome in the center of the main performance pool — the first



► Animal Encounters in the Conner Barn at Conner Prairie attract new guests and make them regular members. This barn has baby animals of different species from April through October.



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The Children's Museum

Adults and children alike will enjoy this museum. This museum has been voted the biggest and best children's museum in the country, and it's also among the top voted museums (not just children's museums) in general. It is easy to spot the museum with the three dinosaurs breaking out of the side of the building and another dinosaur peeking into the front of the building.

There are six floors of hands-on activities to spark curiosity, including exhibits like All Aboard, Animal Secrets, Biotech Lab, Dinosphere, Fireworks of Glass, Flight Adventures, Health House, Lilly Theater Playscape, Power of Children, SciencePort®, ScienceWorks, Planetarium Stories, Take Me There®: China, Terra Cotta Warriors, Treasures of the Earth and the Carousel. More information can be found at www.childrensmuseum.org/.

There are plenty of other attractions like the Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts; the Indiana War Memorial Museum; and Circle Center; lots of shopping at malls like Keystone and Castleton; and a whole host of great restaurants. I know time away from the barn is short, but Indianapolis has plenty to offer!



of its kind in the country. Additionally, the International Orangutan Center is the newest and "most dynamic" exhibit ever designed for the Indianapolis Zoo.

More information on the zoo can be found at www.indianapoliszoo.com/SitePages/Home.aspx.

Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art

Just up the street from the zoo is the Eiteljorg Museum of American Indians and Western Art. If you enjoy the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum in Oklahoma City, Okla., then you would enjoy the Eiteljorg.

Its mission is to inspire an appreciation and understanding of the art, history and cultures of the American West and the indigenous peoples of North America. It is one of two museums east of the Mississippi River to highlight both Native Americans and the American West.

The Eiteljorg collects and preserves high-quality Western art and Native American art and cultural objects. The institution's contemporary Native American art collection has been ranked among the world's best.

Indianapolis Motor Speedway

Indy has some great agricultural attractions, but it is most famous for the Indianapolis 500 and the Brickyard 400. If you visit the speedway, there is a Hall of Fame museum, Gasoline Alley, a golf course, the yard of bricks and the pagoda. For those big race fans,

there are even on-track experiences. Check out more information at www.indianapolismotorspeedway.com/facility/.