

Farmer for a Day

NAILE exhibit exposes children and parents to agriculture.

by Kasey Miller

The agriculture community, while strong, is not as big as it may like to be. That is why consumer education is so important, especially to provide a good foundation of agricultural understanding. The North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) has an exhibit, called Farmer for a Day, that exposes children and their families to agriculture as they visit the show.

Tim Wheeler, NAILE Sponsorship and Event Marketing Department, says that Farmer for a Day has been around for more than 10 years. The International Association of Fairs and Exhibitions created the exhibit to provide families with young children an opportunity to make memories by playing together and learning that there is something before the grocery store.

Wheeler says the exhibit is popular with families and school children who visit NAILE in November. A wide range of children, from 2 to 12 years old, can engage with activities within the exhibit that show “all food at the grocery was grown on the farm.”

Many school tours get to visit the exhibit, and about 5,000-10,000 kids get to experience agriculture through it every year. Wheeler explains that it lets them “find out where the food on shelves comes from. It gets city

kids who don't know agriculture and farming exposure to see where food comes from.”

Exhibits include many aspects of agriculture, whether in the store or on the farm. Children of all ages can match toy food found in a grocery store with baskets of the animals or fields by racing with grocery carts. They plant crops in a sandbox, and learn to harvest crops in a sandbox full of corn kernels. Children can color scenes from a barn and farm animals to display. They can dress up scarecrows, dress up as sheep and pick apples. Nine educational picture cutouts explain how horses and tractors are used on the farm; the legend of Paul Bunyon and his ox, Blue; and other instances. The most popular aspect, though, is roping a calf head.

Wheeler says that when school groups or families come by, the adults ask the questions, though the information can be passed on to the children later. The children just want to play, but learning is more memorable that way. He says the children act like the exhibit is Disneyworld.

He asserts that the exhibit gets much positive feedback from those in agriculture, too. The International Association of Fairs and Exhibitions has this exhibit and more available for other fairs and events to educate youth about agriculture that may not have the exposure. For more information, visit www.fairsandexpos.com/resources/products/farmerforaday/.

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PHOTOS BY SHAUNA ROSE HERMEL

►Above: Association members David and Parker Newsom of Jasper, Ind., look on as 9-month-old Cooper takes his turn planting crops in the sandbox in the Farmer for a Day exhibit at the North American International Livestock Exposition in Louisville, Ky.

►Right: Cole Knittel takes a break from shopping to watch as brother Carson (left) and his partner Brady Kessler (right) try their hand at roping.



PHOTO BY KASEY MILLER

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