

## Entertainment

For sixty years, people have been coming to the Dairy Cattle Congress in Waterloo to be entertained. Many of them find this entertainment by walking through the cow barns and admiring the aristocrats of the dairy world. Others experience nostalgia and adventure in viewing the great draft horses, once an indispensable adjunct to farm operation and now symbols of abdicated power in our agricultural past. Many city visitors are diverted by looking at animals which are as remote from their daily lives as a zebra would be to an Eskimo. Four-footed exhibits continue to be the motivating attractions for the public, as they were when the Cattle Congress began.

There is another common denominator in the annual exposition. It is farm machinery. As long ago as 1854, when the first State Fair was held in Fairfield, interest centered in farm implements which were bidding for public favor. In those early times, attention was focused on plows, harrows, corn planters, reapers, threshing machines, fanning mills and corn crushers. Prison-made goods were displayed side by side with floral paintings, snake collections, fur hats, cloth and wallpaper.



A stroll along Machinery Row at the Cattle Congress today affords a view of diesel tractors, combines, loaders, manure spreaders, honey wagons, conveyor belts, fork lifts, and many other labor-saving devices. Farm machinery manufacturers put their best foot forward to capture the attention of Cattle Congress crowds, because there is buying power here—drawn from America's richest and most progressive agricultural region.

Estel Hall, named in honor of the Manager who "ran the show" for 42 years, is a vast concourse bristling with industrial exhibits. The DeLaval Separator Company, the Loudon Machinery Company, and Hoard's Dairyman have displayed their wares at the Cattle Congress since it was founded.

But the thousands of exhibits in Estel Hall are not all designed to attract the working farmer. There are many appeals to his leisure. Maurice Telleen, current Manager of the Cattle Congress, has been impressed by the product changes over the years. For example, he recalls that "Bulk tanks were very big in the Sixties. Not a single bulk tank is exhibited any more. Now, we are looking at snowmobiles. The major direction in the last few years has been the adult toy market."

There continues to be much incidental entertainment for the Cattle Congress visitor. Salesmen are busy demonstrating the superior merits of their



merchandise; pitchmen give rapid-fire monologs on the convenience of their potato peelers, glass-cutters, and radish carvers; sidewalk artists paint mountains and waterfalls on mirrors; sewing-machine artisans stitch names on Cattle Congress caps, and there are constant stimuli to which the observer can respond if he limits himself to browsing over the grounds.

But there is a larger canvas upon which the Manager of the Cattle Congress must paint when he ponders what the entertainment picture will be. This is the show which attracts the crowds to the Hippodrome. In the early years of the Waterloo exposition, Manager Estel would look at his budget and write a letter to his booking agent in Chicago. It might be as brief as "Dear Sam: This year, we can use about \$4,000 worth of entertainment. Cordially yours, Ed." Estel didn't need to add that \$4,000 would be the amount of the check for the full week of the Congress. In return for this outlay, Sam would send him enough dog acts and acrobats to keep the customers happy.

It isn't quite so simple—or economical—today. Manager Telleen must carry on negotiations with a half-dozen agents, and the current entertainment budget is in excess of \$75,000. The 1972 show has matinee and evening performances by Myron Floren and the Lawrence Welk Orchestra on Sep-



tember 23 and 24. The bill is changed to The Florida Boys on September 25; Hank Williams, Jr. and Jeannie C. Riley on September 26; Kenny Rogers and The First Edition on September 27; Roy Clark and Grandpa Jones from "Hee Haw" on September 28; John Davidson on September 29; and the Barnes RCA Rodeo on September 30 and October 1. This entertainment calendar is a far cry from the old days, when the same circus acts remained in harness for the full week of the show.

All of the entertainment listed above is scheduled for the Hippodrome. In addition, the following activities are booked elsewhere on the grounds: Baton and Archery Contests, Tractor Pulling, Senior Citizens Day, Kids Day, and KWWL's Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Rock and Roll Revival. Daily style shows, flower shows, midway rides, little garden shows, livestock exhibits, and agricultural and home exhibits will fill in the gaps.

Although the word Hippodrome means a horse race-course, the quarter-mile show ring has never been used for horse races, except in such games as Musical Chairs—for riders on draft horses. A novelty of the Hippodrome show in 1964 was an Ostrich Race. Drivers were enlisted from the spectators, and the following instructions were issued:

Congratulations on volunteering to drive in the Ostrich Race at the National Dairy Cattle Congress. To help you,



we are supplying a bit of advance information on driving your ostrich.

First, you don't steer ostriches like a horse, because you have no bridle or reins. You have a broom. When you want the bird to turn, you shake the broom near one side of the bird's head. The bird turns away from the broom. The main thing is to hang on tight to the sulkie at all times so you don't fall out, especially on the fast starts, quick turns and unpredictable finish.

How do you stop the birds when the race is over? Well, that's one thing we've had trouble figuring out. So far, we've been getting a lot of local help. Of course, sometimes an ostrich escapes, but usually the bird can be run down with a fast horse or a car. Good luck to you!

It was fun for the crowd—and, apparently, for some of the drivers, who volunteered again and again—but, during one race, an ostrich got excited and jumped the fence. Although no one was hurt, the ostrich races were discontinued after 1964.

In 1971, an in-depth survey of audience tastes in entertainment was conducted by The Midwest Research and Analysis Associates. Stan Bruner of the *Waterloo Daily Courier* summarized the results of the survey:

The average fairgoer will spend only four hours on the grounds, and his attendance is usually limited to one day. The study indicates that the individual patron spends between \$10 and \$15. Replies by those participating in the poll stress the belief that grandstand (Hippodrome) entertainment is the fair's main drawing card. The type of en-



tertainment mentioned most often in the survey is Country Western, with most people expressing strong interest in viewing a rodeo and/or circus acts, and a somewhat lesser interest in ice shows.

Selection of a top-rated star would afford wider latitude than selection of a name band, since the choice of such a musical group would limit the National Dairy Cattle Congress to the Lawrence Welk Orchestra. In reply to the question 'Who would you like most to see in a Hippodrome show here?' the top ten named were Johnny Cash, Charlie Pride, Glenn Campbell, Flip Wilson, Lynn Anderson, Ernie Ford, Tom Jones, Merle Haggard, Tammy Wynette, and The Carpenters.

Of the sizeable cross-section of area residents participating in the poll, 70 per cent said they would pay between \$2 and \$15 to see their top entertainer. 18 per cent would pay between \$5 and \$10, and 12 per cent less than \$2.

Entertainment was named by 40 per cent of those polled as the prime reason for attending a fair, with 32 per cent favoring home and garden shows, 17 per cent livestock, and 11 per cent 'other.'

Whatever the entertainment may be, the Board of Directors remains dedicated to education. The serpentine parade of dairy cattle has been discontinued, but every show in the Hippodrome has a curtain-raiser of livestock judging and horsemanship. Horse lovers from Idaho to Pennsylvania congregate in Waterloo to admire America's best drafters. Along with the Belgians are the best representatives of the Percherons and Clydesdales.



Not to be outdone by the heavy horses are the animals representing the light horse breeds. The net result is a spectacular horse show rivaling the best that can be produced at Kansas City, Chicago or Toronto. They come from 14 states, the District of Columbia and Canada. It is difficult to tell where entertainment ends and education begins.

A poster advertising the National Dairy Cattle Congress is not merely making a play on words when it declares that "Congress entertainment is educational; its education is entertaining; it is ALL inspirational."

HERBERT V. HAKE