



**JB Pritzker, Governor**

**Jerry Costello II, Acting Agriculture Director**

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## **Illinois and Du Quoin State Fairs Cancelled Due to COVID-19**

*Junior Livestock Expo to be held in September, 4-H General Project Show  
will proceed virtually*

**SPRINGFIELD, IL-** Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Pritzker will issue an Executive Order cancelling the Illinois and Du Quoin State Fairs this year. The announcement of the cancellations has prompted the Department of Agriculture to offer a safe, creative way to ensure youth exhibitors still get a chance to showcase their hard work. The annual State Fairs, which attracted over 600,000 visitors combined in 2019, will return in August 2021.

“The Illinois and Du Quoin State Fairs have been some of my favorite opportunities to celebrate our agricultural communities and the residents who make Illinois so exceptional,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “But it’s because the fairs are such a treasure to so many thousands of people that my administration, like those of our neighboring Midwestern states, must make the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 State Fairs in light of the risk posed by COVID-19. This is the right choice based on guidance from the Illinois Department of Public Health and other experts: we have to prioritize keeping our people safe. Our state fairs are unmatched across the nation, and I look forward to gathering again to showcase the best of Illinois when it is safe to do so.”

“We’ve said from the very beginning our main concern is the health and safety of those who attend our state fairs,” said Jerry Costello II, Illinois Department of Agriculture, Acting Director. “These aren’t just Fairs; they are economic engines for the Springfield and Du Quoin communities that highlight the best that Illinois has to offer and shine a spotlight on kids around our state. These kids work all year to prepare for their livestock and projects, so we are determined to still provide them an event that showcases their hard work and perseverance through a very difficult year.”

Due to the cancellations of the fairs, the Department of Agriculture will host a Junior Livestock Expo in Springfield in September, for Illinois exhibitors ages 8-21 to show their animals. The 4-H General Project Show will take place virtually, with premiums and ribbons to be distributed by the Illinois Department of Agriculture. Details regarding entry and operations are forthcoming.



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The State Fair was previously cancelled from 1942-1945 due to World War II, as the fairgrounds were used as a U.S. Army Airforce supply depot. The Fair was also cancelled in 1862 due to the Civil War and was replaced in 1893 by the World's Columbia Expo in Chicago.

Last year, the Illinois State Fair set records for the Grandstand and near record numbers for attendance. Officials were optimistic 2020 would rival the success.

“We are obviously disappointed that we will not be able to hold the 2020 Illinois State Fair,” said Kevin Gordon, Illinois State Fair Manager. “Our staff has been working hard to top what we did last year, and we feel like we were on track to do so. With that being said, we also understand that this is an unprecedented event. We have fantastic vendors, fairgoers, partners and exhibitors that we will miss seeing this year on the Fairgrounds.”

2020 will mark the first time the Du Quoin State Fair has been cancelled since the State took over the grounds in 1986. No grandstand announcements had been made yet for the Du Quoin State Fair, but fair staff have been working diligently to put on another great fair in Southern Illinois.

“We know the Du Quoin State Fair is a longstanding tradition in Southern Illinois and it’s hard to fathom that it won’t be taking place, but our first priority is to keep the citizens of Southern Illinois safe,” said Josh Gross, Du Quoin State Fair Manager. “While this year’s fair will not take place, our grounds will be open for camping allowing for memories to still be made on the grounds this summer.”

If you have purchased an Illinois State Fair mega pass, admission booklet or parking pass contact the State Fair office at 217-782-6661 or email [agr.fairinfo@illinois.gov](mailto:agr.fairinfo@illinois.gov).

The 2021 Illinois State Fair will run from August 12<sup>th</sup>-August 22<sup>nd</sup>. The 2021 Du Quoin State Fair is scheduled for August 27<sup>th</sup>-September 6<sup>th</sup>.

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