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NEBRASKA STATE FAIR CONTINUES BRAND WITH AKSARBEN *Aksarben Stock Show Begins Three Weeks after Stock Show Concludes*

Grand Island, NE – A 90-year tradition, Aksarben Stock Show has been a long standing agricultural tradition in Nebraska. After the move from Omaha to Grand Island in 2017, more changes are in store for its 91st year.

Beginning in 2018, Aksarben will be managed and produced by Nebraska State Fair. Lori Cox, executive director for Nebraska State Fair, said she is very excited about what how the show is developing. “We officially began management April 1. Since then we have hired a full staff, brought on interns, set up permanent offices at State Fair headquarters and rolled out a whole new plan.”

Greg Harder, director of Aksarben Stock Show, is thrilled to return to his roots where he originally showed as a young boy. “We love the kids,” Harder said. “We want to cater to families, putting the fun back into the show.”

Harder has a grand vision for Aksarben, finding many dual purposes with Nebraska State Fair. He likes that the show has so many kids from Nebraska that show in both events and said that will only help build both brands. “Ultimately we want to bounce Aksarben into the top tier of all junior stock shows in the country,” he added.

New for 2018 is a breeding ewe show and a purebred market hog show. Showmanship will have a junior and senior divisions. Operations manager Shelby Leonhard said, "We want to make the show more youth friendly. We hope the younger showmen will watch and learn from the older exhibitors."

Harder and Leonhard were recently joined by Gretchen Kirchmann, strategic development coordinator, and interns, Tayler Johnson and Emily Keiser. Kirchmann is responsible for fundraising for the Purple Ribbon Auction and generating sponsorship revenues.

Aksarben begins with the Horse Show September 22-23, 2018 in Thompson Foods 4-H Arena. The Stock Show is September 27-30 at Five Points Bank Arena. During the Stock Show, the Purple Ribbon Auction (which brought nearly \$270,000 in 2017) begins September 30 at 6 p.m.

For more information about entries (deadline August 31) or for interest in supporting the Purple Ribbon Auction, visit aksarbenstockshow.com.

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