

Because of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, both the N.C. Mountain State Fair and the N.C. State Fair are being canceled for 2020. The Mountain State Fair was scheduled for Sept. 11-20 and the State Fair was slated to run Oct. 15-25.

Despite the fairs' closures, modified youth livestock shows will still be held at both sites to give kids the opportunity to show the animals they have already invested time and resources into, said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler in making the announcements.

"I can think of a thousand places I'd rather be today than here delivering this news," Troxler said. "Our Fairs are traditions we all look forward to each year. It's a time for family and friends to come together to celebrate everything that makes North Carolina such a great place to live. They are also vital economic engines for local non-profits, community groups and small businesses and we understand that this decision affects many, many people. We waited as long as we could, hoping the numbers would take a turn and we'd be able to continue with our planning, but each day brought more challenges than solutions."

The decision to cancel this year's fair was based on the following:

- safety and health of visitors, vendors, competitors and staff,
- current COVID-19 statistics in the state,
- North Carolina's pause in Phase II of reopening thus limiting the size of gatherings,
- and the long-term financial health of each Fair.

Fairs are

Fairs are expensive to produce, with the Mountain State Fair costing over \$1 million annually to put on and the N.C. State Fair costing \$6.1 million.

To date, 76 events scheduled to be held at the WNC Ag Center have cancelled, which has resulted in a significant loss of income. Since February, 186 events scheduled at the N.C. State Fairgrounds have been canceled, resulting in a \$2.3 million loss in revenue.

"The heart of the N.C. State Fair has always been and will continue to be our ability to showcase what agriculture in our state is all about. I am glad we can stay true to that commitment by holding our junior livestock shows," Troxler said.

Show dates for the Western N.C. Youth Livestock Expo are as follows: Sept. 12 – Dairy goats and rabbits; Sept. 12 & 13 – Beef cattle; Sept. 12, 13 & 19 – Sheep; Sept. 17-19 – Poultry; Sept. 18 – Swine; Sept. 19 & 20 – Meat goats and dairy cattle.

Show dates for the N.C. State Fairgrounds are as follows: Oct. 16 – Market barrow, market steer, beef heifer, feeder calf, junior gilt; Oct. 17 – Swine showmanship and beef heifer; Oct. 18 – Goat showmanship; Oct. 19 – Junior market goat, commercial doe and sheep; Oct. 20 – Market lamb and junior ewe; Oct. 21 – Junior wool showmanship; Oct. 22 – Junior wood breeds; Oct. 24 – Youth dairy goat and dairy cattle showmanship; Oct. 25 – Youth dairy cattle.

Both fair's will begin working on plans for 2021.

“We are committed to returning with the best Mountain State Fair and State Fair when we come back in 2021,” Troxler said.