

Advantage

A CHRISTENSEN FARMS PUBLICATION

Organizers and sponsors of the CHS Miracle of Birth Center gathered on the Christensen Farms stage during the ribbon cutting ceremony held on the opening day of the Minnesota State Fair.



Christensen Farms highlighted at Minnesota State Fair

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FEATURE ARTICLES

04 NEW GRAIN MARKETING TOOLS LAUNCHED

08 A SALUTE TO OUR PRODUCER AWARD WINNERS

10 CHRISTENSEN FARMS INVITES COMMUNITY TO NEW BARN

12 MANURE SAMPLING ENSURES CONFIDENCE IN NUTRIENT VALUE

MIRACLE OF BIRTH CENTER A HUGE SUCCESS

For 50 years, the FFA Children's Barnyard at the Minnesota State Fair has captivated children and their parents with close views of baby animals. It wasn't until 2001 that farmers across the state teamed up with the FFA to give the petting zoo a new goal: educate children about agricultural production, veterinary science and the live birthing process.

Once transformed, the exhibit welcomed nearly 40,000 visitors a day; however the Children's Barnyard was not conceptualized for hosting so many fairgoers at one time.

Last year, organizers knew it was time to update this popular exhibit, and they came to the agricultural community for help. "I've never seen such an outpouring of broad support," said Bob Christensen, CEO of Christensen Farms. "We are always happy to support our FFA and 4-H groups, as well as initiatives that educate consumers about agriculture and modern food production."

Christensen Farms has a unique tie to the FFA. "Our business started with two bred gilts we received from a neighbor," said Christensen. "My brothers Lynn, Glen and I grew that small herd as an FFA project in high school." By the end of high school, the Christensen brothers were managing a 140 sow, farrow-to-finish operation.

What once was a small FFA project has now grown into a thriving family swine business that is ranked the 4th largest in the U.S. "When the FFA Foundation came to us for support of the new Children's Barnyard - the Miracle of Birth >> P2

MIRACLE OF BIRTH CENTER A SUCCESS

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR CONTINUED FROM PG 1



Bob Christensen, CEO of Christensen Farms visits with Tom Rothman of the Minnesota Farm Network about the Miracle of Birth Center.



Information about Christensen Farms was on hand inside the Miracle of Birth Center.

Center - we wanted to give back to the FFA community and support our next generation of agricultural leaders.”

In addition to the Minnesota State FFA Foundation, the Minnesota FFA Association, the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association and the University of Minnesota’s College of Veterinary Medicine were the key drivers behind the project. But in order to finance the \$2 million project, they knew they needed to reach out to the agricultural community in a big way.

Christensen Farms joined CHS and many other businesses, agricultural commodity organizations and individual families who donated time and money to see the new exhibit succeed. “Organizers believed fundraising would take a year. It took three months,” said Christensen.

Not only did the fundraising go quickly, but the concept and construction did as well. The Miracle of Birth center was originally slated to open in August 2007, but the project was finished

in 50 percent of the projected time.

Christensen Farms signed on as one of the primary financial partners of the Miracle of Birth Center by sponsoring a stage located right in front of the Center. The Christensen Farms Stage hosted a variety of events throughout the fair, including educational presentations, award ceremonies and music

and entertainment.

In addition to the sponsorship, Christensen Farms contributed a bright, colorful backdrop for the back of the stage which visually told the story of sustainable agriculture and saluted the FFA and key organizers of the new Center.

“We received many positive responses



ABOUT THE BANNER

Christensen Farms is proud to invest in the Minnesota State Fair’s Miracle of Birth Center, an extraordinary undertaking driven by the dedication and passion of our next generation of agricultural leaders – our FFA.

This artwork was created to tell the story of sustainable agricultural production, tales to be told and lessons to be learned by these very FFA students for generations to come. A story of the risk and dedication of a visionary group of entrepreneurs, few among many in our growing population. Those who seek a greater plan, working together to produce food where it’s best grown and getting it to where it’s most needed.

Take a moment to follow the photos clockwise, and you see that producing food begins with our nutrient rich Midwest soil, which grows high quality grain to feed our livestock. In turn, our livestock provides the essential nutrients needed to replenish our soils.

Today’s food producers are proactive in protecting our natural resources. Aided by better technology, information and innovative thinking, they seek out solutions for today’s challenges while shaping the future for generations to come.

Thank you to the Sleepy Eye, Minnesota FFA Chapter, the Minnesota State University’s College of Veterinary Medicine and the Minnesota Veterinary Medical Association for participating in the presentation, as well as for their leadership on behalf of the pork industry.

Pictured left to right - Christensen Farms producers Lisa and Clay Bryan of Renville, Minnesota, with Dr. Eric Christianson, DVM and Christensen Farms Vice President of Nursery, Grow/Finish; Sleepy Eye FFA officers - Anthony Sellner, Alisa Marti, Ben Seifert and Mary Schmid; Dr. James Collins, Director of the University of Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory and Adam Jones, Christensen Farms Agronomist



Veterinarians were on-hand at the Miracle of Birth Center to explain the farrowing process, as well as the care given to sows and their newborn piglets.

about the banner,” said Christensen. The artwork incorporated colorful photos of cornfields, feed, pigs and food in a circular pattern around the perimeter, while featuring the key organizers of the Miracle of Birth Center on the inside.

“Visitors stopped by to trace the photos and learn the story of sustainable agriculture in the Midwest. We wanted to “put a face” on modern agriculture, which is why we also incorporated photos of real people, who day in and day out work to produce food for consumers across the U.S.,” said Christensen.

ABOUT THE MIRACLE OF BIRTH CENTER

In its first year of operation, the Center hosted over one million visitors who flocked to the exhibit in hopes of seeing a live birth of a piglet, lamb, calf or chick. Total paid attendance for the 2006 Minnesota State Fair was 1,680,579 people, making the Center the most popular exhibit at the fair.

Three times the size of the original exhibit, the new Center features livestock displays, washing stations for the animals and office areas for the volunteers, veterinarians and FFA students. In addition to the Center and the Christensen Farms Stage is the FFA Chapter House and Leadership Center, a place for displays and for FFA students to talk to the public.

Staffing the Center is no small challenge, which is why the veteri-



The Minnesota Pork Producers Association hosted Oink Day on the Christensen Farms stage during the Minnesota State Fair. Throughout the day, the MPPA offered a variety of presentations, guest speakers and activities that promoted pork and educated the public about modern pork production.

narian community and University of Minnesota veterinary students were on-hand to assist with the births and to educate visitors on the intricacies of modern reproduction practices. During the birthing and immediately following, health care procedures were demonstrated such as colostrum testing and administration and warming/drying of the newborns.

Sets of bleachers and video monitors for people to watch demonstrations and birthing came in handy as the building filled quickly each morning with parents and children in anticipation of seeing a newborn animal birth.

“Animal agriculture today no longer resembles ‘Old MacDonald’s farm.’ The Miracle of Birth Center better reflects modern animal production practices,” said Jim Ertl, representative of the Minnesota FFA. “Thanks to fertility management techniques, we were about to have newborn animals for the public to view each day.” ■