

# Richmond Fair 2011



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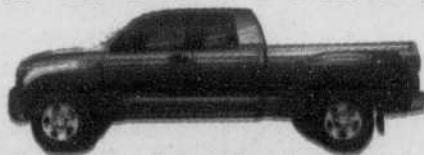
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# Richmond Fair signals the end of summer celebrations

By Claudia Villemaire

The signs are everywhere – the gentle sway of goldenrod in pastures and along highways and country roads, the deep red of mountain ash berries, sumac cones also a different shade of red, an ever-widening variety of colours on tree tops and yes, the Richmond Fair this weekend – all indications summer is almost over and its time for one last Eastern Townships fair.

Opening the gates on the 155th county fair Thursday evening means lots of planning and organizing by the team that must bring the grounds and buildings up to par, doing the never-ending tasks of repairs and maintenance that come back every year. Of course, every county fair hopes to improve or build new facilities and Richmond Fair president Pauline Antink-Nelson was proud to announce the inauguration of a new sheep barn, completed in time for this year's event.

"Thanks to our success last year, we were able to finance this new building for our sheep exhibitors," Antink-Nelson explained during an interview last week. Exhibitors here had been dreaming of just such a new facility to replace the aging structure where snow, wind and rain had wreaked havoc in recent years. The new stable, with a higher roof, larger pens and walkways and, with its attachment to the roofed breezeway, will boast a covered showing on judging day. A far cry from the roped off space outside the main door where, if rain were imminent, the blue plastic tarps would

be stretched between the door and perhaps a pickup bumper, providing a little protection from rainy, windy show days where spectators and friends could huddle, seated on bales of straw arranged in a circle to form a showring. In this area as well, Exotic Breeds Canada and the fair board will present an exhibition of rare breeds in four categories. "We will have a Berkshire pig, a Canadian dairy animal, a Canadian horse and I think, a Chanteclerc chicken. (The Chanteclerc breed of poultry was developed in Quebec and is both a pretty good egg producer as well as a meaty bird, perfect for early settlers who wanted their eggs and their roasted chicken too). There will be special pens set up here in the breezeway, giving ample space for visitors to linger, ask questions and get some idea of food production," Antink-Nelson described.

A new project this year and one that has, in various forms, been featured at county fairs elsewhere, is a space set aside where children from three to 10 years old are the focus. In this circuit, visitors will find several different types of food production on the farm represented. They will be able to see and, in some cases, participate in various types and stages of food production, all while educating the younger generation about the source and preparation of their food. They'll be encouraged to travel through the displays which take them from the initial stages of food production on the farm, with 'stops' at the hen house, the stables where both dairy and beef animals will be explained, examine the sheep enclosure, the horse stable, a vegetable garden and orchard, follow through to the market where farmers take their produce and finally to the supermarket where consumers make their food choices and purchases."

Information placards are placed at each type of production and youngsters will be asked a question about what they have seen. This program is designed to educate the youngest generation whose connection to basic food production such as milk, meat, poultry, eggs, fruits



CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

Pauline Antink-Nelson, president, Richmond County Agriculture Society.

and vegetables is almost non-existent. The idea is a result of the l'Association des expositions agricoles du Quebec, looking for ways to attract, interest and educate youngsters and their families about food production by supporting this new idea of an Agri-Tour in a 'fun' place such as a county fair.

Antink-Nelson, in her third year as president, has earned her 'epaulettes' quickly. But fairs are not new to her and her family. The Antinks from Hatley were well known in county fair circles, especially during the late 70s as the Antink children began to participate in 4-H activities and competitions and father Willie joined several die-hards in the Ayer's Cliff area who, with determination and perseverance, worked to complete many changes, new buildings and

renovations to their county fair grounds and programs, determined to bring back the glory days of former years.

Pauline and her husband Trenholm Nelson have followed in the elder Antink's footsteps, introducing their three daughters to the rigors and fun of being active 4-H members. The girls have earned an enviable reputation as showmanship champions with their Suffolk sheep, Jersey calves and Boer goats, traveling to Eastern Townships fairs and even winning championships at such prestige events as the Royal Winter Fair in Toronto. Fairs are a priority for this family, proving the worth and importance of county fairs, getting involved, and helping to promote agriculture and food production and have a good time doing it.

Good luck!



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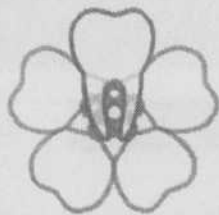
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# Enjoy the ride to the biggest little fair

By Claudia Villemaire  
RICHMOND

**H**ave you noticed? There's a bit of colour showing on the sugar maples and, if you're not driving too fast, the odd crimson swamp maple can be spotted in the valleys below the highways. That color means two things - summer is almost over and the last county fair will open its gates Thursday evening, celebrating 155 years of non-stop Richmond county fairs.

But this is no ordinary event. This is the last chance dyed-in-the-cloth fairgoers have to celebrate not only the end of summer, but to toast the hard-working agriculture producers who turn out to show the world what food production is all about. With top notch dairy and beef animals taking their turn in the showing Saturday to the purebred heavy horse halter classes in the outside ring, visitors can boast proudly about the outstanding examples in every breed they've watched go through their paces at this fair.

Now that's not to say the other county fairs are not as good.

Every county exhibition prides itself on attracting the best display of animals, vegetables, fruit, field crops, arts and crafts and of course, country-kitchen fresh cooking and preserving. The Richmond folk are quick to acknowledge the excellence at other county events but they turn out here to prove they can be proud of the productivity in their own county too.

Visitors to any county fair are encouraged to take a look at the countryside they will probably cross as they travel down to the Richmond Valley floor where the fair is located. Perhaps a quick and admiring look at artist Tetro's monumental work at the entrance to Upper Melbourne where his steel team of horses pulling double sleds loaded with logs, has weathered its first winter. This work of art commemorates world famous artist Fred Coburn whose home is right across from the Richmond County Museum, another interesting spot to tour, where the styles and habits of a middle class family are represented in

furnishings, art work and clothing.

If one arrives on Rte 116, from Asbestos of Danville, at the first, (and only) traffic light, the antique Auto museum can't be missed. In this spacious building, vintage vehicles from an era when classic styling, luxurious interiors, and lots and lots of chrome and nickel were 'in'. The museum can take an hour or more to visit, depending on the visitor's desire to learn about the provenance of each vehicle, when and where it was made and, in some cases, hear the story of famous owners or even Hollywood stars.

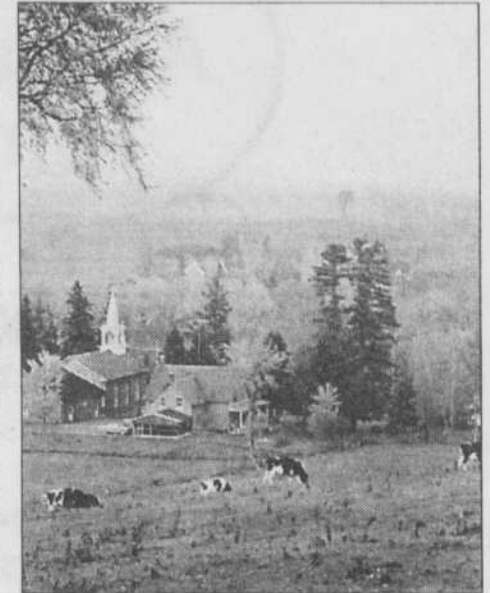
If one continues straight down Craig Street, and crosses the old steel bridge, just up the hill from the four-way stop is the old Presbyterian church, with its slate steeple, totally restored and repaired. Here one can find the history of slate quarrying in the area, learn that local slate was used on the first Parliament Buildings roof, (that were later lost by fire), watch a slate expert split open a block of this harder-than-rock stone and visit the boutique where local artists present their work for admiration and also for sale. Here we find souvenirs and ornamental pieces as well, with amiable and well-informed hosts and hostesses on hand to answer just about any question on the slate industry of long ago.

Perhaps by this time, a snack would be the next order of the day. After all, if the 'start' was early, there's still plenty of time for fun at the fair. So back across the historic bridge, a right turn down Main Street takes on to the old railroad station. The building is much the same as it was in the heydays of the early 1900s. At that time, two railroads met here, the CNR and the Quebec Central. Station platforms on both sides of the station would be filled with hurrying folks, some transferring from one train to another, going to and from Portland, Maine, Sherbrooke, Montreal and, on the QCR, Quebec. This was one of the largest railway junctions of the time, complete with water tanks, round house where steam engines were repaired, coal sheds and stockyards. These days, in the

renovated waiting room, an excellent restaurant awaits the traveler. In here, relics from bygone days decorate the wood used in wall and ceiling is still the same - a fitting start to an event that began when this railroad junction was in full swing, often unloading animals destined for the short walk that would bring them to the old fairgrounds, located just up the hill from the station.

When the Agriculture Society moved its operation in the 60s, to the broad expanse of the Richmond Valley, this fair slowly fell on hard times. With the purchase of a new site, construction of a new arena, an increasing lack of interest by the usual fairgoers and buildings that didn't transport very well, showing the signs of age, the future began to look dim indeed. But, as is the case of the Ayer's Cliff supporters, a group of determined people organized a fundraising program which, in time, brought back the spirit of this fair, making it the 'biggest' little fair in the Eastern Townships. Last year's attendance far exceeded the most optimistic estimates, breaking records almost every day and providing the funds for the new sheep facility which will be christened with its first exhibitors this week. There have been new buildings through the years, a completely new and modern dairy stable replacing the one seriously damaged by snow a few years ago, the extension on the front of the arena where the office and exhibition hall are now situated and, with the popularity of truck and tractor pulls increasing each year, competitors have the benefit of a rebuilt pulling track in plain view of spectators seated on bleachers both sides of the track. Presidents such as Harry Lodge, Doug Perkins, David Crack and Malcolm Wheeler whose history as exhibitors, directors and administrators is legendary played a major role in 'firing up' enthusiasm for this county fair. Their belief in the importance of such events is evident

and as past president Lodge often says, "I guess I'll just admit it. I simply can't let a fair go by without being on hand to help out wherever I can."



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Pastoral Scene on St Francois River, Lower Richmond, Quebec, Canada



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# September 8, 9, 10, 11, 2011

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## Expo Richmond Fair

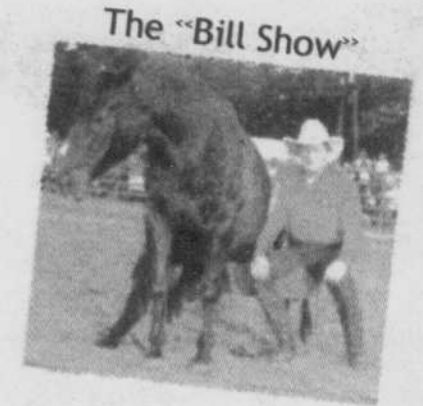
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### Thursday, Sept. 8

- 18h Registration for amateur dog competition (3)
- 19h Amateur Dog Competition, costume & race classes (3)
- Obstacle course demonstrations by canine clubs



Petting Zoo



### Friday, Sept. 9

- 9h Opening of the Petting Zoo (8)
- Draft Horse Judging (6)
- 9h30 Youth Fair Judging (9)
- 10h Horticulture & Ladies Building Judging (9)
- Beef Judging (3)
- 13h Midway opens
- 19h Street Truck Pull (7)
- Horse Show (3)
- 21h Orchestre Country 'Bad Boys' (10)



### Saturday, Sept. 10

- 9h Pony Show (6)
- Opening of the Petting Zoo (8)
- 9h30 Judgement Holstein, Ayrshire & Jersey (3)
- 10h Rabbit & Poultry Judging
- Draft horse Judging (6)
- 11h Youth Talent Show (10)
- 12h Midway opens
- 13h Irish Dancers (10)
- 13h30 Magillusion (2)
- 14h Line Dancing (10)
- Truck Pulls (7)
- 15h30 Magillusion (2)
- 16h 'Lucky Boy (Luc)' (10)
- 16h30 Shephed & Shephredess Lead Class (3)
- 18h Truck & tractor Pull (7)
- Horse Show (3)
- 18h30 Magillusion (2)
- 21h30 'Slightly Haggard' (10)



### Sunday, Sept. 11

- 9h Pony & light horse Judging (6)
- Opening of the Petting Zoo (8)
- 11h30 Tractor Pull (7)
- 12h Midway opens
- 12h30 'Ludovik' Clown show (2)
- 14h 'Mystic Road' (10)
- 4-H Turkey & Meat Chicken Auction (2)
- Horse Show (3)
- 18h End of Richmond Fair



\*Schedule subject to change without notice.

# Youth participation encouraged at Richmond Fair

By Claudia Villemaire  
RICHMOND

The Richmond County fairgrounds is a hive of activity this week as organizers and volunteers put the finishing touches on preparations for the 155th exhibition opening Thursday evening. "We're just about ready," said Valerie Fowler-Redburn, secretary who was already behind her desk Monday morning, mounds of official looking papers stacked and set aside, exhibitors' tickets ready. "I think I'm getting used to the routine now," she offered. "This is my third year now, so things move along faster now. That first year was pretty hectic," she adds.

"But a lot of credit goes to my very motivated husband who is my right hand man."

We found Patrick Redburn, or perhaps we should say he crossed our path hurrying off to help early arrivals as they found their allotted spaces and began the task of setting up. Concessionaires were pulling in with trailers in tow, midway trucks with rides stacked on semi-trailers inched into their spaces, stables were getting a final cleaning and the stables for beef and dairy were almost ready with stall space swept and ready for its first layer of wood shavings and clean straw.

But that last minute rush is traditional at any event of this size when thousands of visitors are expected during the three-day event. Actually the fair opens unofficially Thursday evening with another tradition - the Dog Race. This event begins on a lighthearted note with a costume class for family pets. The result is a colorful mix of pets of all sizes dressed up, (or down) for the occasion. Actually this opening class for the races to follow is more like a grand parade before an evening filled with competitions for small, medium and large dogs followed by demonstrations by AccroCanin, a group specializing in training dogs in both discipline and competitive discipline and obstacle course fields of competition. Last year's appearance by the Schutzhund Club was a great favorite.

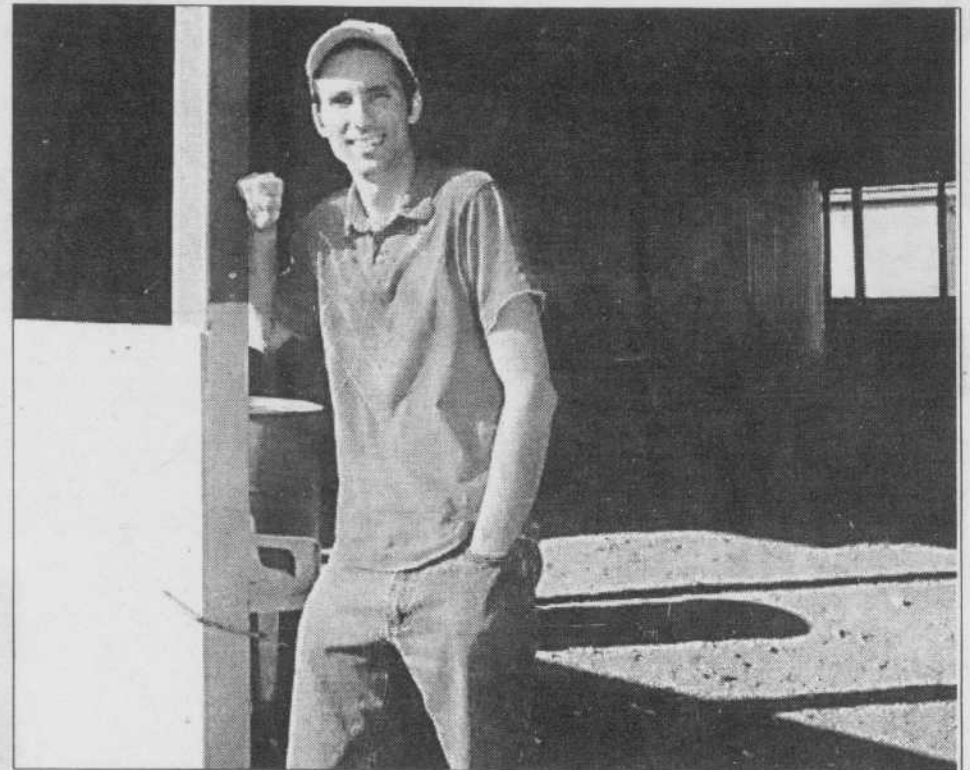
This year's appearance by AccroCanin brings a different approach and underlines the intelligence and potential of their four-legged members. Registration is at 6 p.m. and the show begins at 7 p.m. and admission on the grounds is free.

Friday, there's another type of invasion at this fairgrounds. Hundreds of elementary school children arrive, with arts and crafts in hand if they didn't make it to the fairgrounds the day before. This is Youth Fair Day and hundreds of items ranging from gardens in a box to leggo set-ups that amaze the passersby, from toys and animals created with materials found at home, to collections of just about anything one can imagine. Everything goes on display in the Main Building, and is judged Friday afternoon when dozens of participants will take home prize ribbons and trophies for their creations. The Youth Fair was organized nearly thirty years ago with the goal of bringing local youngsters to the fair for a few hours, organize demonstrations of selected animals such as dairy and beef cows, hitching a horse, and so on, encouraging them to tour the stables and ask questions. Midway rides do not operate while the youngsters are here Friday. Although it's a different kind of school day, it is not designed to be a holiday from learning, but definitely a fun way to learn about food sources and production.

Also in the Main building, judges begin the task of tasting every pie, cake and cookie on the display shelves. Judges move slowly among flowers and plants, examining the symmetry of perfect stems and petals and just across, shelves filled with handmade garments, quilts hung as wall tapestries are getting the once-over from their judges. In the arena, beef judging begins with the sheep, out in the breezeway between the new sheep barn and the beef stable.

Friday, the midway opens at 5 p.m., but Saturday and Sunday, 12 noon is the opening hour.

The first of several pulling competitions, the street truck category, gets



Adam Frost, poultry and petting farm man has a special exhibition of rare breeds this year. CLAUDIA VILLEMAIRE

under way at 7 p.m. and the traditional horse show in the arena at the same time. And the party begins in the recreation tent where the band, The Bad Boys will tempt visitors to trip the light fantastic into the wee hours.

PLEASE SEE FAIR  
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organizers.



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# Fair

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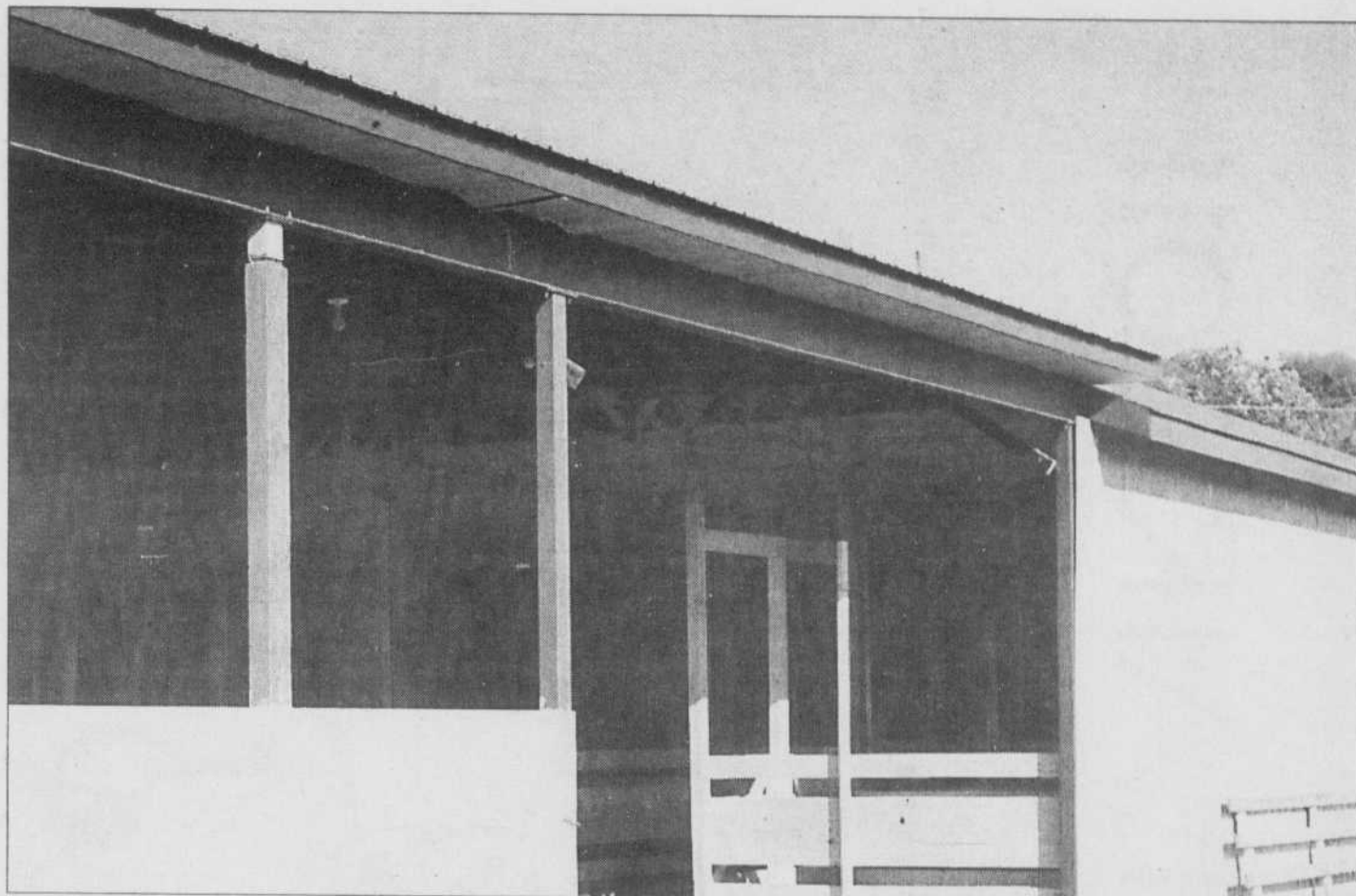
Saturday, there's a pony show in the outside ring and the arena gets busy early with dairy cattle, Holstein, Ayrshire and Jersey breeds coming out to strut their best. The poultry, waterfowl and ornamentals are also getting the once over by judges in that facility beginning at 10 a.m. This is the day the real fun begins with Irish Dancers from the local Irish Dance School, probably one of very few outside the Montreal area, to rouse the crowd with their presentation of traditional Irish dance, with both the soft shoe and hard-toed footgear that resembles the popular River Dance style and expertise. That's at 1p.m. While the magic of Ireland is still in the area, immediately after the dancers, Magillusion takes over in the smaller recreation area in front of the arena and the Lucky Boy band tunes up in the big recreation center at 4 p.m.

Meanwhile, out in the arena, the Sheep lead line class gets underway at 4:30, the Billy Show featuring a trained horse follows and the horse show takes over right after that.

Saturday is the largest of the pulling competition with both trucks and tractors roaring to the delight of the crowd, beginning at 6 p.m. Then of course, after another appearance by Magillusion, Slightly Haggard, the renowned Eastern Townships popular country and country rock band puts the frosting on another busy day at this fair. The music starts at 9:30 p.m.

Of course, there's still lots to do and see on Sunday. In the outside ring, light horses and ponies prance through their specific classes beginning at 9am, another tractor pull begins at 11:30 p.m., Ludovic the clown appears to do his show, the Mystic Band tunes up in the recreation tent and the high point of this fair for 4-H members is their traditional turkey auction at 2pm. This year, the 4-H will also offer meat-type poultry at this auction, a popular event where sometimes folks get a little silly with their bids, keeping in mind funds raised are used for club activities, clinics and events. The last chapter of horse events begins in the arena also starts at 2 p.m.

Committee chairpersons report entries down a bit in beef and light horses. Lucie Logan, in charge of the light horse section reports entries reflect the onset of horse illness which has forced some



The new sheep barn is ready for its first fair.

CLAUDIA VILLEMARE

exhibitors to cancel their appearance.

Repairs and renovations in the beef barn will ensure the safety and comfort of these animals, but Jason Brock admits entries are down a bit there too.

However, Adam Frost, looking after poultry exhibits, was proud to say his facility will be filled with many different breeds of standard fowl, bantams, rabbits, waterfowl and ornamentals. Frost is also a major player in preparations for the Frost Family petting farm, (same building), where visitors can meet and greet small animals like baby bunnies, tiny chicks, young miniature horse foals or the winsome baby miniature goats.

Patrick Bernier, looking after the heavy horse section reports all is well in this category. The illness which has plagued county fairs' horses this year is pretty well eradicated across the territory and Bernier emphasizes there'll be a great heavy horse show at the fair this year.

The Youth Talent Show, encouraging participants

aged 13 to 20, a special event to attract young people to agricultural exhibitions, has become a tradition at local fairs. The first competition at Richmond Fair last year proved very successful and once again, young people are invited to take courage in hand and step up to the microphone and show off their talent in whatever medium they choose, song, dance, instrumental, variety, solo or group. For more information about this event where winners get the chance to go on to provincial and national competitions with prizes that encourage the development of their talent.

"All in all, I think we've got a fun weekend lined up," the Secretary insisted between phone calls, queries from arriving exhibitors and volunteers and keeping her books and official papers in order," concluded Valerie Fowler-Redburn.

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