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FAQ's for 115th National Western Stock Show

Q: What is the primary mission of the National Western Stock Show (NWSS) and the Western Stock Show Association (WSSA)? How is the Stock Show governed?

A: The National Western Stock Show, established in 1906, is the premier livestock, rodeo and horse show in the nation, serving agricultural producers and consumers throughout the world. We are a 501 9 (c) 3 not-for-profit organization, providing education in agriculture, including college and graduate-level scholarships in agriculture and veterinary medicine for practice in rural areas. We currently award 100 scholarships annually.

The Western Stock Show Association is the official governing board for the National Western Stock Show.

Q: Will the scholarships be awarded this year even though the 115th Show will be postponed to 2022?



A: Yes! The scholarship Trust Fund, which has grown over many years, will award scholarships this year to all 100 students studying in the fields of agriculture and rural medicine at schools across Colorado and Wyoming.

In addition, the NWSS will also fund the National Western Denver Scholarship program, which is currently supporting an additional 10 students annually. This program focuses exclusively on Denver-area high school students and supports urban youth who are interested in studying agriculture or agricultural-related areas.

Q: What will happen to all the events that have traditionally occurred in conjunction with Stock Show, such as the Parade, Boots and Business and the Jr. Livestock Auction?

A: Unfortunately, those events will have to be postponed to 2022 when we hold the 115th Show.

Q: Why is a smaller show not possible? The Colorado State Fair was held in an abbreviated fashion so why can't this work for the NWSS?

A: While one can draw similarities between the State Fair and the National Western Stock show, we are indeed quite different entities. The Colorado State Fair was able to limit participation to just Colorado 4-H and FFA members. The National Western Stock Show is the "Super Bowl of Livestock Shows." Planning a smaller show would be nearly impossible for us given that we would have to make choices as to what breeds would be allowed to show their animals. We have had relationships with many different breed associations for many decades. It would be very unfair to allow some and exclude others.

In addition, the Colorado State Fair is a summer event that had the option to spread to many outdoor venues. The National Western Shock Show is a winter event without the option of spreading to outdoor venues. We cannot risk the viability of our non-profit by incurring expenses and risking the Show being canceled due to issues beyond our control.

Q: Are other shows across the country facing the same dilemmas? Have any national shows also been postponed?

We are the first to officially announce a postponement for 2021. We have not received any information regarding the decisions of other large shows in 2021.

Q: Did you explore going virtual, and will any aspects of the show be on a virtual platform?

A: Yes, we explored going virtual. But it poses some difficult challenges operationally and comes with a great expense. It is difficult for a judge to see livestock online and make an informed decision as to a winner. We also have very crowded livestock barns that are difficult to socially distance so having competitors on-site simply was not a safe option.

We are still exploring whether some events, such as the Coors Western Art Show, could be successful using a virtual platform. If we are convinced that it will work well, we will do it.

Q: Why couldn't the show be just postponed a few months, rather than a full year?

A: The National Western Stock Show is the first major show of the year for competitors. The Show started in 1906 and our founders picked January because it was the only month that livestock producers were not calving. Moving the show to any other month would not only reduce the ability of our producers to attend the Show but would also put us in direct competition with other major shows scheduled across the country.

Q: Is there a worry that other shows would try to lure exhibitors and rodeos that are held as part of the Stock Show and make it part of their shows?

A: The National Western Stock Show has built up brand loyalty for 114 years. We believe it would be exceedingly difficult for a first-time show in some other part of the county to replicate our success in one year. We will be back in 2022 with new yards and other buildings that will make it a year not to miss at the 115th National Western Stock Show.

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