

**Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies
Proud Heritage-Promising Future
February 2010**

Round Table Results

Topic 1: Combining Ag Education with Junior Exhibits

- Use cd's, DVD's and posters from OMAFRA
- Use Maple the Cow
- Stage Farmers' Olympics
- Promote fair in the area schools
- Ambassador to visit schools
- Copy Junior Division section and send it home with the June report cards
- Use school curriculum to revamp junior section
- Use bicycles for prizes
- Have Junior Farmers do demonstrations
- Use celebrity judges
- Ask juniors for suggestions
- Include junior categories for students with special needs
- Have schools design prize list cover / thank you cards
- Have classes for the entire family-build a scarecrow
- Have a community garden on the fair grounds

Topic 2: Using Displays to Promote Livestock, Roots and Vegetables

- Each building named on a map given to patrons at the gate
- Permanent directional posts
- Give each child \$15 to enter calves which will promote entries
- Question and answer sessions in the barn setting
- Have a sheet telling how the show is judged
- Increase prize money to encourage entries
- Farm safety displays
- Display different seeds
- Zucchini races
- Junior gardens on site
- Make animals out of thistles
- Make life size board paintings of vegetables with holes cut in them for people to put their head through for photos
- Have judging schools for livestock
- Make colourful displays

Topic 3: How to keep Fairs informed about the OAAS

- Fair Secretary MUST distribute and inform members of all correspondence
- Most information on the website is password protected and some boards do not share the password with their members
- Make website user friendly
- District Directors need to be able to be contacted by telephone and email
- Boards need to invite OAAS directors to their Annual Meetings
- Fairs need to send people to the District meetings
- Send an email to all fairs when the Gazette is posted to the site
- Send out Ambassador information earlier
- Promote job descriptions for District Directors

Topic 4: What can OAAS do to promote your fair

- Regular informative letters to the fairs from the District Directors
- Promote the Ambassador program
- Set up a question and answer section on the website
- Promote the fairs in the farm related papers
- Promote the home craft division
- More visibility of District Directors
- More promotion from OAAS about the organization
- Prepare list of frequently asked questions
- Would like to see District Directors involved at the fairs
- Provide more brochures and prize books

Topic 5: Educate and Encouraging Hand Washing

- Demonstrations using germ simulations and black light for children
- Show DVD's on proper hand washing
- Hand out samples of sanitizers
- Set up stations near food vendors, gates and barns
- Signage
- Target your audience-promote washing with funny songs for children
- Promote in your fair advertising
- Get sponsorships for washing stations

Topic 6: How to Revamp the Convention

- Rotate seminar topics
- Use more controversial topics
- Allow for daily registrations
- Allow for more networking time
- Send AGM resolutions out to fairs so grass roots can participate
- Record seminars and theme speakers for DVD use
- Do we need the craft room?
- Allow time on Thursday for Districts to meet
- Have a regional meeting with several Districts
- Put photography section on-line
- Have a dress code for the Directors- this is a business
- Don't use balloons to decorate-people have latex allergies
- Take fair attendance at AGM
- If the fee goes up, more services should be provided
- Start later on Saturday morning
- Keep all of the information in the program together by the day-do have different subject sections
- Have sign in lobby direction delegates to the Convention Floor
- Put directional signage at the elevators on the MM floor directing people to the rooms. This floor is confusing.
- Presidents' reception was 200% better this year
- Too much being held on Friday-not enough time if AGM speaker is to talk so long again
- Use Canadian theme speakers!
- Use bigger rooms for "hot topic" presentations on Friday

Topic 6: How to Revamp the Convention-continued

- Ambassador program was better on Thursday as they had a chance to mingle. Fantastic!
- Bring back a continental breakfast
- Ensure home craft is not lost at the convention
- Some of the round table topics would be good seminar topics next year
- Post room numbers at registration desk for hospitality rooms
- Should notify delegates in advance of any potential problems-parking was not good because of the movie shoot
- AGM speaker was too long-many people left before the Secretary's award
- Move Secretary's award to the beginning of the AGM so people will be there so see it.
- Do we really need a speaker at the AGM
- Need tables back on Thursday night
- Offer more at the Showcase than just singing
- Pod casting sessions should be explored
- Younger presidents at the fair level do not understand the important link to OAAS
- Craft room needs to be open longer
- Not enough time to see and do everything
- Realign the budget to reduce delegate costs
- Guest pass for family of award winning Secretary
- Offer a youth program-not just an Ambassador
- Security issue-who was filming the Ambassadors on Friday night
- Need a single day registration fee
- Offer food at the reception
- Keep content relevant and appropriate for all people
- Ambassador ice breaker too long / same thing every year / no changes since 2001
- Improve Ambassador seminars-current issues should be covered instead of telling them how to walk / sit
- Allow Ambassadors to provide feedback. If they did, the program would change
- Seek out more sponsorship –ask other provincial conventions how they do it?
- Sound systems were better this year

Topic 7: How to Respond to Animal Rights Groups

- Educate public- don't force opinions on visitors
- Make sure visitors see that animals are cared for properly
- Education is the key to proper attitude
- Use OFAC to educate boards / directors on how to handle rights groups
- Prepare an emergency kit for animal displacement
- Don't confront activities
- Have them removed if they create a scene
- Spray paint over their graffiti
- Meet with activists to explain show rules
- Research activist groups ahead of time
- Watch for paid protestors
- Educate volunteers / staff
- Have one person designated to speak to media
- More urban problems than rural
- Document all activities, take pictures for defense support
- Prepare notice of trespass letters
- Video record the protest
- Ensure local vet and animal owners are on-site
- Exercise "Do Diligence"
- Have two way radios available
- Include protests in the fair emergency plan

Topic 8: Demonstrations that Add Interest to the Fair

- Sheep shearing
- Baking pies
- Sewing machines for home craft displays
- Pampered Chef
- Local history talks
- Pottery
- Milking a cow / goat
- Honey bee frames
- Maple syrup judging
- Knitting, sewing and quilting
- Wood carving / wood burning
- Master gardener
- 4-H Achievement days
- Invite schools to the fair before it opens to the public
- Blacksmithing
- Calligraphy
- Cosmetics
- Spelling bee
- Highland dancing
- Pioneer antique show
- Horticultural-how to grow flowers / how to display flowers
- Judging school for entrants-allow them to taste the winners
- Making ice cream
- Soft food demonstration / making apple cider
- Shoeing and harnessing horses
- Auto extrication displays by fire departments
- Egg display
- RCMP Musical Ride
- OPP Golden Helmets
- Model railroad
- Ontario Power Generation
- Hand made jewelry
- Loom weaving
- Rug hookers
- 100 mile diet
- Children's colouring contest
- Blindfolded musical chairs
- Scrap booking
- Potato digging-6 varieties-match to pictures
- Guitar hero
- Air bands
- Skateboard tricks
- Scavenger hunts
- Farmer's Market

Topic 9: Junior Directors-Responsibilities and Recognition

- Use them where they are interested
- Need to be encouraged and mentored, not baby sat
- Have junior achievement day
- Give them ribbons to acknowledge support
- Have 4-H club dedicated to the fair
- Under 18 years of age
- Nothing financial
- Count time for community service
- List names in prize list
- Physical labour support
- Office help
- Monitor home craft halls
- Pizza party recognition
- Awards dinner recognition
- Give them midway tickets

Topic 10: Concerns of small fairs (smaller than \$2000 gates)

- Share resources between neighbouring fairs
- Lack of midway support
- Problems drawing urban support
- Lack of support from government
- Use animal shows and local acts instead of midways
- Remind local people about the fair
- How to get exhibitors, visitors and volunteers
- Use inflatables instead of midways
- Have bed races and bike races
- Have a volleyball tournament
- Sponsor a chess contest
- Oreo cookie stacking contest
- Have a blind folded husband driving a lawn mower and his wife directing him

Topic 11: What to Do when Hiring Children's Entertainment

- Get references
- Do they have a criminal check?

Topic 12: Fair Websites-what does and does not work

- OAAS should create a 'step by step' guide sheet
- Don't make the prize list too long for PDF form
- Use links to municipality and Parks Canada
- Do not use a lot of graphics
- Get sponsors for website
- Have high school students build it
- People still use dial up so don't make it too long
- Sites must be kept current
- Keep information in sections
- Promote the web address
- Vendor applications, entry forms and surveys could be printed off earlier
- Incorporate a face book link
- Post prize list earlier (3-4 months)

Topic 13: What Makes A Successful Fair

- Organization
- Good leadership
- Clear lines of communication
- Follow through on all issues
- Openness between Ag and Home craft groups
- Motivational speaker to address the Board if the older directors are reluctant to allow younger directors to say anything
- One person speaks at a time
- Use 'Roberts Rules of Order'
- Lots of Volunteers
- Continuity
- New attractions
- Restrict length for term of office
- Print an agenda
- Limit time on meetings
- Everyone has an equal voice
- Don't let Secretary control issues
- Listen, listen, and listen some more
- Be respectful
- Don't be afraid of change
- Give new ideas time to grow
- Meet regularly
- Create a director's handbook
- Directors must be willing to become Executives
- Celebrate and thank volunteers
- Ensure that Directors who do not attend meetings do not stay on as Directors
- Advertise for new members

Topic 14: How to Embrace & Benefit from Ethnic Diversity

- Approach schools of ethnic diversity for artwork
- Schools of Dance
- Ask for parade participants
- Add classes for native displays, jewelry, crafts and baking
- Have ethnic food booths and vendors
- Use ethnic entertainers-Northern Lights Steel band from Sundridge t
- Google different ethnic ideas

Topic 15: What is 'fair' remuneration?

- Some have honorariums, contracts and stipends
- No set formula
- Many are under valued
- Depends on what the Board can afford
- Each position needs a job description which must be reviewed annually
- Ensure staff keeps up with technology
- Letters of employment should be used
- Mileage should be paid
- Some pay Home craft Judges \$10 per hour or \$50 per class plus mileage
- Some pay livestock judges \$250 per show plus mileage
- Secretary and Treasurer must be bonded

Topic 16: Free fun, Novelty Events and Special Attractions

- Demonstrations by local businesses
- Children's corn sandbox
- Bubble gum blowing
- Cake decorating
- Water melon seed spitting contest
- Haunted house
- Wheel barrow races
- Paint an old junk car
- Frog jumping contests
- Shoe scramble
- Best dressed sheep
- Pet show
- Farmers' Olympics
- Frozen t-shirts: put on a froze rolled up t-shirt
- Talent shows
- Cookie stacking
- Spaghetti eating contest
- Greased pig contest where the participant's hands are greased and not the pig
- Log sawing
- Apple peeling
- Building model airplanes
- Fireman's games
- Church services
- Wii
- Story time-reading children's stories
- Face painting
- Teddy bear picnic
- Fashion show
- Mazes and Needle in the haystack
- Mini tractor pedal pull
- Throwing hay bales
- Treasure hunt
- Pie in the face
- Egg drop-it is election year!
- Wagon rides
- Lawn bowling
- Nail driving
- Beard growing
- Scare crow building
- "Mom" calling contest
- Mutton busting contest

Topic 17: How to Start an Antique Tractor Pull

- Go to local clubs to see what kind of prizes are given out
- Make sure prizes are useful to farmers
- Go to other shows and pass out pamphlets
- Promote as any other fair event
- It will take 3-5 years to take off
- Check for insurance coverage
- Approach farm dealerships for sponsorships
- Have a tent available for tractor display area as well
- Have a modified show as well
- Go to other fairs to see what they do

Topic 18: How to Make Your Fair Environmentally Friendly

- Bio-degradable plates and cutlery
- Monitor waste
- Recycle
- Put pictures on the recycle / garbage cans-not words
- Recycle paper
- Plant trees on the grounds
- Hand out sapling trees to people at the gate as they leave the fair
- Install solar panels
- Have contest called litter bug: put your name on the garbage and have draws from the garbage can
- Use recycled paper for prize book
- Green crafts challenge for kids
- Use green composting units
- Set up sorting stations
- Use souvenir cups instead of Styrofoam
- Use water bottles that can be refilled
- Use blue boxes from the municipality
- Discourage extra wrapping on food products

Topic 19: Where Do We Find Funding?

- Fund raising events-dances, bingos, dinners, bake sales, raffles, derbies
- Fund raising events-Ladies Night, Dinner Theatre, truck & ATV pull, teen video dance, lawn mower races
- Trillium Grants
- Celebrate Ontario tourism grants
- Canadian heritage Grants for Cultural Events
- Grounds rental
- Partnerships
- Hydro plans
- Check Government websites
- Festivals Ontario
- Casino sponsorships
- A lot of paperwork needed to get grants

Topic 20: Updating Prize lists

- Collect prize books from other fairs to seek out new ideas
- Give advanced lists to other fairs
- Update prize list on-line
- Keep prize money compatible with other fairs
- Use points per section instead of 1st, 2nd and 3rd
- Kids get a prize instead of money
- Need to stay current
- Update and distribute list early
- Committee must update the list-not just the Secretary
- Pick theme two years ahead of time
- Split classes to allow for more categories