

Little International Set April 11

UNIVERSITY PARK (Centre Co.) — The Little International Livestock Exposition, set for 8 a.m. on Saturday, April 11 at the Penn State Ag Arena, is a time-honored tradition at Penn State.

This year is very special for the college as it celebrates the 75th year of the expo.

When the first class of showmen entered the ring for the inaugural Little I in 1917, they showed livestock in the spirit of competitive sportsmanship that would become characteristic of the show throughout the decades. The first show was held in the pavilion (now the Pavilion Theatre), but as the years passed the Little I was moved to the Ice pavilion, the Agway barn, and now is held annually in the Ag Arena.

Over the next several decades, sizes and shapes of livestock changed. Beef cattle became smaller framed and thicker made, with Aberdeen Angus and Hereford breeds predominating. Sheep followed cattle in type, as evidenced by smaller, more compact, heavier muscled types. On the other hand, swine were extremely lean with very little muscle.

Until the 1950s, the horse division consisted solely of draft breeds. Catalogs from past events document the tradition and changes that span the 75-year existence of the Little International.

The 1947

Little International

In 1947, after World War II, beef cattle became smaller and thicker, leading to a stouter, bold fronted appearance. Small skeletal stature seemed to dominate livestock type as sheep remained in a small package and hogs took a

drastic change from a decade earlier. The general trend was toward very heavy conditioned smaller framed swine.

Both Aberdeen Angus yearling heifers and steers were shown in the beef cattle division, along with Herefords and Shorthorns. Sheep breeds shown in 1947 included yearling ewes of the following breeds, Cheviots, Hampshires, Shropshires and Southdowns. Poland China barrows, Duroc Jersey gilts, and both Hampshire barrows and gilts were exhibited in the swine division. A single class of draft horse aged mares provided the excitement in the horse division.

Some Little International traditions have been eliminated, such as 1947's Pig Derby and sheep shearing demonstration. The sale of raffle tickets, a continuing tradition, provided funds for the show's sponsor, the Block and Bridle Club. Raffle winners took home selected cuts of meat in 1947. Not yet an all-day event, that year's outing did not begin until 1:00 p.m.

The 1961

Little International

The decade of the 1960s brought only slight changes to the Little International. Sheep became smaller in their kind, but hogs once again headed toward the leaner, larger-framed kind.

American Quarter Horses featured thick, heavy, shortlegged, agile horses of the "Bulldog" type. Showmen and fitters of Shorthorn bulls, heifers, and steers competed against showmen of Hereford and Angus heifers and steers.

American Quarter Horse mares and yearling fillies replaced draft horses, while the swine classes consisted of Berkshire bred gilts,

and Yorkshire bred gilts and barrows. The sheep division was similar to that of 14 years earlier, with students showing Cheviots, Shropshires, Southdowns, and Hampshires.

The 1961 show was patterned after the International Livestock Exposition in Chicago — which has since been ended and moved to Louisville, Ky. — as the North American International Livestock Exposition, held annually in November. That show featured square dancers, a parade of herd sires, a sheep dog demonstration, and a faculty milking contest.

The 1977

Little International

The 1970s saw continued change in livestock types, with cattle becoming more moderately framed and cleaner patterned.

Sheep moved toward larger-framed, more capacious, and heavier muscled types. Hogs were generally large-framed, extremely lean, and extremely heavily muscled.

In the fifteen years between 1962 and 1977, Charolais bulls and heifers entered the competition for the first time as did crossbred steers. While the crowd watched Polled Herefords and Angus strut their stuff, several breeds of sheep were replaced. Southdowns were still popular,

and Dorset and Suffolk ewes were shown. Between 1962 and 1977, Penn State's herd of Berkshire swine had been replaced with Durocs, and both gilts and barrows were exhibited. Quarter horse yearlings and 2-year-olds were once again the featured horse entries.

The 1992

Little International

The type of livestock exhibited at the 1992 Little International will typify the types found nationally.

Increased emphasis has been placed on the "predictability" of breeding livestock. Breeding values and predictions of progeny performance are important in 1992.

The push toward increased frame size in beef cattle has moderated with a trend toward muscle expression and fleshing ability. Sheep circles continue to emphasize size, scale, muscle, and structural correctness.

The swine industry has recognized the need to produce lean, heavily-muscled hogs that are in structurally-sound, large-framed packages. American Quarter

Horse type presently focuses on a taller, cleaner, more athletic horse compared with those of 30 years earlier.

The 75th anniversary of the Little International sees only minor changes in the breeds exhibited from those in 1977. The Charolais herd has been dispersed and replaced with Simmental cattle. But Polled Herefords and Angus continue to be shown.

Although plans include complete dispersal of the Suffolk flock, both Suffolks and Dorsets will be exhibited this year. Southdowns are no longer raised at Penn State. Breeds of swine include Durocs and Yorkshires, with additional classes of crossbreds included this year. The horse division is now limited to Quarter horses, and both yearlings and 2-year-olds will be shown.

As in the past, the Block and Bridle Club will sell raffle tickets to raise funds for their activities. New events have been added for this special edition of the Little International, including a special showmanship contest for alumni and a petting zoo for the children.

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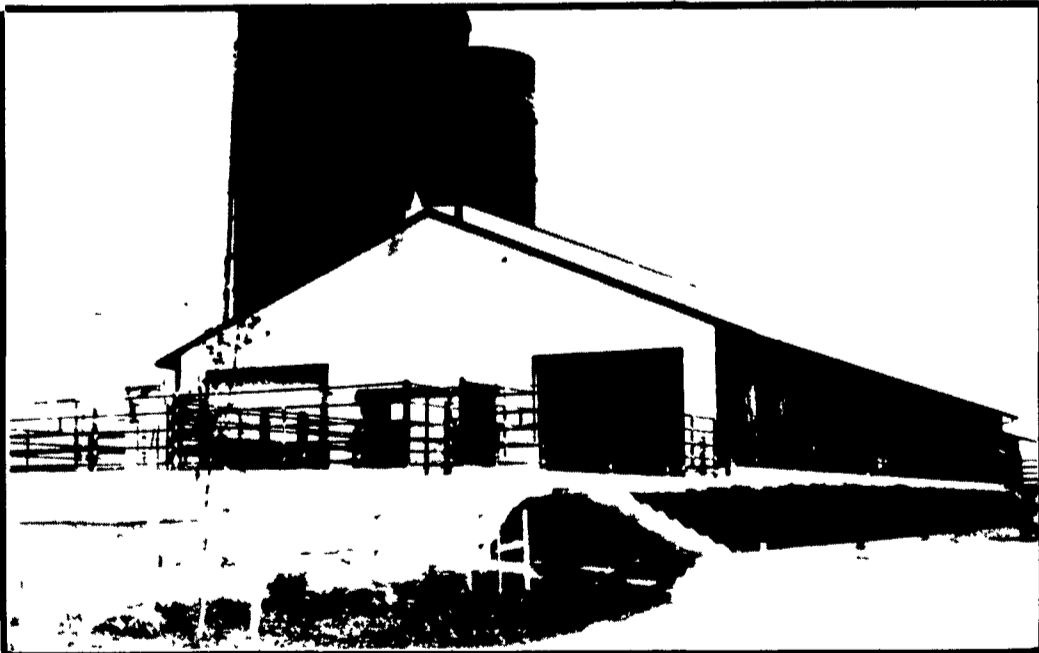
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