

# Washington County Agricultural Fair

*Supporting Washington County Youth Agriculture*



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# It starts with one child

For some, the Washington County Fair is about carnival rides, tractor pulls and funnel cakes. All fun pieces of what makes summer so special here. But for a few hundred youngsters, the Fair is a whole lot more. It's where a year of hard work raising animals to show in the junior livestock auction pays off. Range Resources is proud to have helped generate more than \$1 million to benefit the kids of Washington County.

Agriculture is still the backbone of this area. Sure natural gas development has helped, it's helped a lot, but if you've been to the auction you've seen that ag is as strong as ever. And if you've never been, you don't know what you're missing.

Far too often we read about all that's wrong with the world – these pages are dedicated to everything we think is right – and it starts with one child.



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# Ten Years at Region's Largest Youth Livestock Auction

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**Range Resources & Partners Raise Over a Million Dollars  
at Washington County Agricultural Fair**

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On the third Saturday in August, the Harry Hank Show Arena on the Washington County Fairgrounds – is packed. It's the last day of the Washington County Agricultural Fair, and for hundreds of kids – and thousands of their family members, it's a day that caps off a project that saw them raising and caring for livestock that will be sold at the largest youth livestock auction in the region. It's been a long road, and an irreplaceable lesson on responsibility.

FFA Advisor Renee Cambuzzi is an educator at McGuffey High School. A former FFA officer herself, she is a graduate of Penn State University and has been teaching in Washington County for nearly eight years. Renee also works closely with local 4-H leaders and as she talks about agricultural education, she breaks it down into a three-circle model.

"FFA and 4-H, our youth leadership organizations, are one part of that model," says Renee. "Another part is classroom education – everything from natural resources, to agricultural mechanics, animal sciences, plant sciences and a host of other things are under that umbrella. The final component is something we call SAE or "Supervised Agricultural Experience". And that's what you see unfold at the fair. The animals the kids show here represent the classroom knowledge they are now putting into their SAE project."

For hundreds of students in Washington County, agricultural education programs offered by FFA and 4-H are geared toward

helping them build upon skills that they've learned each year as they progress through the different programs.

"Students come into my program in 8th grade," says Renee. "And they can stay with us until they're 21. We really get to know our students, we get to know what their strengths and weaknesses are. So, not only are we building upon their different skill levels, we are also building upon their leadership, their abilities to become leaders in our communities, and we make sure they are very active in our communities with different events and community service. It's our goal to help prepare them for any type of career or post-secondary education."

According to Renee, when it comes to a market livestock SAE project, there are two types: short-term and long-term. The long-term project is nearly a year long. It involves purchasing a market steer in September or October, and then raising that animal until the following August. "Caring for them, caring for their health, feeding them two to three times a day – and most of our fair exhibitors hand feed their animals, cleaning their pens, cleaning the animal – some of the animals might get washed more than the kid, it's often more than once a day! But they have to keep them clean and keep them cool on hot days. Ultimately, they are raising them to become a food product that will eventually end up on the plates of consumers."

Short-term projects involve livestock that will require a little less time: goats, lambs and hogs. Students raise and care for these animals from April through August.

*(Continued on page 4)*



Once the unofficial end of summer rolls around – it is time to present the animals at the Washington County Fair. The sale is officially a “junior” livestock sale, you have to be a member of 4-H or FFA to show and sell an animal. On the day of the auction, atop the fresh sawdust layered inches thick on the floor of the Harry Hank Show Arena, buyers line the rows of seats (made a bit more comfortable with cushions provided by Range Resources); as over 300 eager kids and their parents get ready to parade each animal into the ring so the auctioneer can start the bidding. It is a day they’ve been preparing for all year, and hopes are high for every animal entered into the auction.

Walt Bumgarner is the livestock educator with the Penn State Cooperative Extension. He has a long history with both 4-H and FFA, and has been involved with the Washington County Fair since 2006. Locally, Walt also provides outreach and education to leaders of agricultural education programs for young people. He is passionate about importance of the work that he and other “ag” educators are doing at the fair and beyond.

“Sometimes people think agriculture isn’t important anymore,” says Walt. “But agriculture is still the number one business in this state – and in most states.”

Walt sees the fair as a prime opportunity for furthering education. “The Washington County Fair is one of the biggest events in Washington County. People come from all around, from as far away as Ohio and from

“*Since Range came on the scene, the dollars have continued to increase, and it continues to bring on other buyers. Without Range’s funding, we would not be able to do what we do for kids.*”

other counties. And one of the things we do here is provide ‘Ag Literacy’ – agriculture literacy. People don’t know where their food comes from – they think chocolate milk comes from a chocolate cow. With our programs, we’re not training kids how to be farmers necessarily, but all of our kids will leave knowing something about agriculture, about raising an animal and the importance of it, and the responsibility of it. That’s the main thing we try to get through to the kids. And that’s



the big thing that makes animal projects different than say, an art project. With an animal project, you are responsible for that animal every day. You’ve had to feed it. You’ve had to water it. If your family went on vacation you had to get someone to come take care of it. You had to brush it. You had to teach it how to be led. You can’t put it down and step away and come back to it. It’s constant responsibility.”

The livestock auction is where kids see their hard work pay off – literally and figuratively.

“*The livestock auction is really important because it gives students an opportunity to sell those animals at a fair market value.*”

“The livestock auction is really important because it gives students an opportunity to sell those animals at a fair market value,” says Renee. “And they are really bringing to you a product that is above the quality of what you would find in a grocery store, raised locally by that young person. Many of the animals were also born here in Washington County, and they’ve been hand raised by 4-H and FFA members.”

In addition to providing students with a chance to show off their work and sell the animals they’ve raised, Renee says the livestock auction is a critical fundraiser.

“Range Resources and other energy companies come to the fair and actually purchase the animals these students are showing. And so, if you’re sitting in the audience, you might think Range is taking home a truckload of animals – but they’re not. What they do is they come here and they support the child. They support our 4-H and FFA members, and they give them the opportunity to take extra money and put it into future projects or into their education. So, they bid, and then they actually donate the animal back to be sold again.”

Renee explains that dollars from the initial bid go to the student and are often used to help offset the cost of having raised the animal. “Then, the student re-sells the animal to another buyer – and the money from that second sale goes into a three-way split which



includes: the 4-H endowment fund, the FFA programs here in Washington county, and a scholarship fund.”

The Washington County Fair is one of the few that offers kids the chance to “re-sell” their animal. That opportunity amounts to an approximate 40 to 50-thousand additional



dollars per year that are funneled into scholarships, programming funds and non-profits. The scholarship dollars are made available to all 4-H and FFA members who are planning to attend a technical school or four-year college after high school. Additional funds made available to 4-H and FFA go into accounts that are utilized for student activities, educational programs, career development, and to defray the cost of FFA and 4-H events that might otherwise be out of a student’s reach.



Range and their service company partners also contribute annually to an extra “pool” of dollars (over \$60,000 this year) – that will be divvied up among the young participants, ensuring that each one goes home with an extra \$100 - \$200 to further offset their costs.

In the days leading up to the livestock auction, Range employee volunteers are at the fair starting in the morning and into the evening, staffing a large, family-friendly booth where parents and kids can sit down, play a few games, and ask questions or talk with the Range employees. The auction is later attended by a team of employees and contractors who welcome the families and congratulate every child who participates.

Range got involved with the fair in 2006 – just as the company was beginning to grow their presence in southwestern Pennsylvania. Ten years later, the commitment to the people and

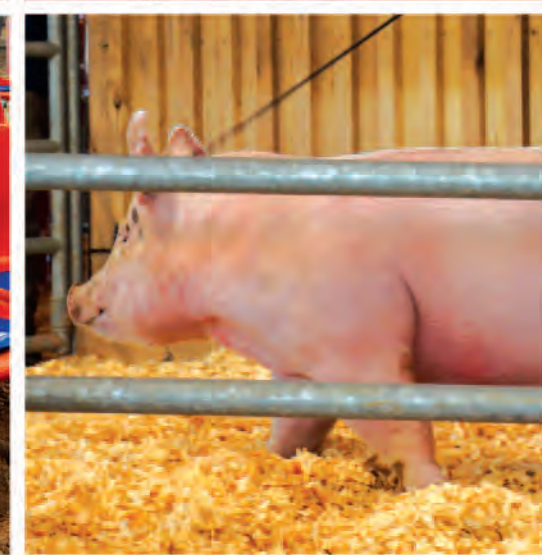
“*Sometimes people think agriculture isn’t important anymore, but agriculture is still the number one business in this state – and in most states.*”



community of Washington County has also continued to grow, inspiring others to follow suit.

“Since Range came on the scene, the dollars have continued to increase,” says Renee. “And it continues to bring on other buyers. They’re saying, if Range is doing something like this – they’re doing so much good in our community – well then we’re going to get on it and we’re

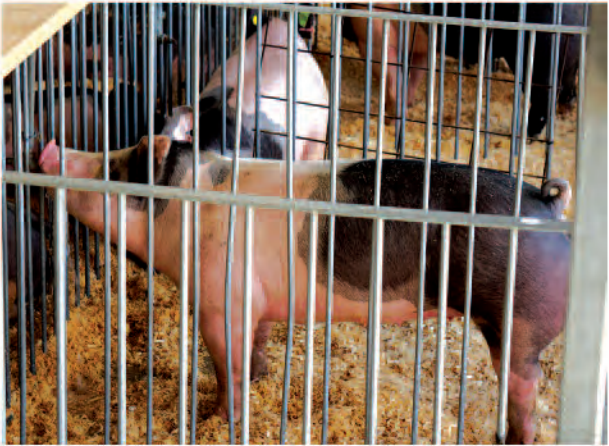






going to get involved too. They’ve brought several more buyers out to our fair. Which has been important for every kid. Without Range’s funding, we would not be able to do what we do for kids.”

Dennis Degner is the Vice President – Southern Marcellus Shale Division at Range



Resources. A former national officer with FFA, he joined Range a little over six years ago and was thrilled to find out about the company’s involvement with the Washington County Fair and local youth agricultural groups.

“I was raised on a farm, much like many of the people here in southwest Pennsylvania, in a town of 300 people,” says Dennis. “It was the kind of place where you could dial a wrong number and end up talking to somebody you know for an hour. But the way I was raised helped me become who I am today. I grew up around livestock, and I got involved with FFA.”

“I’ve spent the last twenty-plus years in the energy industry, but I have a degree in agricultural engineering. These programs are all about personal development, and developing young leaders.”



With that came leadership opportunities – I ran for various offices and I had the chance to travel around the world. It’s also where I met my wife Deb! We both held offices with FFA.”

Dennis believes his experience in youth agricultural organizations helped prepare him for the job he has now.

“My background wasn’t oil and gas. My background was being a farm kid. I’ve spent the last twenty-plus years in the energy industry, but I have a degree in agricultural engineering. These programs are all about personal development, and developing young leaders. My experience with FFA helped me get where I am today.”

And for Dennis, nothing beats actually meeting the kids and their families at the fair.

“You know, there’s a lot of headlines these days about everything that’s wrong in the world. But what you see at the livestock auction at the fair – is everything that’s going right. You see these young men and women who have put in a year of hard work. You’ll see their manners, you’ll see their work ethic, and there’s nothing better at the end than having them shake your hand and say thanks for being here to support our community. It’s why we’ve been excited to be a part of it for the last ten years, and why we’re even more excited about the next several decades. It’s all part of our long-term commitment to the communities where we operate.”

Having participated in the livestock auction for ten years – employees at Range have also been able to watch former FFA and 4-H kids enter the workforce – some in oil and gas.

“To think that several years ago – we bid on a young person’s animal, and participated in some way in their development as a leader, helping them get ready for a career – and now, some of those kids we met along the way work in the energy industry and even work for Range Resources, right here in Washington County. And their kids are participating in youth agricultural programs and will have animals up for bid at the livestock auction! It’s really terrific,” says Dennis.

Over the past decade, Range and their partners have contributed funds and in kind donations that have amounted to well over a million dollars of support for young people and agricultural programs in Washington County.

Walt hopes people recognize that the kids and families who participate in the Washington County Fair have an advantage due to energy industry investment.

“I’ve worked in three states. I grew up in Central Ohio and I’ve been around a lot of fairs. This area is set apart due to the energy industry. And it’s not only the amount of money – which is great! But really it’s coming in and supporting the kids.”



Walt also sees the support extending well beyond the livestock auction. “The entire community benefits from programs that Range is giving to. The dollars go into the classrooms, they go into experiences, and into preparing kids to be career ready. The end result is kids who have a very strong work ethic and leadership skills that they can utilize in any career.”



Over the last ten years, Walt has watched other companies follow in Range’s footsteps. “Companies that support the drilling business, the pipeline folks – and we’ve even seen that while it kind of started here in Washington County, there’s a lot more folks participating down in Greene County now, in Fayette County... The energy industry has been a great partner. And we remind the kids to be grateful for that. We’re lucky. We need to be happy and appreciate the support we have from the business community – especially the energy industry. Washington County is the envy of the fairs around Pennsylvania.”



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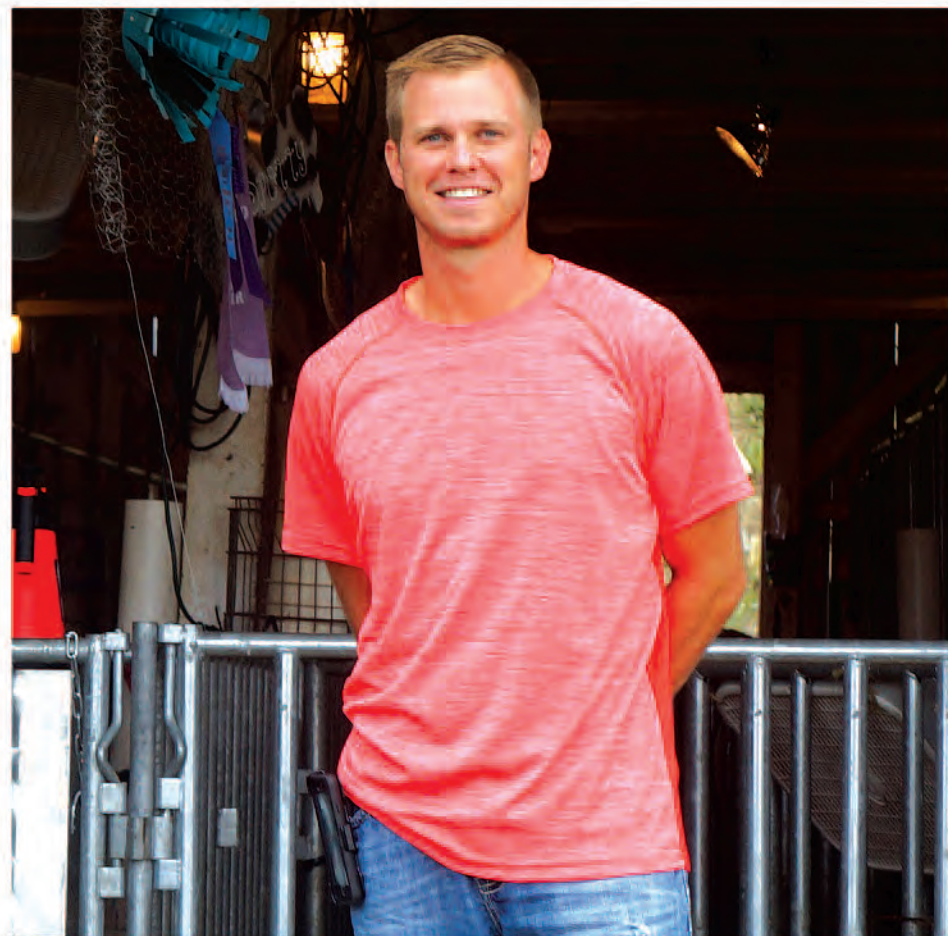
# The Art of Auctioneering:

## Over Fifty Years at the Washington County Agricultural Fair

For more than fifty years, the fast-paced voice of an auctioneer has propelled sales forward at the Washington County Fair Junior Livestock Auction. Anyone who's ever been to an auction is familiar with the distinctive rhythm of a good auctioneer whose talents include being able to discern the difference between a wink, a wave, and a bid. And for a dedicated group of auctioneer volunteers at the fair – those talents are a means of raising dollars for a deserving group of kids who, while raising and caring for livestock over the last several months, have shown a level of responsibility and commitment beyond their years.

Chad McGowan and his father Bill have been sharing auctioneer duties at the fair for over a decade (Bill has been auctioneering at the fair for over twenty years.) They are part of a team of volunteer auctioneers that includes Raymond Patterson (now retired, Raymond was one of the originals at the fair more than fifty years ago), Bruce Smith, Jim Behm, Mike Stritzinger and Steve Yilt.

Chad learned the craft from his dad.

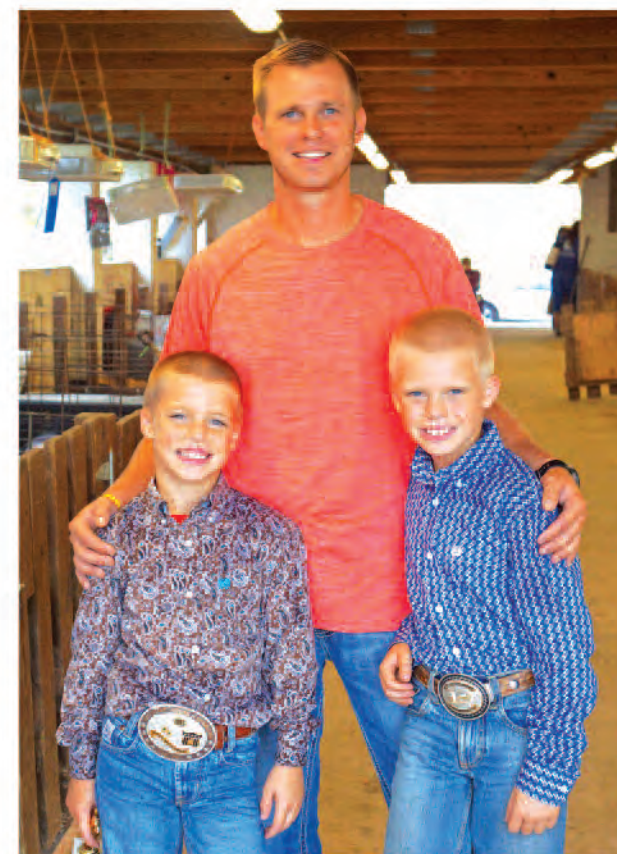


"You know how some people sing in the shower? Well Dad would rattle off his auctioneering in the shower!" says Chad. "So when I was a little kid I'd hear him in the bathroom and I just kind of picked up on it. I'd sneak off and try to imitate him by selling off my toys."

That experience set the stage for Chad to catch the auctioneering bug. Once old enough, he did an apprenticeship with now retired long-time Washington County auctioneer Hezzy Reese. Hezzy auctioneered for over sixty years in southwestern PA, and helped Chad hone his skills. In order to become a certified auctioneer in the state of Pennsylvania, applicants must either attend one of three approved auction schools, or complete a two-year apprenticeship with another PA-licensed auctioneer. After that, every candidate needs

to pass the state auction exam in order to obtain their own license.

These days, the McGowans have their own auctioneering business, but for Chad and the other auctioneers who participate – the livestock auction is a favorite event.



"All of the auctioneers donate their time, none of them get paid to do this, they all come in to help out and get as much money for those kids as they can!"

Chad also knows what the kids are going through on auction day. "It's special to me, because I used to show market lambs and market pigs with 4-H just like these kids. So I know what their experience is like. I know it's bittersweet – sometimes it's sad to see your animal go. For other kids, it's more business, they took on a project and they are there to make the most of it."

As far as what it takes to be good auctioneer, "you have to have fun," says Chad. "And make sure the crowd has fun too. I know a lot of the buyers, the people who come to support the kids every year. And I like to mess around with them, no insults, but I might guilt them a little bit, make them spend a little more money than they might have planned to. In the end, it's all for a great cause, it's all about the kids."

Chad has watched the livestock auction grow over the last decade too. "I hope the kids, and the moms and dads realize that the businesses coming in – specifically the energy industry and companies like Range Resources – well, the kids are very fortunate nowadays. They're very lucky. When I showed we didn't have participation from nearly as many buyers as we do now."

Chad's skills have not gone unnoticed by bidders.

"My cousins were into ag, but I wasn't growing up. I went to the Washington County fair every year, but the livestock auction wasn't something I was exposed to as a kid," said Range's Matt Pitzarella

who has bid on behalf of the energy company over the years. "Let's just say with my initial inexperience I set a record for rabbits one year and another on hogs – and as cute as the kids were, Chad got me good. It's all in good fun and it helps these kids so much and you're just happy to be a part of it. But my bidding days are over, we have some other people from Range handling that now!"







# Thank You

Congratulations to the Washington County Fair Board Officers,  
Directors and Volunteers on another successful and memorable year.

Thank you to all of our community partners for their  
continuous support of the livestock auction kids fund.

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