

Shenandoah County Fair



Rich Cooley/Daily

Youngsters race after a pig breaks free during the pig scramble held Thursday evening at the Shenandoah County Fair.

Kids go hog wild at pig scramble

By Tommy Keeler Jr.
The Northern Virginia Daily

WOODSTOCK — The Shenandoah County Fair's decision to push the pig scramble from Wednesday to Thursday night couldn't have been better — especially for one family.

Due to heavy rains, the pig scramble was pushed back a day and the turnout for the event was strong.

One family left the fairgrounds with two pigs.

The Foltz sisters — Lelia, 7, and Eva, 5, — were able to secure a pig each.

"I think it was easy," Lelia Foltz said. "All I had to do was push down on the leg."

Lelia was in the first of 10 heats and was able to grab a small white pig by its back legs almost immediately and pulled it into the pen.

With each heat, the kids, ranging in age from 3-8, tried to grab a pig by its legs and pull it to the pen.

The event was divided into four groups of 7 and 8 year olds, three groups of 5 and 6 year olds and three groups of 3 and 4 year olds.

Jim Eastep, who has been running the event for the last 15 years, said there were 67 pigs total and nearly 285 kids.

"It was great," Eastep said. "It couldn't have been any better. Everything was smooth. We did it in about an hour and 15 minutes. ...This was probably the most people I've seen here. The grandstand was almost full. I put some bleachers (down in front of the grandstand) here. I couldn't put anymore here and they were all full."



Rich Cooley/Daily

Olivia Anderson, 9, of Maurertown, drags a pig into the pen during the pig scramble Thursday evening.



Bentley Smith, 5, of Edinburg, sheds a tear after coming up empty during the pig scramble.

Scramble

Continued from A1

The children had to put lard on their hands before the pigs were released. Anyone who caught a pig gets to keep the pig after the event is over.

Lelia and Eva's dad, Joe, said they live on a farm and have pigs, but their pigs are much bigger and older than the ones at the Shenandoah County Fair.

"I'm proud of (Lelia)," Joe Foltz said after his oldest daughter won her pig. "I didn't know how she would do. We usually have some pigs on the farm that we'll butcher, but we usually we buy them around 200-250 pounds and grow them out until they're 350 or so and butcher them. She had never been around any little pigs and had to catch any, so I didn't know how it would turn out."

About 15 to 20 minutes after Lelia won her pig, it was Eva's turn.

Much like her sister, Eva said "it was easy." Lelia said she knew exactly what she was going to do with her pig.

"I'm going to make it eat a lot, and then I'm going to butcher it and eat it," she said.

Joe Foltz said he wasn't sure what the family would do with the pigs.

"We usually have family butchering day on Thanksgiving day and the day after — it's been that way for years," he said. "We'd have to keep them a whole year, so I don't know."

Joe Foltz said he wasn't sure how his children would do going into the scramble, but he was proud of them.

"It looks like we're gaining more pigs," Joe Foltz said with a laugh after Eva won her pig. "I knew it was a possibility (that they could both win), but I didn't know how it would go. I didn't really expect it."

Eastep said Shenandoah County's pig scramble is the largest in Virginia and it's really grown over the years.



Photos by Rich Cooley/Daily

Youngsters race after a pig breaks free during the pig scramble held Thursday evening at the Shenandoah County Fair.

"We started out down in a little building and we only had four pigs the first year," Eastep said. "Now it's so big that we had to bring it (to the grandstand) as a main attraction for the Shenandoah County Fair, and we have some good attractions here."

Eastep said he feels like the pig scramble teaches kids about responsibility.

"I like to talk to the kids," Eastep said. "I like to talk to them about what they're going to do with them. I like to see them take them home. We didn't do this just because we like to mess with pigs. We like to do it because it gives kids a chance to develop. It gives them a little responsibility. If those kids have a pig to take care of, it makes them think a little more. They can go out and feed that pig. I know they don't do it every day. I didn't either when I was their age. It gets it in their mind that they want to take care of something."

— Contact Tommy Keeler Jr. at theeler@nvdaily.com



Rich Cooley/Daily

Youngsters in the three and 4-year-old class chase a pig during the pig scramble.



Macom McCabe, 4, of Woodstock, works his pig to the pen.



Rich Cooley/Daily

Waylon Holliday, 6, of Mount Jackson, heads to the pen with his pig.

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Mr. and Mrs. Richard E. West of Stephens City, VA, announce the engagement of their daughter, Corbin Ellen to James Sean Bridgeforth, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Scott Bridgeforth of Winchester, VA.

Miss West is the granddaughter of Mrs. Sue E. Keplinger and the late Roger P. Keplinger of Winchester, VA, as well as the late Mr. and Mrs. Raymond D. West of Gore, VA. She is a 2013 graduate of Sherando High School in Stephens City, VA. She earned a Bachelor of Science in University Studies-Elementary Education Track Pk-6, as well as an Undergraduate Certificate in Elementary Education from Shenandoah University in 2019. She also earned a Professional Teaching License from the Virginia Board of Education in 2019. She is employed as a second grade teacher by Frederick County Public Schools in Winchester, VA.

Mr. Bridgeforth is the grandson of Mrs. Betty R. Marsteller and the late Vernon E. Marsteller, Jr., of Winchester, VA, as well as Mrs. Ruth H. Bridgeforth and the late William "Ed" Bridgeforth, Jr., of Winchester, VA. He is a 2013 graduate of John Handley High School in Winchester, VA. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, as well as a minor in Accounting from Ferrum College in 2017. He is employed by Royal Crown/Dr. Pepper Bottling Company in Winchester, VA.

A June 2022 ceremony is being planned.