Animals, children steal show at El Dorado County Fair

By Kathryn Reed

PLACERVILLE – Brooks & Dunn are right, cowgirls don't cry.

With bodies flying, sheep stomping on or near them, and the crowd whopping it up, it was the young girls who got up, dusted themselves off and looked like they were ready to ride the bulls in the pen behind the arena. The boys, well, a few of them left in tears.

Mutton bustin' can be a rough sport.

Megan Ehle, 7, of Placerville is off to a fast start in mutton bustin'. Photos/Kathryn Reed

The announcer assured everyone at the El Dorado County Fair on Friday that every child was there because he or she wanted to be – not because their Wrangler-Roper-Stetson clad parent wanted them to be.

Broken into age groups 4-5 and 6-7, girls and boys compete

together. Several of the little ones didn’t look quite old enough to be riding. It didn’t appear much would have stopped them.

Megan Ehle, 7, had a big grin on her face after her first mutton bustin’ contest. A little scratch near her elbow will be a reminder of the day’s fun.

Across the fairgrounds the animals are the ones being judged.

When Jennifer Weber, 16, first started raising swine it was difficult when auction day would come. Even though she knows she’ll be in tears today when 6-month-old Sammy is sold, the paycheck will be welcome.

She and her Hampshire took first place on Friday in senior showmanship. Weber would take the pig for walks on her family’s 6 acres in Shingle Springs. Some of its favorite foods include blackberries and Jelly Bellies.

To those who didn’t grow up on a farm or don’t live on one now, the judging for the goat milking champion was eye opening. Mammaries are the big deal in this competition.

Plenty of farm animals are on display – beef cattle, swine, turkeys, chickens, rabbits, guinea pigs and goats.

For those who don’t want to mess with animals, there is the mechanical bull. Plus, there’s a ton of meat to eat.

Aromas of all sorts fill the grounds, ranging from sizzling beef to kettle corn.

The four-day event that wraps up Sunday is worth going to multiple days because there is so much going on. Music genres run the gamut – some professional, some competitive.

Demonstration halls are filled with baked items, photographs, knitting, quilts, canned goods and more that were entered by county residents to be judged. Some of the amateur photographs

look like the shooter should consider switching professions, they are that good.

At the games of chance and carnival rides is where most of the teenagers could be found.

To find out what is going on at the fair on Saturday and Sunday, click on schedule.

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