

FFA Week

Manson Future Farmers of America filled with year round activities



Photo provided by Kevin Amsden

Manson School District Future Farmers of America (FFA) participants along with Chelan School District FFA during a field trip to the Ag Expo.

By DIANA PIÑON STAFF WRITER

MANSON – It is National Future Farmers of America (FFA) week and the Manson School District FFA is ready to celebrate. FFA students and the rest of their peers will participate in different activities throughout the week.

Each year the students come up with the activities for the week. It has become a tradition for first-year members to get their hand dyed green on “Green Hand Initiation Day.” The following day one person from each class will participate in a Hot Wing Eating Contest. On Thursday, four representatives from each class will race during the Hotdog and Marshmallow Relay. The celebrations will wrap up



Blake Cochran, Manson FFA President

with the yearly BBQ during lunch time.

FFA President Blake Cochran and the rest of the FFA officers will be part of the week’s activities and will make sure they run smoothly. Cochran stated that they are most excited



Kevin Amsden, Manson FFA advisor

about the food race relay. If the competition gets tight, they will determine the winner by time. The activities are intended for everyone to come together and have fun.

FFA advisor Kevin Amsden explained that all students who are enrolled in his classes are eligible to be an FFA member. At the moment

25 to 30 students out of the 55 are active members of FFA, “last year we had a bunch of seniors graduated so we are down a little bit, but we have four, five new kids this year,” he said.

Throughout the year, FFA members and advisor participate in an array of activities. They do the Chelan County Fair, District and State Apple judging, travel to Spokane for the Ag Expo and do a Leadership Contest, to name only a few.

The Leadership Contest consists of giving speeches and doing job interviews, this is something they enjoy the most because it is a real-life experience and it prepares them for the future.

Preparations for Apple Judging began almost two months in advance, the kids

Manson has officially formed its very own FFA Alumni Association. Back in November, Marty Cochran started the association in order to receive funds from the Chelan Valley Fieldsmen’s Association. The money goes to support FFA kids through projects and other needs. Members meet every first Thursday of every month at Manson Growers starting at 7 p.m. Everyone who is willing to help and support Manson FFA kids is welcomed to attend. You don’t have to be a former FFA member to participate. For more information contact the Manson FFA advisor Kevin Amsden (509)687-6109.

and Amsden meet after or during lunchtime to practice identifying different apple varieties, bugs, learn about pesticides test and grade apples. In the 2018 competition, Manson placed 11th with all freshmen and sophomores.

At the Chelan County Fair, Manson was able to place third overall right behind Chelan High School.

Amsden is preparing the list of animals the kids will need for the fair coming up

again. “In April they will get their sheep and goats, in May they get their pigs.” Those kids with steers have had them since November.

“It’s almost a whole year process, the day after the fair is over, I try to order and estimate what we are going to need for the fair next year,” Amsden stated.

Opportunities such as these ones, allow the kids to have great educational experiences. “They build confidence and knowledge.”

Student profile: Blake and Cole Cochran

Editor’s Note: This article appeared in the 2018 Chelan County Fair Official Program Guide

By DIANA PIÑON, STAFF WRITER

MANSON – Manson High School upcoming juniors Blake Cochran and his twin brother Cole Cochran are physically similar but very different.

Blake is part of the marching band and he plays the drums, Cole plays baseball and is part of two other school clubs.

Both have been involved with FFA and 4-H for many

years. Blake is the current Manson FFA President and has been involved with the club for two years. He is still involved with 4-H and has been a part of it for nine years now, his twin brother Cole is the 4-H Manson President and is also involved with FFA.

“My older brother started off with FFA and I got another older brother who started off with 4-H and then went to FFA, plus my family has kinda been doing it for a very long time,” said Blake.

At the beginning the Cochran’s were raising chickens and then both transitioned into raising pigs instead. They have now been raising pigs for

nine years, “with pigs you have to work with them more, you have to wash them and show them more. With chickens you train them at the beginning when you first get them and they are pretty much set,” said Blake. Cole agrees, “with pigs you get more attached to them, you get more involved with them.”

Blake has two pigs and Cole has one. The Cochran twins have been attending the Chelan County Fair since they were two weeks old, so at this point all of this is normal to them. However, “it’s fun and you get to hang out with people. It is something that changes up your routine,” said Cole.

After all this time with their pigs, the twins have a set schedule that they follow, “me and my brother switch off each day to take care of the pigs.” The twins give their pigs water, check their



Photos by Diana Piñon

ABOVE: The Cochran twins getting ready to weigh their pigs three weeks before the showing. LEFT: One of the three pigs the Cochran’s are raising.

food, pet them and walk them. Closer to competition Cole and Blake will wash their pigs and walk them more regularly.

Once Blake graduates from high school he plans on at-

tending Wenatchee Valley College and then will transfer to Washington State University. Cole also plans to attend college to study electrical engineering.

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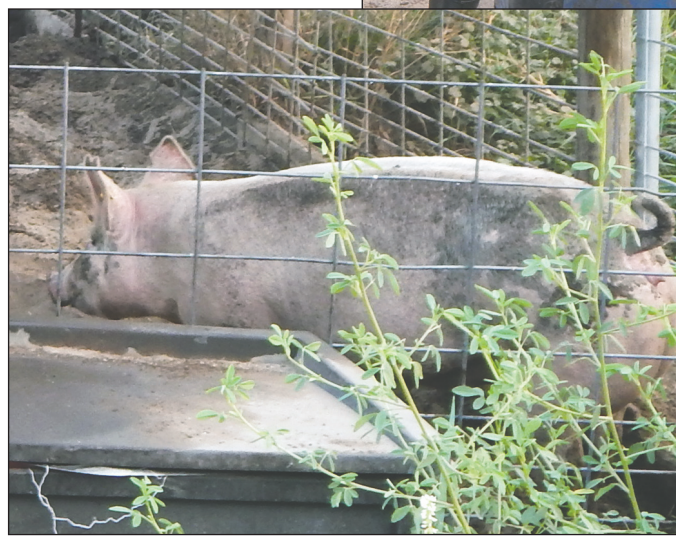
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Chelan Future Farmers of America year starts with Lake Chelan Rodeo

COMPILED BY DIANA PIÑON
STAFF WRITER

CHELAN – Chelan School District Future Farmers of America (FFA) will celebrate FFA Week in style.

This year, the festivities will take place the week of Feb. 19 thru 22. Starting on Tuesday Chelan kids will get the chance to dress in camo, as an agriculturist, a farm animal and will show their FFA by wearing their FFA t-shirts on Friday for a chance to receive a prize for their participation from FFA advisor Bailey Dezellem.

Each year, Chelan FFA participates, organizes and competes in different activities throughout the months.

One of the most popular activities Chelan FFA and alumni are part of is the Lake Chelan Rodeo, which kicks off the year. In 1981 the Chelan FFA Alumni was started with the mission of supporting physically and financially the members and activities of the Chelan FFA Chapter. The Chelan FFA Alumni provides chaperones for trips, judges for contests, guest speakers for classes, help to haul animals, coaches for teams, and dollars for travel scholarships, academic scholarships and SAE project grants. FFA students sign up to help out during the event along with their parents and other volunteers.

In mid-August, the kids start preparing for upcoming fairs, they shear goats and get their personal bios and educational posters to pres-



Chelan School District Future Farmers of America (FFA) 2018-2019 members.

Photo courtesy of Chelan FFA Facebook

ent. Last year, during the North Central Washington Fair, Carlos Venegas won the Grand Champion Market Goat title.

During the 2018 Chelan County Fair, Chelan FFA

had the Overall Supreme Showperson, Grand Champion Market Goat, multiple Grand Champion Fitting and Showing, Reserve Grand Market Steer, finalists in Market, finalists in fitting and show-

ing, and plenty of blue ribbon showpeople.

Another 2018 highlight for Chelan FFA was the December State Apple Evaluation. The team representing Chelan FFA took fifth place

statewide. The students were required to complete in a multitude of tasks including identifying pests, blemishes, varieties, as well as grade apples, pressure test, and more.

In January, Chelan FFA hosted the annual Lake Chelan Horticulture Day at the high school. Now, the kids are gearing up for the 2019 Chelan High School Plant Sale which will be May 2-4.

Student Profile: Mark Heimark

Editor's Note: This article appeared in the 2018 Chelan County Fair Official Program Guide

BY DIANA PIÑON,
STAFF WRITER

CHELAN – A lot has changed for the soon to be senior at Chelan High School, Mark Heimark. Last year was his first year showing livestock at the fair, this year Mark will be back with one of his two market hogs.

Heimark moved to Chelan in the eighth grade and his freshman year he became a member of FFA. “FFA is for everyone and I really found my place in FFA and even though I do nerdy stuff, I managed to be FFA President. People look up to me and respect me, they know me well enough and know I can get stuff done,” said Heimark.

The first year Heimark was around livestock was during the summer of his sophomore year going into his junior year. He decided to give goats a chance, “goats are not that fun, they are such a pain ... they are such a struggle to show”. This overwhelming experience made Mark Heimark show pigs this time around, “pigs do their own thing and they are quite smart animals and are capable of feeling, when they see me they come and greet me. I feel more of a connection to pigs because they are more laid back, they are also more easier to take

care of,” he explained.

Before his FFA presidency, Heimark was part of Drama Club and FCCLA “but now that I am president, I really want to focus on FFA mostly.” As president of FFA Heimark is in charge of a lot of things but mainly he is a representative of all the members.

He enjoys participating at the fair because “it’s fun, I really enjoy it. You get up early in the morning and you take care of your animals, clean their pens and wash them up, get them ready for showing.” After the showing ends, FFA members hang out after dinner and have even more fun, “some of my best friends I met through FFA and by sharing some of the same experiences and they are people that I will have a connection with for the rest of my life and it means a lot to me,” said Heimark.

Every two days Heimark visits his two pigs to make sure they have enough food and water, he also takes them out of the pen and walks them with him to get them ready for showing.

Mark has two male pigs, BLT and Brought, only BLT will be competing at the Chelan County Fair. “I have been told that if you name them it makes them harder to let them go at the end ... I know what I am getting into and that they are an investment,” explained Heimark.

It is going to be hard for Heimark to let go of his pigs,



Photos by Diana Piñon

RIGHT: Chelan FFA President Mark Heimark and his pig BLT.

ABOVE: BLT loves to play in the mud, we could say he enjoys being a pig.

“I’ve seen them grow and I’ve worked so hard on them but we all have a purpose in this life and theirs was to feed someone that needs it.”

Throughout his four years of high school Mark has been working hard to get to where he is now and he will continue to work hard to achieve

his goals after high school. Heimark says he will start off at Wenatchee Valley College to get his prerequisites and then transfer over to Washington State University for Viticulture or Central Washington University to study Business and Brewing.



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