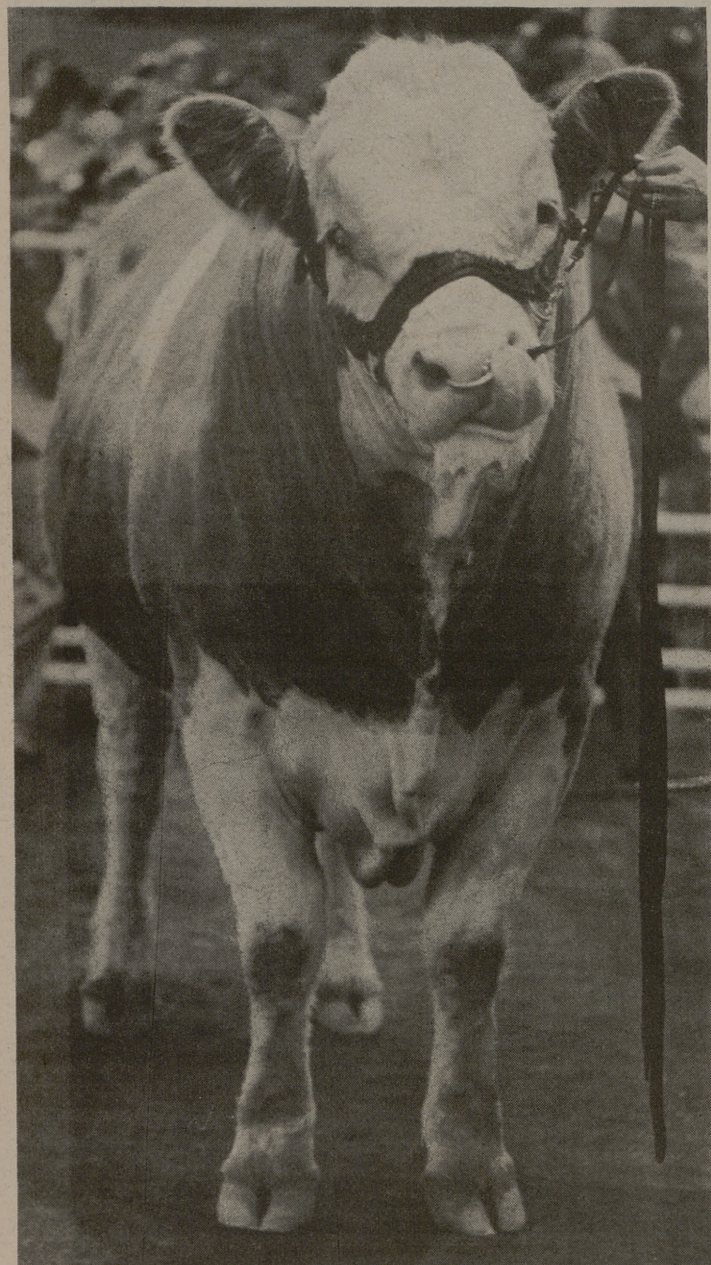


Photos this page by Jeanne Graham

RODEO!



THE CHUCK WAGON RACE, top, is often one of the most exciting events of the rodeo; fans cheer for their favorites while the drivers battle for position. Above is Orlando, the Grand Champion Bull of this year's livestock show.

By Julie Smiley

Battalion Reporter

Houstonians "Go Texan" for two weeks a year when cowboys and rexall rangers, livestock and exhibitors, music stars and fiddlers gather at the Astrodome for the Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo. It is Houston's big chance to dress in cowboy boots, belt buckles, hats and pearl-snap shirts and be a real Texan.

The 22.5-acre production began in 1932 with 2,000 entries, and this year it attracted over 27,000 livestock exhibits.

The stock show began this year on February 21 with the largest Brahman cattle show in the history of the show and the breed, with 512 entries. Besides the 18 breeds of cattle shown in the cattle arena in the Astrohall, exhibitors also showed horses, sheep, goats, rabbits, swine and poultry in open class competition during the first week. The youth show followed, and will run from last Tuesday through next Sunday.

Exhibitors found showing livestock hectic enough without the invasion of the Osmond family television production crew. Donny and Marie and family filmed their March 18 television program on location at the show.

For three days, crowds watched as the Osmonds sang and danced in the cattle arena, sang to children in the FFA children's barnyard and performed in concert in the Astrodome.

Amused livestock exhibitors and fans laughed when Marie Osmond fell on her face during a filming as the impatient ewe she was leaning on walked out from under her.

Larry Mahan, former all-around cowboy, showed Donny Osmond how to ride a bronc with the help of a bucking machine, but Osmond decided against flying hooves and chose to ride a Guernsey cow out of the bucking chute.

Perhaps the real stars of the show are the children who come to watch and show livestock. Miniature cowboys and cowgirls dressed in belt buckles three sizes too big and hats drooping over their eyes found cotton candy and barbecue sausage sandwiches much tastier than hot lunches in the school cafeteria.

One 9-year-old showman, Mitch Thomas from Raymondville, is a 6-year veteran of the show. He shows Charolais and Zebu cattle. With showstick in

one hand and a leather lead strap in the other, he shows yearling heifers, a 2,200 pound Zebu bull and all sizes in between. He said he loves to show cattle, and that his bull is just a big teddy bear to him.

Another young attraction was a 7-year-old female fiddler who competed in the fiddle competition. She didn't place first, but she captured the audience with her version of "The Orange Blossom Special." Her 18-year-old brother, Reggie Wrinkle of Vidor, placed first and won the chance to perform in the Astrodome last Saturday evening.

Cattle, sheep, horses, swine and barns — a perfect setting for children and, of course, Aggies. Each year about 50 Aggies are chosen from animal science and agricultural journalism to work at the show. Aggies work long days in the show ring writing press releases, taking pictures and running errands for the Osmonds, and find sleep and hot showers at a premium.

"It's lots of fun and work, but also a great chance to meet professionals from breed magazines and publications," said Martha Hollida, a junior ag journalism major from Silva, Mo. "I decided last year, after working four or five days, that I was in the right major and this is the kind of work I want."

Bill Stone, Max Crittenden, Kevin Smith and Steven Wythe, animal science majors, kept record books in the open cattle show. They agreed it was a great learning experience, plus much fun and hard work.

Another ag journalism major, Bonnie Helwig of Miles, said she hopes she can work next year even though catching up on a week of college work will be tough. She said she owes her college education to the Houston show. She is a recipient of a \$6,000 Houston Livestock Show Scholarship.

The show's main purpose is to provide over \$1.25 million in scholarships and research funds for colleges and universities in Texas. Each year the show awards 50 FFA and 50 4H scholarships. Of the 247 scholarship recipients, 135 students chose to attend Texas A&M.

Money from the Houston show also funds research projects at Texas A&M in amino acid availability, utilization of slaughter blood in feed, muscle development in cattle and nutrient requirements in athletic horses.

And if you think livestock shows are just a bunch of smelly barns, scholarships and cattle, you should know that the grand champion turkey in Houston last year sold for \$13,005.



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