



THE SHOW BOX

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This time of year, 4-H'ers, parents, grandparents, leaders and agents are preparing for the next show season, it is time to purchase the new projects. I would like to suggest another type of preparation – THE SHOW BOX. Everyone has one – some are small, some take up half the trailer, some have two or three. Some have wheels, some have beds and some take four grown men to pack from the trailer to the show pen. Some are plastic, some are homemade and some are well designed portable monstrosities which could serve as a bomb shelter if needed. Regardless of their size, shape or construction they are most certainly a necessity for the show barn.

I recall sending our oldest off to “lamb camp” many moons ago with his mom in tow. Now, I grew up showing lambs and mom did not, so my thinking was what a great way to get mom “indoctrinated”. Well, little did I realize how much the show industry had changed in the 20 years I was away. We really did not have a “show box” back then, what we had was more of a “tool box” for clipper blades, oil cans, tools and shearing hand pieces and then a good old cardboard box for the rest of the stuff. Well after day one of “lamb camp” I received a phone call wanting to know why I did not send a “show box” and where is all the stuff they needed to prepare and show the lambs? I was presented with an arm’s length list of stuff they needed. To save some face, I rushed down to the feed store, grabbed up all I could find and headed to Albuquerque with the insides of a “show box”. I made do with a few plastic containers for our first “show box”. Soon, we purchased a lamb show box, followed by one of the children winning a nice four foot, by three for by three foot metal show box with take-out trays and a padded top (nice for a nap), a nice plastic show box for the horses and we added two hang on the fence pig show boxes over the years. I share my personal story because we didn’t know what we needed when we started but we soon learned and added.

Those with years under your belt in the show barn may not get anything from this, but this is for the rookies and those in the learning stage. I would like to propose that spring is the time to prepare the show box. This time of year you will not have all the stress associated with loading stock before the sun comes up, keeping animals on feed and headed off to the fair just hoping you remembered everything. It is a good time to take everything out of the show box and give it a good wash and sundry. It is amazing what one can find in a show box after the season. For the most part I imagine once the fair is over, everything is tossed in the truck and trailer and unloaded at home without thought to cleaning and removing things from the show box. There is school to catch up on and the season is over and why worry? Well I can remember finding all sorts of things in our show boxes. From ribbons to dirty socks someone tossed in, to rusty clipper blades (Dad messed up), to cash, to some real nice science projects.

So prepare now while you have some time. There are all kinds of lists and suggestions you can find online these days for what should go in a show box, by species. I am not going to recreate the wheel because you can google the lists. In addition, everyone has a different opinion on what should be in the box. Again my target group are the folks new to the show culture. There are camps and Programs you can attend to get a good basic start and suggestion. The seasoned exhibitors in your county will have suggestions. So here is my proposal. If you do not have a show box now is the time to start preparing. Find a good list or get information from folks then get the right size show box to fit your needs. Remember someone has to move this thing once it is ready. If you already have a show box, take everything out, get rid of out of date products, clean the inside and clean the bottles of show magic and fu fu dust before you put it back in. Now you are ready to start fresh for the new show season. One thing done.

Here are a few things I would like to recommend based on 17 show seasons (Remember we started without a show box). Get a large envelope for each fair you will be attending, and put the name of the fair on it. Inside this envelope put a copy of all the rules, paper work and documents you require for entry, even a copy of your entry forms and receipts. When you get to the fair, there it is. Some folks use a three ring binder as well.

Some things we added to our show box (sometimes not on the lists) over the years are:

Something for aches, pains and headaches (Mom and dad need these)

Nail clippers

Bobby pens

Safety Pens (all sizes – never know when you need a hem)

A stain stick remover for that fast fix before showmanship

Dry socks

Lotion

Tape

Hair ties

Comb or brush – for kids

First aid items (small kit - if needed, there is the urgent care for big hurts)

Allergy meds or inhaler if used

Travel size hair spray, gel, toothpaste etc.

Wire/rope and pliers

Extra batteries for camera and video games or spare charger

Bug spray

Zip ties - all sizes (lots of uses)

Washers for water hose and spray nozzles

Assorted nails and screws

Small note book with pen or pencil

Small stretches of chain (10 to 12 inches)

Snap clips

A prescription bottle full of quarters. (Never know when you need a late night treat)

A football, cards or Frisbee to pass some time.

I realize you may think why all this and how does it fit. Most all of this will fit in small containers inside a zip lock or plastic snap lid container. You want to try to avoid a bunch of loose stuff floating around

inside the show box. Organize it by needs and uses in several containers or color code it. These are only suggestions - make it your box.

Now, once you are loaded and ready, make a check list and laminate it. Put it in the show box so all you have to do is clean and restock once you start to prepare for next season. Now your show box is ready to load come fair time. Another added benefit, it is usually less expensive to prepare your show box at home vs depending on vendors at the fair.

I would like your feedback. Please email me with things your family likes to have in your show box. Let me know if the items are species specific. Include in your suggestions anything and everything to show your animals. Once I get a good list, I will send it out in a future Extension newsletter. Maybe we can put together a nice list for all to enjoy. My contact information is jwcamp@nmsu.edu and my extension phone number is (575)646-8180.

One last thing, throw in some good chairs for sitting around the show box. I have a life time of memories of things I learned about my kids, comradery and just life lessons in general from the show box.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Horse Expo & Sale
Horse Center – Las Cruces, NM
April 29, 2017 – Joby Priest, Horse Manager

NMSU Bull Sale
Ag Auditorium – Las Cruces, NM
Neil Burcham – April 29, 2017

Indian Livestock Days
May 10 – 12, 2017 – Albuquerque, NM

US Dairy Extension & Training Consortium
May 17 – June 23, 2017 – Clovis, NM

NM Youth Ranch Management Camp
June 11 - 16, 2017 – CS Ranch in Cimarron, NM

US Beef Academy
May 15 – 19, 2017 – Corona, NM

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