

# Winnisquam Echo

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## Record numbers turn out for Belknap County Fair

BY ERIN PLUMMER

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BELMONT — Animal showings, music, food, tractors and monster trucks, and opportunities for kids to shine could be found at the annual Belknap County 4-H Fair.

The 74th annual fair took place over the weekend at the county fairgrounds with a wide array of events and offerings for people of all ages.

Past fair president Fran Wendelboe said numbers over the weekend were near record, especially on Saturday.

Despite earlier con-



PHOTO BY ERIN PLUMMER

Landon Akerstrom with his sleeping pig Snowflake.



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George LeClair spends some time with his holsteins Bow and Ari.



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Kids compete in the Belknap County Fair's pie eating contest.



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Noah Cullen with his pigs Bluebell and Stripe.



PHOTO BY ERIN PLUMMER

Vernon LeClair brushes Buck and Dan.



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Olivia Nason gets Star ready for a costume contest.

### FAIR

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cerns about possible rain on Saturday, they had record numbers that day. The weather turned out ideal on Sunday and

brought in good sized crowds. This year also saw a large increase in participants. Wendelboe said a few years ago, they had six pigs; this year, they had 27. The amount of cattle entries

has doubled.

"The food vendors were having smiles on their faces," Wendelboe said.

New this year were the Monster Trucks, which kids were allowed

to climb inside.

Kids from 4-H programs across the state displayed their many skills and even inspired many more potential members. Wendelboe said many parents came up to her and asked how they could get their children involved in 4-H.

Olivia Nason, nine, of Boscawen showed Star, a Scottish Highland heifer, in the Animal Costume Show; both were dressed as ballerinas. Olivia said she has been working with Star since Star was born last year, starting her training on a four-wheeler and going from there.

Olivia said she enjoys doing 4-H.

"I like when I get to walk her around during the fairs," Olivia said.

George and Vernon LeClair of Mason showed their own pairs of holsteins. George, nine, has been working with Bow and Ari for six months.

they get better."

George took his holsteins in the Showmanship in Cart and the Drag competitions. He said he really likes being part of 4-H.

"It's fun that some days you can bring your cattle up and show them a little bit," George said.

Vernon, 13, has been working with Buck and Dan for a year and seven months.

"After the first couple weeks, it started getting very easy, but after the first two it's hard because you have to train them," Vernon said.

He said some days are difficult, but he overall enjoys what he does.

Vernon said one of his favorite parts of 4-H is learning life skills.

"We're very proud of them," said George and Vernon's dad Matt LeClair. "It's quite a learning experience for the cows and their kids and their parents."

and Noah Cullen of Belmont, both nine-years-old, showed off their pigs. Landon came with Snowflake and Ham. He said sometimes they can be hard to work with and require a lot of feeding and caring for.

"You need to bring them water very often, you also need to feed them very often in the morning and night," Landon said.

He walked his pigs in front of the judges, saying they look at how good the pigs look and how well they walk.

Noah, who was there with Bluebell and Stripe, said they can be hard to work with. The hardest part is getting them to walk when they would rather lay down.

Overall both of them said they like doing 4-H.

"You can spend more time at the fairs and with your pigs," Noah said.

“At the beginning it’s a little annoying because when you want them to go forward they pull back,” George said. “As you train then more and more as they get older

“They have to learn a lot of things and it’s an everyday thing, it’s not just a summer,” said their mom, Beth LeClair.

In the swine barn, cousins Landon Ak-erstrom of Gilmanton

Noah’s mom Rebekah Cullen said this is the boys’ first fair with their pigs. She said she thought 4-H is a great program that teaches them a lot of things.

“It’s so far bee the best experience with animals,” Noah said.