

Two sessions of Milk Makers Fest April 21 open to adults



At one Milk Makers Fest station, kids can see and feel how a milking machine works. First graders get a complete sense of how a dairy farm operates. — Lynden Tribune | COURTESY PHOTO

Reservations due by this Monday

LYNDEN — For the first time in the 17 years of the Milk Makers Fest, its organizers are planning two free sessions for an adult audience.

The grown-ups' opportunity to learn about dairying alongside Whatcom County's first-grade students will be on Wednesday, April 21. Group times are 12:15 to 1:30 p.m. and 12:30 to 1:45 p.m.

Reservations must be confirmed by 4 p.m. Monday, April 19. Contact coordinator Cheryl DeHaan at 354-1337 or cdehaan@wcfarmfriends.com. Space is limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

DeHaan notes that this is an adult education opportunity, and no children (besides the first graders) are allowed in these four sections.

It's an opportunity to learn about the dairy industry — which had about a \$186 million market value in Whatcom County in 2007 — and its

importance nutritionally and impact locally on the environment and economy.

Milk Makers Fest takes place at the Northwest Washington Fairgrounds. Groups meet at the clock tower near the Dairy Women's booth, via the western entrance off Front Street.

Each spring, first graders from throughout the county are invited to learn about the dairy industry first-hand by visiting a model farm set up at the fairgrounds. The students visit six stations where they learn and experience:

- Where milk comes from and how cows are milked.
- The care and health of the calves and heifers.
- The Circle of Farming, or what it takes to feed a cow and how everything that is done daily on a farm is in direct relationship to the end product — milk!
- The importance of dairy products to a healthy diet.

The children release some energy by working their way through a giant hay maze and seeing other animals that might be found on a dairy farm (not included in adult sessions).

The youngsters also experience a tractor-pulled wagon ride and scavenger hunt locating items that might be used or found on a dairy farm.

Milk Makers Fest is a three-day event, with six sessions each day lasting about two hours. Up to 72 classrooms can be accommodated, with nearly 2,000 first-grade students and their teachers/chaperones attending each year.

This event is sponsored by the Whatcom County Dairy Women with support from Farm Friends, Whatcom County Dairy Federation, Whatcom County dairy farmers and industry businesses.

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