



Miles Hamann of Santa Cruz is dwarfed by a John Deere 9430T tractor on display at the Santa Cruz County Fair on Sunday.

SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

# COUNTY FAIR ENDS ON HIGH NOTE

As event concludes Sunday, director of marketing say he's pleased with turnout

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By CATHY KELLY

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WATSONVILLE — The 127th Santa Cruz County Fair came to a close for another year Sunday, leaving behind some happy memories and pleased organizers.

More than 50,000 people heeded this year's theme, "Come See the Berry Best," and ticket sales and other revenue were up 2 percent as of Saturday night, said Steve Stagnaro, the fair's director of marketing.

## ON THE NET

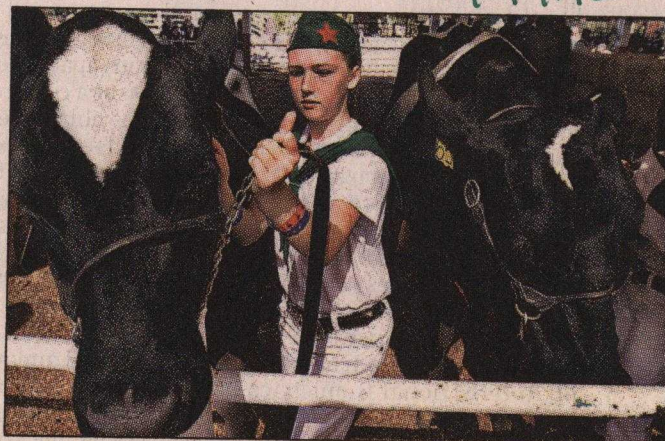
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Sunday is typically one of the busiest days, Stagnaro said.

"It's gone amazingly well," he said. "Saturday was one of the busiest anyone can remember."

A walk around the expansive grounds on a sunny, cool Sunday showed a bounty of activities and displays for children and adults. There were myriad showings of crops and collections and farm animals, as well as faux bull riding, a horse show,

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Already a winner in her category of choice, Aromas 4-H Club member Julaine Mullaney competes with 'Lockett,' a Holstein, during the Round Robin Finals in the Livestock Arena at the County Fair on Sunday. During the Round Robin, winners of individual categories compete to determine their overall ranching skills.



# FAIR

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pig races, several human performers, art, information, shopping, rides and plenty of tasty fair food.

Some new activities were off to a great start, Stagnaro said. Opportunities to play miniature golf, pan for gold and float on a pool of water inside a large plastic "bubble" were offered on the main grass area. (The bubble ride drew a crowd, as did some of the food booths and a litter of piglets at one of the barns).

Stagnaro called the attractions a good combination of old and new.

The Heritage Building held agriculture and horticulture displays and things were humming Sunday. Many people stopped to look at the blue ribbon pumpkin, a 563-pound wonder grown by Beverly D. Reader of Santa Cruz.

Nearby was a wine barrel aquaponics demonstration, mushroom nutrition facts from Monterey Mushroom, seed sales and volunteers pushing Prop. 37, a measure that would require labeling of genetically engineered food.

In the nearby J.J. Crosetti Building, the Education Department included artwork and other displays by county students and rug twining and hooking in another area.



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**Erika Savage begins to lose her balance as she enjoys Bubble Fun, a new balancing challenge attraction, at the Santa Cruz County Fair on Sunday.**

Jeanine Spreckman gave a good pitch for rug making, calling it a "dying art." She learned the craft from Billie Street, who teaches a class in Scotts Valley.

"It's like therapy and it's a form of recycling," Spreckman said.

Collections were also in this area, where top awards were captured by gorillas and cartoon characters.

In the Adult Division, Rita Lew won Best of Show for her gorilla collection and in the

Junior Division, 13-year-old Matthew Simoes of Scotts Valley won Best of Show for his cartoon characters.

Over in the Fine Arts Building, Bill Horgos of Aptos was demonstrating woodworking and helping a young girl create a bowl, while artist Katherine Stutz-Taylor guided a print-making activity.

Steve Ibarra's three daughters, Alliyah, Deserie and Bella, each made a print — creating images of hearts, snakes and a pumpkin on construction paper.

"We come every year," Ibarra said. "It's a great way to spend time with the kids."

Jeremy Thompson of Aptos was watching his young daughters ride the Elephant Tower kiddie carnival ride, floating in a circle inside some pink elephant vehicles.

"They're having a blast," he said. "We come every year. They wouldn't have it any other way."

Follow Sentinel reporter Cathy Kelly on Twitter @cathykelly9