

*For Immediate Release*

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**Antelope Valley Fair & Event Center Receives Industry's Top Honor**  
*The Western Fair Association's Coveted Merrill Award*

**January 31, 2020, Lancaster CA** - The Antelope Valley (AV) Fair has won the fair industry's most coveted award, given by the [Western Fairs Association \(WFA\)](#) underscoring the local Fair's leadership and commitment to community excellence.

The Fair's inaugural 2019 "[Kids Feeding Kids](#)" program took home the prestigious WFA [Merrill Award](#), award named in honor of the WFA founder Louis Merrill. The "Kids Feeding Kids" program was recognized for its community outreach, education and youth advocacy, during WFA's Annual Industry Awards Celebration on January 22, 2020 in Reno, Nevada.

The Merrill Award, is given to fairs that clearly demonstrate innovation, vision, and excellence. This is only the second time the AV Fair has received the award. In 2004 the AV Fair shared the top honor with Salinas Valley Fair in recognition of the new AV Fair facility.

Prominence of local hunger was a key factor in launching the 2019 "Kids Feeding Kids" program. The program was created and initiated by the Antelope Valley Fair Livestock Council, community support from Los Angeles County, Trade Unions, local businesses, and community volunteers. The program is one hundred percent funded by donations and one hundred percent supported by volunteers. "Kids Feeding Kids" is dedicated to providing a healthy source of meat based "farm to table" protein to the less fortunate who seek assistance from two of the Antelope Valley's largest food banks, SAVES and Grace Resource Center.

The [WFA](#), is a renowned trade association, representing Fairs throughout the Western United States and Canada, and recognizes excellence in the fair industry at its annual convention. The WFA officials announced a record-breaking number of entries submitted this year, topping over 800 submissions. In addition to the Merrill Award, the AV Fair garnered six WFA Individual Achievement Awards.

AV Fair Board Director and the "Kids Feeding Kids" co-founder, Debbie Dino commented "It's an incredible honor to receive the Merrill Award, as well as the other WFA Achievement Awards. The 150 WFA Fair members are incredibly innovative, and have countless inspiring programs. It is truly humbling to receive WFA's top honors."

Dino went on to say, "My fellow Board Members, the staff and the hundreds of AV Fair volunteers work extremely hard all year, ensuring that our Fair is a unique and memorable experience for our fans. We're equally passionate about contributing to our community in meaningful ways that improve the quality of life for all of our residents, neighbors and friends all year long."

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According to Drew Mercy, President of the AV Fair Association, “The ‘Kids Feeding Kids’ program embodies our core values and community commitment that is at the heart of everything we do at the AV Fair & Event Center. I applaud the Livestock Council, all the youth and volunteers who initiated, and made the program work. I look forward to the program growing year after year. “

Additional details about the “Kids Feeding Kids” program is available on the AV Fair & Event Center website, [avfair.com](http://avfair.com).

The WFA awards are in addition to several top honors received earlier in the year from the International Association of Fairs & Expositions, an industry organization that also recognized several of the AV Fair’s marketing initiatives. A complete list of awards are listed below.

### **2019 AV Fair Award-Winning Entries from the Western Fairs Association:**

- Merrill Award: Kids Feeding Kids
- Gold Star Award: WFA Service Members

### **Individual Achievement Awards**

#### First Place:

- Fairtime Advertising Poster
- Outdoor Advertising Campaign
- Give It Your Best Shot - Animals

#### Second Place:

- Social Media Campaign
- Give It Your Best Shot – Entertainment
- New Event, Exhibit Program

### **2019 International Association of Fairs & Expositions (IAFE) Hall of Honor awards:**

#### First Place:

- Mobile App

#### Third Place:

- Promotional Advertising: Outdoor
- Promotional Event
- Website

The 2020 AV Fair & Alfalfa Festival “SAAY WHAAAT?!” will take place August 21-30, 2020. For more information about the AV Fair & Event Center visit [avfair.com](http://avfair.com). Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).