

Mentone Egg Festival June 4, 5, 6

Early Egg Show Started To Promote Business

The Mentone Egg Show was started in 1936 to promote the poultry business — and particularly eggs — produced in this area.

A number of years ago poultrymen in the Mentone area conceived the idea of an egg show to stimulate interest within the poultry business, and to attract wide attention to the high quality eggs produced here. Hat-

cherymen, feed dealers, egg buyers and all allied industries were called on for financial and physical support.

The poultry business saw a tremendous growth during those early years, and the egg show also expanded. Although a queen contest was not a part of the first egg show, that was included in the 1940's.

The dates of the egg shows were changed to a time deemed most suitable to the community. For example, the show was April 16-18 in 1941, March 12-14 in 1947, Oct. 21-22 in 1948, and Sept. 18-19, 1958.

Entire County Involved

Although the show was held each year in Mentone, it was by no means a local affair. In the past, producers, egg car managers, dealers, and hatcherymen from almost all of neighboring towns either attended, contributed or worked on some committee.

In 1946 the surrounding communities putting on the Mentone Egg Show used on all advertising a map of Indiana centered in the middle a large basket of eggs, with each egg named for a surrounding community and called "Egg Basket of the Midwest."

Participating communities were Rochester, Argos, Milford, Hamlet, Etana Green, New Paris, Leesburg, Pierceton, Claypool, North Manchester, Denver, Chili, Akron, Plymouth, Bourbon, Atwood, Warsaw, Burket, Silver Lake and Mentone.

The second egg show catalog states that 400 persons sat down to a banquet at the 1937 Mentone Egg Show and this was the largest banquet ever held in Mentone.

Such names as Roy Rush, Ken Dolan, C. O. Eiler, Oliver Teel, Royce Tucker, Forrest Kessler, Mace Nelson, Chester Manwaring, and Cecil Long were on the various committees connected with the second Mentone Egg Show. At least some, if not all, of these members were instrumental in starting the first egg show.

Egg Judging

An egg judging contest was also part of the early festivals, with each dozen eggs entered in a contest receiving a prize exceeding the value of the eggs.

Eggs were judged on a scale of 100 points, with 25 points for shell texture, 20 points for size, 10 each for uniformity of size, uniformity of shape, color and condition of shell, and five points for shape.

Egg buyers from New York City, along with many Midwest manufacturing concerns, attended the event each year. The county agricultural extension office and Purdue University supplied most of the educational material.

until 1959.

Then, on Aug. 17, 1960, the general committee of the Mentone Egg Show voted not to hold an egg show that year. An announcement of the cessation was as follows: "Due to varied and rapid changes in the poultry industry the past few years, the committee felt that it would be a proper time to evaluate the needs of the day and perhaps institute other programs or means that might be of more value to the industry. During the course of the years the Mentone show has found itself with an indebtedness at the end of the show; however, at the present time there is a small sum of money which will be retained for any future need for which it may be adequate."

Thus, the town of Mentone went without any yearly show throughout the 70's, until it started again as Mentone Days in 1973. On April 22, 1975 Chamber of Commerce President Bill Westerman announced that the name of Mentone Days had been changed to the Mentone Egg Festival.

The Egg Festival received a large boost last year when the local chamber was granted a franchise for a "Miss Kosciusko County Pageant." Last year's win-

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