

Getting ?hitched? at the Schomberg Agricultural Society Spring Fair

Experience horsepower like it was intended. Feel the stands and the earth tremble as the horse hitch teams create a spectacle as they stomp into the ring as one, outfitted in patent leather and chrome harness pulling the large hitch wagons.

The Schomberg Agricultural Society's Spring Fair Draft Horse Show with line classes and teams are back once again to show the beauty, grandeur and the sheer force of today's draft horses.

Registered line classes start at 10 a.m. this Saturday (May 25), and the Hitch Show starts at 1:30 p.m. with the Jeff Hodgson Memorial Six Horse Hitch Class leading things off.

A hitch is a unit consisting of the exhibitor, his or her horse(s) and vehicle, being a cart or wagon. The judge observes all hitches normally from the middle of the ring. A judge may want to see the horses and hitch come straight on and would therefore stand at one end to enable him to see how straight and fluidly the horses are moving and that the hitch is properly aligned. All of the hitches are driven both ways of the ring to see the working of all horses, you know yourself performing some tasks, it is quite common to be better doing something one way or to work on the outside as opposed to the inside.

While many spectators are in awe of the beauty and grace of these teams, the judge is the person determining the criteria of the day, as the ribbons are to be pinned. Exhibitors in these classes are showing their horses to the best of their ability. Whether it is a single horse, a team of 2, 4 or 6 horses, they must perform together as a unit.

The general public sees a matched team as being of similar colour and markings. Think more about the height of each horse, about length of stride and height and flex of action in movement of both the hind and front feet and legs, carriage and height of the nose, head and neck should be similar in the team and at all times each horse should complement each other and work together.

Presentation and style in general are big factors, enhancement of decorations, maintenance of both the wagon and harness and the proper fit of the harness.

The Schomberg Agriculture Horse Show is one of the recognized heavy horse shows in Ontario fair circuit. It is also now known to Ontario 6 Horse Hitch teams as an opportunity to be able to qualify for the North American Six-Horse Hitch Classic Series. The goal of the North American Classic Series to promote the draft horse breeds is being realized within all levels of competition. Each year, more than 175 six-horse hitches across the United States and Canada compete at agricultural fairs to accumulate points for the classic series. At the end of the series, the four highest point hitches in each of three breed classifications are invited to compete at the North American Six-Horse Hitch Classic Series Final Championship.

Schomberg Fair is extremely proud to celebrate its 10th anniversary of showcasing the 6 Horse Hitch on Saturday afternoon at 1:30 p.m. With the generous support of the Bradford firefighters and Cole Engineering of Markham, the Jeff Hodgson Memorial Six Horse Hitch Class for the past three years has been a qualifier for this fantastic series.

The Schomberg Spring Fair show features some of the finest horses in Ontario, representing the best of the Belgian, Percheron, and Clydesdale/Shire line and performance horses. If you have not experienced the beauty and skill of these teams, help fill the stands to watch the competitions May 25.

The fair runs May 23-26. For more, visit www.schombergfair.com

