



# Celebrating Ten Years of Fun at the Sheep & Fiber Festival



by Sarabeth Parido

The Kentucky Sheep & Fiber Festival, a natural fiber and local food event, celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> year at Masterson Station Park in Lexington, Kentucky. It is quite a feat for a festival to last a decade. Trends come and go as do participants and volunteers- but our festival has grown and evolved over the years to become a highly anticipated event. Our final numbers are still pending, but we saw close to 5000 people come through the gate! The two-day

festival showcased some of the nation's best fiber artists as well as offered nearly thirty workshops, sheep shearing demonstrations, and vendors with supplies for knitting, spinning, weaving, dyeing and crocheting.

This year, we changed our outdoor layout and added an incredible tent for our livestock vendors and fleece sale, thanks to funding provided by Agriculture Commissioner, Ryan Quarrels. The larger tent gave more space to our animals, to our vendors, and also hosted our fleece sale this year, which was a huge success for our fiber producers.

Patrons arrived early on Saturday to get the first picks of the freshly shorn fleeces and proceeds went directly to the producer.

Our amazing vendors filled the Masterson Station Agriculture Building and Pavilion, with many more vendors lining the sidewalks of the park. Guests enjoyed two yarn buses this year, as well as many interactive vendor demonstrations throughout the day.

Our workshops highlighted the natural side of artistry. We had a sold out ecoprint class where students used leaves and foliage



Festival images courtesy of the City of Lexington Parks & Recreation Department

from their own yards, as well as a few fresh picked at the park, to dye silk and wool scarves. The class sold out so quickly our instructor, Theresa Brown, quickly opened another class to accommodate the waiting list! We also hosted natural dyeing, design, weaving classes, as well as many more classes for beginners.

Our sheep shearing demonstration was again a big hit, as guests got to see the sheep up close and personal as they were sheared. Many of our guests were able to ask questions, learn about the safety and health management of shearing as well as see wool skirted and bagged up, ready for market. For the very first time in festival history, we also sheared two mohair goats so that our guests could see and feel the difference between wool and mohair. Patrons were provided wool fact cards from the American Sheep Industry to help them learn more about the benefits and care of wool.

Our committee strives to see the festival continue to grow and offer the best of fiber arts and animals to our guests. Looking ahead to 2020 with excitement for where the next 10 years could take us.

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**Sarabeth Parido** is the Director of the Kentucky Sheep and Fiber Festival and The Kentucky Fiber Trail. She raises her own small flock of sheep in Clark County, Kentucky along with her husband and four sons. She spins and dyes her fiber into yarn and has taught knitting classes for nearly 20 years. Sarabeth is passionate about Kentucky fiber and wants to see great things happen for Kentucky wool producers.

