Design Memo

To:	Dr. Karen Kuralt
From:	Tenzing Briggs *TB*
Date:	9 May 2023
Subject:	Final Portfolio — *ASF Livestock Fair* Form Design

The documents described in this memo are "Livestock Fair Form Design 1," "Livestock Fair Form Design 2," and "Livestock Fair Form Design 3," with Design 3 being the final version and Designs 1 and 2 being earlier drafts.

Introduction and Purpose

These documents are fillable Word forms for the 2009 Arkansas State Fair (ASF) Livestock Show. They contain fillable fields, which can be completed digitally within Word; their purpose is to provide the necessary fields to be filled for application, while guiding their filling with instruction. Their purpose, then, is also to properly organize the applicant's information.

Description of the Users/Readers

The audience for these documents is applicants for the 2009 Arkansas Fair Livestock Show. As applicants, they are concerned with providing everything needed for their application. Such readers expect they will be provided with the required fields for all aspects of their application, as well as being able to easily distinguish between different kinds of requirements and fields. Thus, these forms need to organize information both textually and visually.

Description of the Context and Design Constraints

The documents' main contexts are that they need to be exhaustive in the information asked of applicants and that they need to be easy to fill out. Thus, a primary constraint is that design should be especially informative and should help assist the process of filling them out. Their layout needs to be concerned with simplifying the applicant's process, especially by careful alignment and proximity of fields.

Design Evolution and Rationale

In my first draft design for this form, I focused primarily on having a main header with an image, creating distinct sections, and carefully reformatting the Entry Fees section. I chose a color scheme of blue tints based off of the graphic I chose to put into the main header; I felt the graphic was simple enough, and I also felt a blue color scheme fit well with the formal nature of such an application. That is, I felt that the coolness of blue would counteract the potentially stressful process of applying for the fair, considering that much of its information was requirements like fees to pay, deadlines, and legal obligations. Having decided on the color scheme and the main header's graphic, I then used tables to manage alignment and proximity. Two other major changes to the original form's content that I made in this first draft were to change the organization and the formatting of its text. I changed sections that were originally all caps to regular font, making certain parts bold. For bold text, I primarily chose sections that would make skimming the document quicker, like key noun phrases or especially important sentences. Similarly, I reformatted much of the content to fit in tables, such as simplifying the Entry Deadlines section text to fit in a table or organizing the ASF or highlighting every other fee's type entry. I also moved the section for state officials to the very end of the document so that an applicant would have an easier time ignoring it. Finally, I highlighted the agreement text in light blue, under the assumption that its text might be skimmed, and added text to the subheaders in the Contact Information section.

In my second draft design, I focused on improving the main header and on further separating sections. For the main header, I highlighted the main text in light blue and added the same tint to the background of the first design's graphic. I also changed the alignment slightly, so that the three different lines of the main header would have closer proximity to each other and so that they would line up with the graphic's outline. Then, to further separate the different sections, especially those sections which were divided between pages when right after other sections, I repeated the main header at the top of each page and added spaces after sections so that each section would have their own page (the exception being the General Submission Information and Entry Deadlines sections, which fit together on the first page). Due to the repetition of the main header, I also added pagination in the footer and, with the extra space, enlarged the agreement to make it easier to read. A final minor change I made was improving minor aspects of alignment,

such as having the Check and Money Order checkboxes better line up with the four different credit card types below them.

For the final design, I changed the main header graphic to better reflect the topic (livestock), as the original graphic only indicated the topic of the fair. Namely, I replaced the original fair graphic with a new, smaller silhouette of a fair outlined with a banner, and I used the new space by surrounding the banner with silhouette graphics of cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs. I then recolored the banner and silhouettes to match the blue color scheme. The other major edit was to break up the agreement's text. I did this by separating its sentences into new paragraphs, and, for the first lengthy sentence, I separated parts of the sentence into a bulleted list of its main phrases. Finally, I improved the pagination to be more specific and also be outlined in blue.

In terms of rationale, then, the main elements I considered in designing were the formatting of tables, the visual representation of the fair and show itself, and the alignment of related fields. In terms of color, I focused on changes in tint which made navigating the tables of information easier. I believe the final version works well because it simultaneously separates different sections and table entries while uniting them visually, via both the header and color-scheme—the header creates consistency at the same time that it separates pages, and the color-scheme creates a visual consistency at the same time that it separates table subsections. Moreover, the final design reformats the blocks of text so as to be easier to read, and the Word formatting makes it digitally fillable.

Design Assessment

I learned in making this that tables can help create design even when the content isn't as data-centered as one might expect; they can help properly align content or create proximity. I also learned how to create a consistent color-scheme across graphics and text—in creating the main header, I considered the alignment of its text with its graphic, and I also considered what images would best simplify that text's main topics. I also had to consider how I would simplify text visually, such as in tables, or how I would break it up long sentences, such as with bullet points.

In terms of programs I became more familiar with, I gained more experience with Microsoft Word's table and digital entry formatting and with Adobe Photoshop's coloring tools, and with Canva's online graphic design tools.

Sources

Royalty-free graphics for these designs were sourced from pixabay.com.