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Contact: Melissa Lichtenheld  
Wragg & Casas, 305-372-1234  
[mlichtenheld@wraggcasas.com](mailto:mlichtenheld@wraggcasas.com)

## **More students will show lambs, pigs and steers at 2016 Youth Fair**

Fair's new Livestock Funding Program expands opportunities for M-DCPS AgriScience students

**MIAMI, Fla.** – Sept. 21, 2015 – Debt's heavy weight has been lifted from the shoulders of middle and high school agriculture and agribusiness students raising costly hogs, lambs and steers they will show competitively and sell at auction at the 2016 Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition at Tamiami Park.

The relief came when The Youth Fair announced its agreement with Miami-Dade County Public Schools to make available \$100,000 to parents of students raising animals through programs at four Miami-Dade County Public schools: Coral Reef Senior High, John A. Ferguson Senior High, Richmond Heights Middle and William H. Turner Technical Arts High School.



"The new funding program is a result of discussions we've had on how to help students who are working all day, every day of the week to raise expensive livestock animals. We are able to help the students by removing the pressure of upfront costs," said Carol Douglass, director of competitive exhibits for The Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition.

The public school agriculture and agribusiness programs previously paid for feed and received reimbursement from The Youth Fair when the animals were sold at auction.

"But now we will be reimbursed after the animals are sold at the student market auction during the 2016 Youth Fair. Any money left over will go into the students' pockets," Douglass said.

The pilot program will be expanded to other schools where students are raising livestock to show at The Youth Fair, including Homestead Middle School and Miami Jackson High School.

The price tag on a young steer is \$1,500, and combined with feed and healthcare needs the total cost runs up to \$2,500 from now until the animal is auctioned at The Youth Fair Market Auction & Sale, Douglass said. The overall cost to buy and raise a lamb is \$400 and a hog is \$450.

"That's a lot of money to come out of a family's household budget, and as school budgets have dwindled it discouraged students from learning how to raise livestock," Douglass said.

The Miami-Dade County Youth Fair & Exposition is chartered by the state of Florida under Chapter 616 to promote South Florida agriculture, support education and showcase youth achievement, with oversight falling under the Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services. Agriculture in Miami-Dade County employs 20,000 people and has a \$2.7B economic impact each year.

**The Youth Fair** is a not-for-profit organization that awards more than \$300,000 annually in college scholarships, cash premiums and awards to local public, private, charter and home school students. To date, The Youth Fair has awarded well above \$10 million to Miami-Dade students to help them achieve higher education. The annual Youth Fair is the only venue where students can showcase their educational, art and science achievements all in one place and be rewarded for their efforts. More than 53,000 student projects are exhibited each year to more than 650,000 families, friends and fairgoers. Please visit <http://www.thefair.me/>