



Miss Ford County Fair Queen Pageant

Contestant's Information Packet

This packet is meant to outline what's involved in competing in the Miss Ford County Fair queen pageant. If you have questions not answered in this packet, please ask us!

Things to Consider

-Although this is considered an agricultural county fair pageant, it is still a *pageant*. Let us explain that. If you win, you will represent Ford County at many events throughout the year. You must look polished at these events, with hair and make-up done. You must always look your best. This also includes your wardrobe choices. If you aren't prepared to walk the walk and look the part, you may want to reconsider entering this pageant.

-Can you truly fulfill this commitment if you win? Can you adjust your schedule to physically be present for the remainder of the fair-daytime and evening? Can you put in the time to make appearances and prepare fully for the state pageant in January?

-If you have signed the consent form to be a contestant in the Ford County Fair pageant, you are now a representative of the Ford County Fair. Therefore, if unbecoming conduct can be proven, such as drinking, partying, smoking, or partaking of any illegal substance – you will be removed from this competition. In addition, questionable photographs or posts on Facebook, etc can be grounds for your exclusion from competition.

Competition & Clothing Requirements

Here is what will be required for each phase of competition (in a nutshell):

Interview-35% of score

- Five minute interview with a panel of three judges, held in the afternoon
- Business suit or dress, panty hose, and coordinating heels and accessories
- Each contestant completes an information sheet according to supplied instructions

Beauty of Face/Physical Condition (Bathing Suit)-20%

- One piece, solid color swimsuit. (More info and examples will be given at rehearsal)
- Taupe heels with minimum 2" height
- No hose or jewelry allowed
- (Competition takes place at the interview venue, once all interviews are complete)

Speech/Communication-25%

- One minute speech. Topic can be anything that is important to you.
- (Try to avoid political, religious, or other controversial topics.)
- All speeches must be approved by the directors prior to the pageant.
- Delivered in your interview outfit with a handheld microphone

Stage Presence in Evening Gown-15%

- Floor Length evening gown with coordinating heels and accessories. (Use a prom dress or borrow. "Pageant" dresses are not required.)
- Slits no higher than 2" above the knee. Cut outs must be covered with nude or coordinating fabric

Onstage Question-5%

- All questions are of equal difficulty
- Questions are pulled from those asked during interview rehearsals

ALL CLOTHING MUST BE APPROVED BY THE DIRECTORS PRIOR TO COMPETITION. ALTERATIONS MAY BE REQUIRED OR SUGGESTED.

Preparing for a Pageant Mentally & Emotionally

Some of the first things you should ask yourself are:

- Why did I enter this pageant?
- What do I expect to receive from this pageant?
- What can I learn from this pageant?
- What are my personal goals for this pageant?

Your directors and crew will always be there to help, but ultimately YOU are the one competing. Your directors can only help you as much as you are willing to receive help. Remember, you are learning to present yourself. No one knows who you are better than YOU do. We try to help you show your strengths and personality in the best way possible. If you've tried your hardest and been true to yourself, you've already won! You'll be better prepared to do this, if you've answered the preceding questions for yourself.

There are many reasons to enter a pageant:

- To gain interviewing skills to help in obtaining a career
- To help build your self confidence
- To learn public speaking skills
- To polish your stage presence
- To make yourself a well-rounded individual by putting yourself "out there"
- Most of all, to have fun and meet new friends!

Winning the "crown" is just the icing on the cake! Entering a pageant should NEVER be just about the crown. If the crown is your only goal, maybe this isn't the pageant for you. Our intention is that you learn something during this process. Maybe you'll learn about agriculture, your community, or pageants in general. Our hope is that you'll also learn a lot about yourself.

There are a few things that you must be prepared to do:

- Take constructive criticism
- Trust your director – the director and crew know this system and just want to help prepare you for the experience
- Have an open mind
- Be willing to accept any outcome-graciously
- Respect yourself
- Relax – try your best and have fun!

Typical Rehearsal

See the rehearsal schedule for the dates and times of the dress rehearsals. We have a different focus each week, but will practice walking and interview questions EVERY week. Each practice will be at the Secretary's Building in Melvin on the Fairgrounds. The rehearsal schedule will tell you what to expect, what you need to bring, and what paperwork is due (if any).

Helpful Hints for Rehearsal

- Arrive to practice on time
- Be prepared – bring your heels to practice walking and modeling
- Focus and listen
- Make sure your make up & hair are nice for the program photo
- Turn in your paperwork before the due date!
- Bring your wardrobe as soon as you have it so it can be approved
- Write your speech, tweak it, memorize it, and learn to perform it
- Practice your speech in front of anyone that will listen to you
- Study interview questions
- TAKE PRACTICES SERIOUSLY!

The manner in which the newly selected queen conducts herself should always be that of respect for herself, the Ford County Fair, and its Fair Board, at all times including rehearsals.

"STUFF" TO KNOW FOR INTERVIEWS

- This is an agricultural fair. You should brush up on your knowledge of the Ford County Fair. The fair website is a great tool. www.fordcountyfair.org
- What are your responsibilities as Miss Ford County Fair if you win?
- What do the initials IAAF stand for?
- Who is your Fair Board President?
- Who is the Illinois Secretary of Agriculture?
- Who is the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture?

- How long does your fair last?
- What is happening at the Ford County Fair this year?
- What is your favorite part of the fair?
- Do you attend the fair?
- Why do you want to become the next Ford County Fair queen?
- What can you bring to the fair that others cannot?
- Why should we pick you as the next Ford County Fair queen?
- Tell me the about the grandstand events

- If you win you will compete at the state pageant. What title are you competing for?
- What are the state queen's duties? www.missillinoiscountyfair.com

This is by no means a complete list of questions you might be asked in interview. We will practice additional interview questions at EVERY rehearsal. Remember, the on-stage questions are pulled directly from questions we've asked at rehearsals, so pay attention to ALL the questions, not just the ones you are asked. If you can't answer someone else's question, go home and find your answer...it might end up being your onstage question!

Tips:

- There are NO right answers. There is only the right answer for YOU. Judges are looking for genuine answers and an ability to express opinions with confidence.
- Avoid using fillers like "um", "like", "uh", etc.
- Use your strongest voice and don't trail off at the end of sentences. Speak loudly and distinctly so the judges don't miss a word. Always use good diction. It makes an impression!
- Remember that you only have five minutes in your interview. Use this time to let the judges know who you are. Show them your personality. It will make you more memorable.

IF YOU WIN

A Few General Notes:

-It is amazing how many people know your directors in our community and surrounding towns. People do not hesitate to call, e-mail and notify us of what "the queen" was doing at the mall, at a basketball game, at a parade, at her job, at college, or what she posted on Facebook or MySpace, etc. Upon winning the title of Miss Ford County Fair, if you are participating in something that is not becoming of a queen, if you have tarnished the title in any way – you can be stripped of your title and the 1st runner up will be eligible. (See Official Entry Form).

*Do **NOT** put yourself in any situation or any position that will compromise your title. You are a role model to young impressionable girls and you have a responsibility to always act like a queen whether or not you have your crown and sash on.*

-We are very open to your opinions throughout the year; but please note that *your directors have the final say*. Your director and pageant staff have years of pageant experience. We know what works and what doesn't. We only have your best interests at heart. When we all work together, this truly can be a very rewarding and positive year!

-There will be a required meeting with the directors following fair week to discuss the rest of your year as Miss Ford County. Parents are **REQUIRED** to attend, as much of what we cover will be of interest to them as well.

FAIR WEEK

As queen you **MUST** be present at the fair everyday starting Tuesday, June 27th through the last day Saturday, July 1st. Be prepared to rearrange your work schedule and put your social life on hold during the Fair. There are trophies to hand out, ribbons to give, announcing to help with and people to greet! Fair Week can sometimes be grueling, hot and sticky. Now having said that – Fair Week is also what YOU choose to make of it. A crew member or past queen will meet you each morning at the Secretary's building on the fairgrounds. If a crew member is not available, you will be responsible for coming with a chaperone (parent, relative, or friend). You will be given a schedule showing what events are taking place and what time you need to be there, so there is no excuse for being late! (These events include the livestock buildings.) You will be responsible for finding an appropriate chaperone for the evenings. A parent, mature friend, or other family members are perfect. Boyfriends are not encouraged, but are allowed if you can maintain a "PDA" free interaction. (NO hand holding, kissing, hugging, etc.) If you cannot find a chaperone let us know.

Attire: **ALWAYS WEAR YOUR CROWN AND SASH**. Daytime-You are allowed to wear casual clothes during the day. We suggest jeans or capris and comfortable tops. No midriff tops or skimpy attire is allowed. Closed toe shoes are a **MUST** as you'll be in the livestock buildings and pens. Please do not wear your most expensive running shoes. You **WILL** end up with poop on your shoes! Evening-Sun dresses, nice capris, or skirt and top are all acceptable

for night time. A rule of thumb for dress is, if you would wear it to church, it's probably fine. Sandals or flats are acceptable for evening. You will be outdoors most of the time, so wear your hair in a style that is easy to maintain and keeps you cool. We will not have time to retouch curls, etc.

Bring bottled water or other drink as well as snacks. We may not always break at regular meal times. If it is very hot, we may take a break in the Secretary's building as it is air conditioned. If you ever don't know where to be or need to find someone, head to the Secretary's building. It is the "headquarters" of the fair.

Admission: The queen and her chaperone enter the fair free of charge (Excluding Friday night), but other friends or family members will be charged the nightly entry fee (All contestants will receive a full week pass (excluding Friday night) compliments of the fair board.)

OTHER EVENTS THROUGH THE YEAR

Visiting other County Fair Pageants

Attending other county fair pageants is a great tool in learning what works and what doesn't work prior to attending the state pageant. This is by invitation only. Generally, we try and attend Iroquois County, Fisher Fair, Champaign County, Georgetown Fair, & Farmer City Fair. A queen can visit as many pageants as she'd like, but is required to attend a minimum of three. We do not receive any gas money to attend; we do not receive money to eat at other fairs so this is another expense you should be aware of. If a director cannot attend, you will need an appropriate chaperone (such as a former Queen or a crew member) to attend with you and show you the ropes. Additional information regarding attire, and what to expect will be covered at the queen's first meeting with the directors.

Local Parades/Events

There are various parades throughout the year, including the Sibley 4th of July parade, area Homecoming Parades, Gibson City and Paxton Christmas parades, and the Paxton Tree Lighting ceremony. You may participate in other parades as you'd like, but you must clear all appearances with your directors. In addition, you will be responsible for finding a car for parade appearances. You will also be responsible for any signage for the vehicle. More information will be discussed at the queen's first with the directors.

RADIO / TV

Queens are often asked for interviews. WGCY broadcasts daily from the Ford County Fair. WPXN often has a representative at the fairgrounds as well. You should honor any interview request during fair week. We often do a radio interview before the state pageant and have done TV interviews on WCIA and WICD to promote the fair. Any requests for interviews, other than those during fair week, should be approved and coordinated with the directors.

COUNTY FAIR DAY

Friday, August 11th

State Fair Grounds, Springfield, IL

County Fair Day is the first day of the State Fair. It is a day dedicated to celebrating Illinois' County Fair system and volunteers. Anyone involved in a county fair is encouraged to attend. Most county fair queens from around the state will attend this event. Miss Ford County is required to attend. More information will be provided at the queen's first meeting with the directors.

CENTRAL ZONE MEETING

Either the last Sunday in October or first Sunday in November
Springfield

We try to attend the Central Zone Meeting at the Crowne Plaza in Springfield. It is a lunch, entertainment showcase, pageant director's meeting, and hosts mock interviews for the fair queens in attendance. Queens also bring scrapbooks to share at this meeting. Again, this will be discussed at the queen's first meeting.

FAIR BOARD MEETING

We typically have you attend one of the fair board meetings, usually close to state pageant time, so that you can deliver your state speech. The board appreciates your appearance at this meeting because many of them don't make the trip to Springfield for the pageant.

SPEAKING EVENTS

Area churches, women's clubs, chamber of commerce, etc. will sometimes contact us to speak at their event. This is another opportunity to practice your communication skills. You can tell them about your year and how you prepared for your local county pageant, how you're preparing for the state pageant and what you have learned about agriculture. Any speaking engagement should be approved by the directors.

IAAF State Pageant

January 18th-21st, 2018

The Ford County Fair will send you, our new Queen, as our representative to compete for the title of Miss Illinois County Fair (state queen) who reigns over both state fairs in Springfield and DuQuoin. It is a four day, action packed event and we spend many months preparing. Our preparation includes wardrobe shopping, speech and interview rehearsal, mock interview sessions, hair and makeup consultations, and modeling practice. It can be exhausting. It can also be exhilarating!

There are many details to be covered concerning the state pageant. Here are some of the details you may want to be aware of as a potential Ford County Fair pageant contestant:

-Your hotel stay and food will be paid for courtesy of the Ford County Fair Association. Your family will be responsible for their own hotel room(s), food, and associated charges. You will be escorted by and room with one director and another director or pageant crew member.

-There WILL be wardrobe purchases, which will vary depending on your budget and what we

can use from your county wardrobe. Contestants almost always have to purchase a swimsuit, business suit, taupe heels, and accessories (hose, jewelry, undergarments, shoes, etc.). We often purchase an evening gown and second business suit, but not always. Alterations are typically needed as well. Many queens use the Cash award toward their state wardrobe. We are able to work with ANY budget, so please don't let this deter you from entering the Miss Ford County pageant. We will make it work!

-You will receive a crown pin as a gift from our outgoing queen. In turn, you will be required to purchase a crown pin for next year's queen. They are approx. \$15-20 and are usually purchased during the state pageant.

-There will be many miscellaneous purchases available such as official photos, official video packages, candid photos, commemorative pageant jewelry and merchandise, pageant programs, etc. More info will be given to you at the first queen's meeting.

If you are chosen as queen, we will cover all of the other details concerning the state pageant. (Don't put the cart before the horse! We just want to outline what's involved.)

OTHER COSTS

- Postage for thank you notes following the fair
- Scrapbook materials (a scrapbook is not required)
- Parade candy (if you choose to throw candy at parades)
- Congratulation cards for new queens at other county fairs
- Gas
- Food/Drink at other fairs
- Camera/digital prints

Don't feel overwhelmed. We will help you with everything! We are here to make this a positive and fun experience. You will gain so many valuable skills throughout the pageant; interview skills, speaking skills, and self-confidence just to name a few! Do not hesitate to call or email me with any questions that you may have.

We are excited to have you be a part of the Ford County Fair Queen Pageant!

Contact Information

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I have received a copy of the Miss Ford County Handbook. I have reviewed the handbook with my directors and understand it should be my first reference point for information.

Contestant's Signature

Date

Parent or Guardian's Signature

Date