

National Cattle Congress timeline

1877 Sixty-six dairymen meet in Manchester, Iowa, and organize the Northern Iowa Butter and Cheese Association. John Stewart is elected as president. (Feb. 2)

1882 The name Northern Iowa Butter and Cheese Association is shortened to the Iowa Butter and Cheese Association.

1891 The Iowa Butter and Cheese association becomes the Iowa State Dairy Association.

1906 Electric Park Ballroom originally built, though it wasn't until 1974 that the NCC purchased it.



1909 The Iowa State Dairy Association holds first dairy cow exhibition at its annual meeting in Cedar Rapids. Twenty-five cows are exhibited, including those owned by professor Hugh G. Van Pelt, the first Dairy Cattle Congress organizer.

1910 The Iowa State Dairy Association holds its dairy cow exhibition at Chautauqua Park (now the site of Cedar River and Exchange Parks) in Waterloo. There are 62 dairy cattle shown.

1910 Oct. 10 - the Dairy Cattle Congress formed by the Iowa State Dairy Association, started as a nonprofit educational exposition for the development of the dairy industry.

1911 Many cities vie to host the next Iowa State Dairy Association meeting, but Waterloo makes the best offer, and moves for it to be a permanent location.

1913 The Dairy Cattle Congress files articles of incorporation with the state, and gets a long-term lease on land on the west bank of the Cedar River (opposite of Chautauqua Park), near the Electric Park amusement center.

1915 The Waterloo Dairy Cattle Congress meets Sept. 27-Oct. 4. One of the events is the Iowa Market Milk Contest, which awarded gold and silver medals to the dairymen with the highest grades of raw and pasteurized milk.

1916 Dr. P. Malcolm of New Hampton, Iowa, is appointed the first official veterinarian of the Dairy Cattle Congress. His job is to bar herds showing any traces of tuberculosis.

1916 Successful Farming magazine says the young Dairy Cattle Congress "has developed into one of the largest and most important dairy institutions of the country."

1919 Original McElroy Auditorium built.

1919 National Belgian Horse show premieres (three new barns added to house the horses).

1920 The Elgin (Ill.) Dairy Report says that "arrangements have been completed with J.E. Wallace, the famous butter sculptor, to again make an exhibit in the display refrigerator. This display, because of its completeness and attractiveness, has been one of the features at the Dairy Cattle Congress for a number of years."

1920 A dairy products show requiring each exhibitor to enter a 20-pound tub of butter and a 20-pound display of cheese was held at the Fair.

1925 A storm destroys three barns on Sept. 8, shortly before the 1925 show is to begin. The Dairy Cattle Congress quickly rebuilds with new brick barns, and the fair goes on as scheduled.

1927 The Hippodrome first leased to be used as an ice skating rink to the American Legion.

1930 Psychology professors at the Iowa State Teachers College judged babies on mental and physical health.

1935 The Iowa Barn Dance Frolic appeared at the National Cattle Congress.

1936 Electric Park Ballroom replaced with current structure after fire destroyed some of original building.

1936 Original structure of Hippodrome Auditorium replaced by current auditorium building.

1937 Industrial Exhibition Building destroyed by fire.

1942 Iowa State Fair and other local fairs were canceled during WWII, but the Dairy Cattle Congress Fair continued for the education and recreation needed by rural people.

1943, 1944 and 1945, the Cattle Congress "kept alive" by providing a home for the Iowa State 4-H Dairy Club Show.

Post World War II, NCC enters greatest seven-year-period in its history; profits twice as large as its previous best year.

1946 Total attendance for the Dairy Cattle Congress Fair is 210,000, with net profits of almost \$70,000, E.S. Estel reports.

Oct. 25, 1948, Waterloo City Council approves plan to rent buildings from the NCC for 11 months of the year. The city contracts with the Waterloo Auditorium Corp. to manage the auditorium.

1948 Manager Ed Estel establishes band concerts as a major attraction.

1948 The fair is held Sept. 27-Oct. 3. Four groups --the Ayrshire Breeders' Association, the American Guernsey Cattle Club, the Holstein-Fresian Association of America, and the Brown Swiss Cattle Breeders' Association -- hold their national shows at the Congress.

1949 Every state was represented by entries in the fair in some department.

1955 By this year, a permanent set of amusement rides are on the grounds.

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- Home of National Cattle Dairy Congress
- Waterloo Sports Show and Home Show
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1956 A trade magazine advertisement boasts of the City of Waterloo's Hippodrome Auditorium as "Northeast Iowa's Sports and Entertainment Center."

1957 Fair entertainers include Dennis Day, Guy Lombardo, J.P Morgan, Tommy Sands, and Johnny Mathis.

1958 E. S. Estel steps down as secretary-manager of the Dairy Cattle Congress after 41 years.

1959 Country singer Red Foley performs two shows the National Dairy Cattle Congress Fair.

1966 High-diving mules perform in one of their many years at the NCC Fair.





1967 Radio and TV personality Arthur Godfrey and his golden palomino dressage horse Goldie headline shows for three days at the Hippodrome during the Sept. 23-Oct. 1 National Dairy Cattle Congress.

1967 The Cattle Congress Fair offers greyhound racing on its grounds as an attraction -- "a new first for the Dairy Cattle Congress," it announces.



1970 High-diving mules made an appearance at the National Cattle Congress Fair.

1971 NCC moved to June because of Cedar River dike construction behind the NCC grounds slated to start in the fall.

1972 60th anniversary of the NCC.

1974 Electric Park Ballroom purchased along with six acres of land.



1975 Dale Evans and Roy Rogers are among the fair entertainers, who also include Doc Severinson, Charley Pride, Ronnie Milsap, Anne Murray and B.J. Thomas.

1979 The National Dairy Cattle Congress changes its name to the National Cattle Congress, to reflect a broader range of livestock.

1981 Waylon Jennings performs at NCC Fair.

1983 Beach Boys perform during NCC Fair.

1984 President Ronald Regan speaks at McElroy Auditorium (February 20). Willie Nelson performs at NCC Fair along with Oakridge Boys, Barbara Mandrell, & Chubby Checker.

1985 The NCC celebrates its 75th anniversary, Sept. 14-22. Zippy the Chimp (noted for TV appearances) visits NCC, Wayne Newton performs.

1986 Miami Sound Machine, Willie Nelson, Hager Twins, Skeeter Davis perform at NCC Fair.

1986 The National Cattle Congress opens up the Waterloo Greyhound Park.

The Big Blowout
is the
National Cattle Congress'
75th birthday party.

September 14-22, 1985
Waterloo, Iowa



Since 1910



1987 *Sleeping with the Enemy*, by Cedar Falls author Nancy Price, becomes a best-seller and inspires a 1991 movie by the same name. The story has an important scene set at the NCC Fair.

1989 NCC Pepsi Pavilion built.

1992 Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, Tonya Tucker, The Charlie Daniels Band, Brooks & Dunn, Diamond Rio perform at NCC Fair

1993 Billy Ray Cyrus performs during "Sneak Preview Night," McElroy Auditorium (Sept. 17). Wynonna Judd performs at McElroy Auditorium (Sept. 18).

1994 National Cattle Congress Fair canceled due to financial problems.

1995 NCC reopens but the fair is only four days as opposed to an entire week.

1995 Waterloo Black Hawks (hockey) moves from McElroy Auditorium to the newly built Young Arena. The Black Hawks had been at McElroy since 1962.

1996 The 10-day fair returns.

1996 The Waterloo Greyhound Park closes.

2000 To celebrate its 90th Anniversary, the NCC Fair includes all activities and exhibits for just one admission price, just like the earlier fairs.

2001 Beyonce with her group, Destiny's Child, perform at McElroy Auditorium.

2002 Doug Miller becomes general manager.

2006 McElroy Auditorium gets a \$250,000 federal budget appropriation to help update its heating and electrical systems.

2006 The NCC Fair turnout is down 13 percent when the Iowa-ISU football game is scheduled the same weekend.

2007 Escape artist Mario Manzini performs death-defying stunt at NCC Fair, escaping from a straight jacket while suspended from a burning rope.



2007 Sen. Hillary Clinton, campaigning for the Democratic presidential nomination, visits the NCC grounds and brings along her husband, former President Bill Clinton.

2008 The Royal Lipizzaner Stallions perform at McElroy Auditorium.

2008 The NCC Fair hosted the Great American Bear Show and the Marcan Tiger Preserve's Tigers of India.

2008 The U.S. Department of Homeland Security leased the NCC grounds in May, with the publicly stated purpose of "training exercises." The NCC grounds instead are used as a processing center for detainees after U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents raided Agriprocessors kosher meatpacking plant in Postville for immigration violations.

2008 Ashley Wolfe NCC Fair Queen. Willie Nelson performs at NCC.

2009 Rabbits jumped over hurdles at the Black Hawk County 4-H and FFA Fair on the NCC grounds.

2009 Kayla Reiter is crowned NCC Fair Queen.

2010 The National Cattle Congress celebrates its 100th anniversary.

Images courtesy of the NCC, except for Nancy Price and Clinton photos, which are Courier file photos.