

Title, "I Enjoy the Minnesota State Fair."

Apparently, almost two million other people can say the same thing.

I do not normally like crowds or noise but for reasons I will explain below, I have a great fondness for the Fair.

My father was a dairyman and he raised excellent Jersey cattle. My brother and I showed those Jerseys at the Sherburne County Fair and each year won a trip to the State Fair. It was a fantastic experience for a farm boy way back in the 1950s.

The Snake River farm took two shifts at the bison booth this year. Our first shift was the Wednesday morning shift.

Doc Stone came by about one o'clock on that Wednesday and said that he was part of the team for the next shift. The one that runs from three to nine pm. We chatted for a few minutes and then he said he was going to walk around and see the fair.

It seemed only about a half hour later when he reappeared at the booth and announced that he had seen the fair and was ready to go home. I am not certain, but I suspect the good doctor does not enjoy the fair as much as I do.

Of course, he was not actually ready to go home because he had a shift to work, but what impressed me was that he had driven all the way from Windom and was going to make the long drive home in the middle of the night and he did not come to see the fair. He came to help do his share, to help the buffalo association.

For our next shift we had the afternoon and evening of the second Saturday. In case you haven't heard, attendance for that day set an all time record. Well over 200,000 people. John and Shawn McMartin of Promise Farm covered the first shift on Saturday. John is a terrific salesman and works hard to reach a high revenue number. Shawn told us that they had already sold over \$1,600 when we arrived. She also told me that they were staying in the area overnight because they had the morning shift again the next day.

My family and I have the convenience of living only an hour from the fair grounds. That makes it a relatively simple matter to get to the fair ourselves and a simple matter to get relatives and neighbors to help us fill a shift. People like Doc Stone who have to drive great distances or like John and Shawn who have to stay overnight near the city make a much greater contribution than we do.

The Minnesota Buffalo Association is a well run and vital organization because of its dedicated members. We are all fortunate to belong to such an organization.

Thank you all for that. Best regards. Tom Barthel