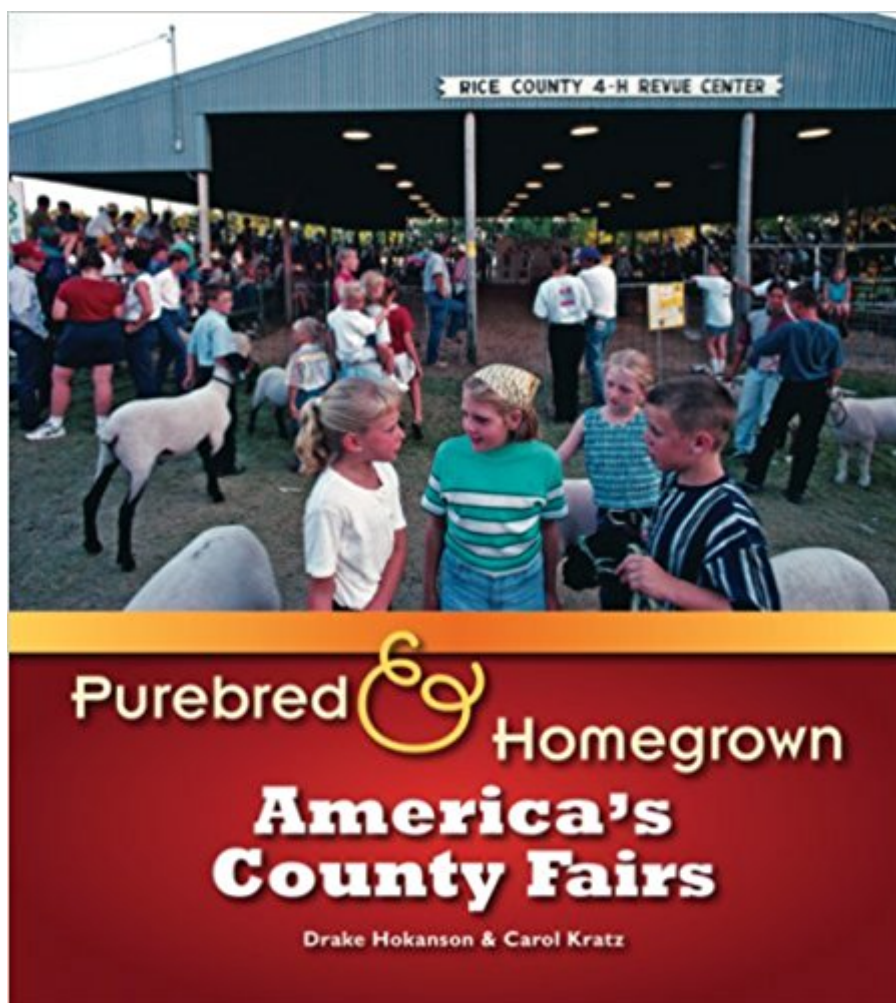


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Purebred And Homegrown: America's County Fairs



Synopsis

Visit America's county fairs as they are vividly evoked through the images, stories, and voices of the people who make them happen—4-H kids, fair managers, pie judges, farmers and ranchers, rodeo queens, entertainers, food vendors, midway pitchmen, and assorted local characters. Illustrated throughout with stunning color photographs, *Purebred and Homegrown* is an affectionate and thoughtful look at the history of county fairs, and their tradition and persistence today, despite the diminished number of Americans who earn their living from agriculture.

Author-photographers Drake Hokanson and Carol Kratz traveled 40,000 miles across America from Maine to Alaska, from Georgia to California, visiting ninety county fairs in thirty-five states. By day they interviewed, observed, and photographed; at night they camped among the carnies and the teens showing sheep, under the rollercoaster, and next to the chicken barn. The story they tell goes beyond the stereotype of fairs as quaint anachronisms obsessed with giant pumpkins and instead reveals the county fair as an important institution that helped define us as a nation of free-thinking, self-reliant, community-focused people. They present the nearly 200-year-old county fair as a fountainhead of American ideals and rural life, as a place of reunion, and as perhaps the most traditional of all American celebrations.

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Customer Reviews

“Just like a great county fair, this book is vast and overpowering. . . . To read *Purebred and Homegrown: America’s County Fairs* is to smell hot corn dogs and barbecue and to hear the happy screams of kids on roller coasters and the moo of fat oxen in harness.” —Jane Stern and Michael Stern, authors of *Two for the Road: Our Love Affair with American Food*

Drake Hokanson is the author of the popular book *Lincoln Highway: Main Street across America*. He is the director of the Center for Mississippi River Studies at Winona State University in Winona, Minnesota. Carol Kratz is a physician assistant at Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center in La Crosse, Wisconsin. They are co-editors of *America from the Air: An Aviator’s Story* and live in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

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