



Westerner Park

# MEDIA RELEASE

August 22, 2017

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## Westerner Park's First Urban Farm Festival and Long Table Dinner a Huge Success

**August 22, 2017 | Red Deer, AB** – On Sunday, August 20, our first Urban Farm Festival was held at Westerner Park. The goal of the Festival, presented by Peavey Mart, was to educate and encourage people to bring aspects of farm living into their urban homes. This was achieved through a tradeshow style set-up featuring exhibitors, comprised of local producers selling homemade or home-grown products. Admission was free for anyone wanting to attend, thanks to the generous support of our sponsors.

There were also free workshops for attendees to participate in, led by local people with experience in the subject matter. Workshops offered included: Urban Chickens, Hobby Bee Keeping, Canning, and Gardening Basics (sponsored by Peavey Mart) and Is Your Home Healthy? (sponsored by Health Canada). The Festival, which fell in line with Alberta Open Farm Days, also offered a petting zoo for children and adults to experience animals up close.

“Opening our doors and allowing people to experience aspects of the farm life that they can bring into their own homes was a way that Westerner Park could share their agriculture roots with the community,” says Christina Sturgeon, Agriculture Event Sales & Production Coordinator, Westerner Park. “We want people to know where their food is coming from and understand the benefits of growing your own or supporting local vendors by buying their natural, homemade and home-grown products.”

In order to better understand how growing one's own garden can be easy and sustainable, Westerner Park employees, with the help of Steel Pony Farms, planted our own Urban Farm near the racetrack on Westerner Park property in May. These small gardens were grown inside cedar boxes called wicking beds, which collect rainwater and feed the plants from the bottom up as they require hydration. This limits the frequency that the beds need to be watered by hand, and could eliminate it altogether depending on the amount of rainfall the area receives. The planting of the Urban Farm was supported by Red Deer County.

Westerner Park also collected donations from TJ's Market Garden to donate back to our community through the Mustard Seed and Red Deer Food Bank. A total of 230lbs of produce was donated.

Sunday evening, 60 people gathered in the Holiday Inn Chalet for the “Taste of Home” Long Table Dinner, prepared by Chef Emmanuel of the Boulevard Restaurant & Lounge. The meal consisted of mostly locally sourced organic ingredients, including donations from local producers Rock Ridge Dairy, James Ramsey, Flying Cross Ranch, and the Little Ice Cream & Soda Shoppe. A highlight of the evening was watching Chef demonstrate how to make his honey berry flambe topped with vanilla bean ice cream.

Hosted by Trevor Stoyko from CRUZ 100.7, the event was well received by those in attendance with many looking forward to next year's event.



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With the first Urban Farm Festival and Long Table Dinner being a success, our staff at Westerner Park are already planning how to make next year's festivities bigger. "We want to grow the agricultural community within Red Deer and Red Deer County's urban setting and have people be more aware of where they are getting their food and other products. That is our ultimate goal," says Sturgeon.

For a full list of sponsors, or information about other events happening at Westerner Park, please visit [westernerpark.ca](http://westernerpark.ca).

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*Westerner Park is Central Alberta's largest tradeshow, agricultural, sports, entertainment and convention facility. A not-for-profit organization supported by 50 full-time staff and 150 full-time volunteers, Westerner Park generates \$150 million annually in economic activity hosting over 1,500 events and 1.5 million visitors each year.*

**For more information please contact:**

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