

“It’s that time of year again.”

So began Renee Payette, who chairs the annual Wichita Mountains Classic Steer and Heifer Show, which will run Friday through Sunday at the Great Plains Coliseum, 920 S. Sheridan.

It’s sanctioned by the Oklahoma Club Calf Association (OCCA) and the Texas Club Calf Association (TCCA), so it’s an opportunity for exhibitors to come in and get points for each organization’s end-of-showseason banquets, she said.

“A lot of them are chasing points trying to get to the end of the year and get prizes from their organizations,” Payette said.

The Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber of Commerce also has some nice prizes for the winners: \$1,000 to heifer grand champions, \$500 to heifer reserve champions, \$750 to steer grand champions, \$375 to steer reserve grand and a 60-percent payback in each class. Participants can earn OCCA double points in Ring B.

The Steer and Heifer Show showcases many of the most promising youth in agriculture who come together from across several states to participate. Last year’s show drew participants from seven states, the farthest away being from Wyoming, and there were 326 heifers, 69 progress steers and 77 prospect steers entered.

Payette said this is only one of many shows the youth exhibitors will go to during the year. In that respect, it’s good for getting younger calves used to the noise and the distractions of the show ring, and it also gets the youths used to showing their livestock. They’ll be evaluated by two experienced judges, Jon DeClerk of Iowa and Tyler Winegardner of Ohio. That way, exhibitors can see whether they need to feed their animals more or less and take steps accordingly to get them ready for other shows.

The barns open at 8 a.m. Friday, and check-in begins at 4 p.m. All heifer cards are due by 7

p.m. Friday and steer cards will be due by 4 p.m. Saturday. Fees are \$40 per head per ring.

Entries will be taken onsite and all major credit cards will be accepted. The Best Western Plus Hotel and Convention Center of Lawton will serve as the official host hotel for participants and their guests.

This year the Lawton-Fort Sill Chamber has a new tourism director working on the Wichita Mountains Classic along with volunteers from the chamber's agriculture committee. Amy Ewing-Holmstrom is a familiar face in the local community, but this will be her first experience with steers and heifers. Payette said she's ready to dive in and get involved with everything, and she's lined up vendors so people can do a little bit of shopping while they're there. Show coordinators will provide on-site security, stalls and space for vendors.

Eligible heifer breeds include American Breed, Angus, Red Angus, Braunvieh, Charolais, Chianina, Commercial, Gelbvieh, Hereford (Polled and Horned), Limousin, Maine-Anjou, Maintainer, Salers, Shorthorn, Appendix Shorthorn, Simmental, %Simmental and All Other Breeds. Eligible steer breeds are American Breed, Angus, Braunvih, Charolais, Chianina, Crossbreds, Gelbvieh, Hereford (Polled and Horned), Limousin, Maine-Anjou, Salers, Shorthorn, Simmental and All Other Breeds.

Payette said the weather may be chilly this weekend, but she thinks there will be a good turnout because she's had phone calls from Kansas, Texas and all over Oklahoma, especially northeast Oklahoma, "so I'm hoping that's a good sign."

Registration will also be taken during the event. For more information, contact Payette at 678-8490 or Ewing-Holmstrom at the Chamber at 355-3541.