



Cattle are stored on the first floor of Missouri State's Bear Park North parking garage on Tuesday, part of the National Holstein Convention that's in Springfield this week. MICHAEL GULLEDGE/NEWS-LEADER

# CATTLE PARK IN MSU GARAGE

By Michael Gulledge

MGULLEDGE@NEWS-LEADER.COM

Old MacDonald didn't have a farm quite like this.

The first floor of Missouri State's Bear Park North parking garage has traded cars for cows as part of the National Holstein Convention.

About 75 cattle are calling the makeshift barnyard home for the week, according to Allyn Paulson, who's helping taking care of the cows. On Friday, the cattle will be auctioned in Juanita K. Hammons Hall for the Performing Arts.

## WHAT'S A HOLSTEIN?

- » Holsteins are known for their black and white or red and white color markings and milk production. Mature Holsteins stand at 58 inches tall and weigh about 1,500 pounds.
- » Average annual milk production for Holsteins is around 23,385 pounds of milk.
- » The average productive life of a Holstein is about four years.

Source: Holstein Association USA

"Some of them can bring \$3,000. Some can bring \$60,000," Paulson said. "You can sell them on pedigree alone."

The auction is expected to bring around \$1 million, ac-

ording to Larry Wright, the chairman of the cattle sale who milks cows in Clever.

Paulson, of Juneau, Wis., helps feed, groom and milk the cows, which are lined up in a bed of hay along the east side of

the building.

A calf has even been born in the garage.

"It is a novelty to see Holstein cattle in the parking garage on Monday morning when (people) come to work," said Wright.

"Some of the premier genetics of the Holstein breed" are in Springfield, Wright said.

Cattle from as close as Clever and as far as New York, Wisconsin and Canada are being stored in the

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## Cattle

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garage, according to the auction catalog.

"We're like a mobile beauty parlor," said Mike McConnell of Lancaster, Wis., who also works with the cattle.

Workers groom the cattle for auction to get the perfect look.

McConnell said the group moved into the garage on Sunday. McConnell and Paulson said the conventions are generally held at fairgrounds, but strange locations aren't unheard of.

One year, the cattle were held in the basement of a hotel, McConnell said.

Tuesday, groups of kids walked through the area where the cattle are being held.

McConnell said kids have walked through several times, asking questions and looking.

Wright said the public is welcome to walk through the parking garage and see the cattle.

Milking will take place around 5 p.m. using portable milking machines, McConnell said.

## Local bureau helps bring convention

The convention is expected to bring around 900 people to Springfield, according to the Springfield Convention & Visitors Bureau.

Dana Maugans, director of sales at the visitors bureau, said Springfield edged out St. Louis for the convention.

"It really was a close call I think getting it to

Springfield," Maugans said. "A lot of the national people wanted it in St. Louis because it was a national convention."

"We worked really hard with trying to differentiate our selves," she said.

The bureau approached MSU about hosting the event and helped set up visits with the convention organizers.

"The facilities are first-class and the convenience of downtown and everything being close together," Wright said.

Randy Blackwood, MSU executive director of athletic and entertainment facilities, said MSU asked event coordinators a lot of questions about event and looked at how other theaters have handled it.

The Holstein association has responsibility for the setup, clean up and storage of the cattle, Blackwood said.

Rent for the theater is the normal \$2,500 plus expenses, Blackwood said.

"The little bit we are earning here at the university is minor to the tourism dollar spent here in Springfield," he said.

He added the parking garage sees little use during the summer term and has water, electricity and a way to hold cattle.

The conference starts today and goes through Saturday, Wright said. The auction is on the performing arts hall stage at 6 p.m. Friday.

The public is welcome to attend.