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Edwin Russell Selected Livestock Farmer of the Year at Agrifest 2020; Grantley Samuel Named Crop Farmer of the Year

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From left: Governor Albert Bryan, Edwin Russell and Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner Positive Nelson pose for a picture on Saturday during the Agrifest 2020 opening ceremony. By. ERNICE GILBERT/VI CONSORTIUM

ST. CROIX — Saturday marked the opening day of the 2020 Agriculture and Food Fair, the 49th annual event on St. Croix that has grown to be the largest of its kind in the Caribbean.

On Saturday morning under a large tent located on the west end of the Rudolph Shulterbrandt Agricultural Complex in Estate Lower Love, local dignitaries, department and agency heads, UVI officials, and members of the Dept. of Agriculture and the Agriculture and Food Fair Board

participated in the traditional opening ceremony. The local leaders who spoke — among them Senate President Novelle Francis, Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett, and Governor Albert Bryan — highlighted the importance of agriculture to the Virgin Islands. Mr. Bryan said a deliberate effort is needed to pass on farming to upcoming generations, fearing the interest is being lost.

Among are host of other honorees, Grantley Samuel won Crop Farmer of the Year, while Edwin "Eddie" Russell — a well-known, professional trumpet player — won Livestock Farmer of the Year.

Below, from left: Governor Albert Bryan, Grantley Sammuel and Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner Positive Nelson (Ernice Gilbert, VIC)



The fair was named this year in memory of Lena Schulterbandt, who is credited with starting the event in 1970 along with her late husband, Rudolf Shulterbrandt, a former Dept. of Agriculture commissioner. Their son, Shelly Shulterbrandt, thanked the board for the honor, and reminisced on the budding days of the fair. He said when his parents originally brought the idea to the territory, many people did not believe that it would last. "But I believe this is one of the biggest events in the Virgin Islands today," Mr. Schulterbrandt said.

The fair has so many activities and so many vendors that, while it is possible to visit them all in one day, it is recommended at least two days of participation to fully patronize every section. From east to west of the grounds, the options are innumerable: an area with a host of different

rides for children; a train-like tour spanning the fair grounds; foods too numerous to list offered up by vendors lining both sides of half of the main roadway; the other half of the road is lined on both sides by sellers offering a wide range of items — including clothing, jewelry, art and more. Then there's the Farmer's Market in a big building on the west side of the fair grounds that includes a plethora of goods from the soil. There's also an area with livestock just outside the Farmer's Market to the north.

And while you're enthralled in all of it, entertainment on either end of the grounds keeps the place lively for the thousands of patrons who make their way to the fair daily.

Agrifest, as it's called, runs through Monday, beginning daily from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.