

Russell Fair Board announces return of Limba the elephant in 2011

By Candice J. Vetter
Candice.vetter@eap.on.ca

The Russell Agricultural Society is proud to announce that the 153rd Russell Fair will again feature one of its most popular, and most unique, animal acts, Limba the elephant. The fair takes place September 8-11, 2011.

In 2009 Limba, an Asian elephant, and her camel comrade were enroute from Hemmingford back to their home at the Bowmanville Zoo, so trainer Robert Crawford agreed to stop at the Russell Fair.

Limba was rescued as a calf in the wild in Vietnam in 1964. She is 47 years old and has never calved. Her maternal instincts seem to settle on human children and she appears to enjoy giving rides to four or five people at a time. Asian elephants can live to be 60 or 70 years old.

According to Russell Agricultural Society president, Tony Baas, elephants have four knees that act like human knees, only bending to the front, unlike other four-legged mammals whose back knees bend to the back. He also says that, unlike what you see in cartoons, elephants cannot jump. They weigh more than 3000 kg and are the second tallest land animals at about three metres in height. Only giraffes are taller. Elephant Appreciation Day is recognized worldwide on September 22

In 2009 The News briefly interviewed trainer Robert Crawford. He said he lives, eats and sleeps near the elephant when they are traveling, as well as much of the time at their usual zoo home too. They have a very special bond. He stated then that Limba loves children and loves watching people. She knows hundreds of words and signals and enjoys playing and being mischievous.

Elephants are highly social animals and usually live in matriarchal groups. But Limba spent 25 years as a solitary elephant when she was young so doesn't have good socializing skills with other elephants. By working with humans she gets social interaction and exercise.